



87TH PGA CHAMPIONSHIP

BALTUSROL GOLF CLUB

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

SATURDAY, AUGUST 13, 2005

An interview with:

THOMAS BJORN

1st Round: 71
2nd Round: 71
3rd Round: 63
Total: 205 (-5)

JULIUS MASON: *Thomas Bjorn*, ladies and gentlemen, has become the 20th individual to post a 63, the lowest 18-hole score in major championship history. Thomas, if you wouldn't mind, we'd like to go through your card, birdies, bogeys, everything to document this historic occasion if you don't mind.

THOMAS BJORN: On 2, I hit a 3-iron and a 9-iron to four feet.

On 4, I hit a 6-iron to 12 feet.

On 5, I hit a driver, 6-iron to eight feet.

7, I hit a driver in the left-hand rough, chopped it out and hit a sand iron to 25 feet and missed the putt.

11, I hit a driver and a 9-iron to 25 feet.

11, I hit driver, 7-iron to 12 feet.

14, I hit a 3-wood and a 9-iron to eight feet.

15, I hit driver, 9-iron to eight feet.

18, I hit a driver and a 5-iron to the back of the green about 50 feet and two-putted.

JULIUS MASON: Thank you. The 63, ladies and gentlemen, is also a *Baltusrol* record.

Questions, please.

Q. I just wanted to follow up on what you were saying outside where you said the weather conditions were nothing new to you. Where else have you played that was worse than this?

THOMAS BJORN: Oh, you try and play in Malaysia and Singapore and Australia and it's going to get a lot worse than this. Malaysia this year is probably the worst I've ever been on a golf course. You know, we play golf courses sometimes where it's between 40 and 47 Celsius.

Q. If you had gone birdie, birdie there you would have shot 62. On 17 did the wind switch on you before the third shot?

THOMAS BJORN: On 17? On 17, I had a big mud ball, and it just shot off and went straight right on me. It was probably one of those fortunate things to get up-and-down. That happens sometimes. You know, my second shot pitched in the shade of the trees, and it just collected some mud.

Q. You talked outside about the changes to your swing, extensive changes. What are the changes and where are you at in that process?

THOMAS BJORN: I'm a bit further than I thought I was (laughter). You know, the one thing that I don't do when I play poorly is I don't finish my backswing, and I'm trying to finish it with a lift of the arms, and I don't complete my turn. I've been working very hard on that, and I'm certainly feeling that I'm 34 years old and not 19 anymore when I do that. That's a difficult thing for me to do.

I thought it was going to take me a couple of months to start and get it right, but I've seen some swings on the video the last three or four days that didn't make me very comfortable with what I'm doing. I'm just trying to make those changes and go on from there, but I've come in here with absolutely no expectations.

You know, it's difficult not to change that when you all of a sudden get in this position, but I'm going to try not to change it. I'm going to go home and relax and do the things that I have been doing. You know, this is a major change for me. This is a decision that I made that I've thought could change the way I play golf and the way my career is going to go.

I'm not going to let this position change that completely, but obviously when you're in this position, we play golf out there for major championships, and when you get in a position like this you've got to give it a go. I certainly will try and stay very focused on my golf swing tomorrow.

Q. When did you make that decision as a follow-up, to change?

THOMAS BJORN: I made it on Friday night of the *British Open*. When I stood on that 18th tee and I had to make, whatever, 5 to make the cut and hit it out of bounds and then made 6. Then you've got to make a decision that what you're doing is probably not good enough.

Q. I know you've been around the block a few times, but could you just sort of comment on joining a pretty illustrious list of names of guys who have shot 63 at majors? That's a pretty healthy accomplishment.

THOMAS BJORN: Yeah, that's nice, isn't it? I don't shoot very low rounds very often, and to do it in -- I've always been a guy that enjoyed playing tough golf courses when it's tough. I don't really enjoy these 25-under par things. I like it when it's tough. So to get out on a golf course like this, to post this kind of number is certainly special for me, and I'll certainly remember that for the rest of my life. It's a long list, but it's certainly a good list to be a part of.

