



# 87TH PGA CHAMPIONSHIP

## BALTUSROL GOLF CLUB

### *INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT*

#### SATURDAY, AUGUST 13, 2005

## STEVE ELKINGTON

1<sup>st</sup> Round: 68  
2<sup>nd</sup> Round: 70  
3<sup>rd</sup> Round: 68  
Total: 206 (-4)

JULIUS MASON: '95 *PGA* champion *Steve Elkington* enjoying the 2005 *PGA Championship* it appears. Steve, let's go through your card, birdies, bogeys, and we'll go to Q & A if you don't mind.

STEVE ELKINGTON: Yeah, I didn't play too bad on the front but I got myself 3 over par, bogeyed 3, was in trouble on 3, and I hit a nice shot at 4 and made a birdie.

5, I was in the rough and made bogey.

6, I was in the rough and made bogey.

8, I drove it in the bunker and made bogey.

The rest of the holes I was in play.

And then 11 was where I turned the round around. I hit a 9-iron to about a foot.

Parred 12.

13, holed about a 20-footer.

14, I hit a nice wedge shot in there about ten feet, made birdie.

15, par.

16, hit a nice shot on and two-putted.

17, I played the hole just the way you're supposed to and made about a 20-footer.

And then 18, I hit a nice drive, hit a 4-iron in the back fringe, chipped down and made about a ten-footer.

As I say, I had a great back nine, glad I wasn't thinking about that, didn't realize I had shot 5-under on the back.

**Q. I'm just wondering, as you're making your way around the front nine, how close do you think you are of shooting yourself out of the tournament, and the flipside is kind of how do you assess your position now?**

STEVE ELKINGTON: Well, as I said down there on the green, you just -- major championship golf, you're just really concentrating on more or

less the shot you're trying to hit. If you get too far ahead of that, you don't seem to do so well.

I really didn't play that bad on the front, just found myself 3 over. The back nine probably is a little bit easier.

The wind made the front nine on a couple of holes kind of awkward. The 7th was awkward today. But, you know, it was a good back nine. That's what I needed.

**Q. For quite a while in your career you got used to contending in majors and you haven't really been in contention since the *British Open* a couple years ago. I'm wondering just at this stage in your career whether it feels different or whether you savor the experience more or whether you look at it differently?**

STEVE ELKINGTON: Well, I think having the experience is much better than not. I'm probably as experienced tomorrow as anyone. I've played in a lot of major championships, won this tournament. I've had a lot of good majors, a lot of good performances in this event particularly.

You know, golf is golf. You know, the primary goal is to hit the first fairway tomorrow, and that's where tomorrow's round starts, so I don't really think much more about it than that.

**Q. You finished very strong so perhaps it didn't bother you, but what was the heat like out there?**

STEVE ELKINGTON: Well, being Australian and living in Houston, I thought it was quite cool (laughter). But for New Jersey I'm sure it was pretty steamy. That almost storm we got cooled it down about ten degrees on the back nine.

**Q. Any sense of surprise that in effect *Phil* has kind of led the field back into the tournament?**

STEVE ELKINGTON: Well, I just think it's a hard course to play with the lead because there's no real holes that you can point to and say, well, he'll probably pick up one here or pick up one there. Like the *British Open*, for example, where maybe a guy who's leading gets the 5th, gets to a

birdie there or gets to another short hole. The opportunities just aren't there, so that puts the pressure on whoever is leading to have to hit fairways.

If you're not -- if you're hitting fairways, the course is very playable, and so with that good score, **Thomas Bjorn** this morning, this tournament is wide open I would say now.

**Q. When you were going backwards on the front nine, did you have to give yourself a pep talk at any stage to hang in there because it must have been frustrating --**

STEVE ELKINGTON: No, actually I just had a sandwich and I felt much better when I had a sandwich on No. 10. Like I said, I didn't really hit the ball that bad, I just missed a couple of fairways. It wasn't like I was spraying it all over the place; just some of the holes are hard. Some of them are 500-yard par 4s. It's a hard course.

**Q. Also on the last two holes you made a couple of really nice putts. Is this as well as you've putted in a while this week?**

STEVE ELKINGTON: I've putted pretty well in the last couple of months. I like the speed of the greens here. I've always liked putting on fast greens. To have to feel like I have to make as big a stroke. I can be a lot smoother, feel anyway.

**Q. A lot of the leaders are struggling today and your explanations on television, the wind is picking up, the greens speed, et cetera, no suggestion of the fact that on Saturday afternoon the reality of trying to win a major kicks in and the pressure level goes up. For somebody who's been in that situation, what is the pressure like the first two days as compared to playing in let's say one of the lead groups on Saturday?**

STEVE ELKINGTON: Well, it's definitely -- you know, it's a notch up than what we play week in and week out, that's for sure. There's much more at stake here. Everyone knows that. You know, the one person who wins this event goes down in history. You know, everyone else is history for the week basically.

It's a very important day today, it's a very important day tomorrow for everyone that's in contention, and that shows, you know, that once the tournament committee starts to push the pins into the corners, then all of a sudden if you're not so comfortable with your iron play and maybe you've got to shoot to 30 or 40 feet, you're not near the pin as much as you were on the first couple of days, and then your touch has to be a little better

and all sorts of things come into play on the weekend.

JULIUS MASON: Thanks for coming down, Steve.

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