Q. You've had some good runs at majors over some time. I'm wondering if I'm not mistaken, I guess *Royal St. Georges* is probably the one you were last close at. Not to revisit what specifically went down, but could you talk about what you learned and took out of that and how you recovered from that, to kind of reboot?

THOMAS BJORN: Well, I feel that I put myself in position, not only major championships but quite often in golf tournaments, and I certainly have had some downs with it, but I've also had some ups with it. You've got to go away from championships like that and say the one thing I can take from this is I am capable of putting myself in good position. My good golf is good enough.

You know, the more often I put myself in that position, we all say one day it's going to break your way, and I'm just going to keep trying. A lot of people have hit me on the head with the way I play golf. A lot of people have been after me that I'm losing the edge, but now I'm just going to keep trying to win golf tournaments and that's the important thing for me. I'm going to keep going, and hopefully one day I will break my record.

Q. You've had a couple of documented times where you needed to step away from the game a little bit. Was that a problem of you being too hard on yourself, and what kind of happened with those things?

THOMAS BJORN: I like to play a big, tough schedule, and sometimes my body can't really keep up with it, and then I get into these situations where I don't play very well, probably more from fatigue than anything, and then I do get hard on myself. I want to achieve things, I want to win golf tournaments, I want to be in the major championships, and that's -- sometimes I just hit that brick wall.

A remember a couple of times in my career where I say this is it, I'm going to take a break away from the game and get myself ready to play again. And I've been very successful doing that. It's not to be recommended to everybody, but that's certainly the way I like to do it, and I'll keep doing that.

Q. Put yourself in the position of other players in the field. When they see somebody put up a number like 63 on this course, do they revise at all their thinking about what is possible around and even change the game plan a little bit?

THOMAS BJORN: I certainly think that -- I can only speak for myself and the way that I think. When I see guys post great numbers, you know, you see that even if you're on a tough golf course that it is possible to play well and it is possible to get on those runs where things just seem easy.

So you can take a lot from that, and I'm sure that the guys that have just teed off take a lot from that. They see it's possible to shoot a great number, so I'm sure one or two of them will.

Q. The *British Open*, missing the cut, you talked about, that was on a Friday. What day did you start working on the new stuff and with whom and where?

THOMAS BJORN: I went on holiday with my family for about just under two weeks, and then I went to London and worked with my coach and made some big decisions. We took the camera out and we said, all right, is this the way I want to swing it? I looked at some old stuff myself where I know I had been playing well and hitting it well, so just made those decisions.

It hasn't been more than a couple of weeks I've been at it, so it's still pretty new. We'll see if it lasts.

Q. Your coach's name?

THOMAS BJORN: Simon Holmes.

Q. I don't know if this is a repeat or not, but are there any specifics that you did to change your swing, any major things that you

would say that you've done that you worked on and that you've used this week so far?

THOMAS BJORN: I just think about -- at the moment I'm just thinking about completing my back swing. It gets very short when I don't, and then I just want to leak out to the right. You can't really get around on the golf course hitting it right all the time. I'm just trying to complete my back swing and go with that.

Standing on that 18th tee today was probably -- it was a good sign for me. I stood over that ball and did what I had to do and got the result from it.

Q. This game allows many opportunities to learn from experiences. You spoke about the *British Open* but you didn't speak about the *Smurfit*. What did you take away from that tournament?

THOMAS BJORN: It's one of those where the decisions had to be made that I needed to do something about my golf swing. The European press over here had said earlier in the week that I wasn't comfortable at all, I wasn't playing particularly well.

Then I got out there on a Sunday on a very, very difficult golf course and it just got away from me. I didn't believe in anything, I didn't have a shot that I could go to when I was under pressure, and it just ran away from me.

But the one thing I took away from there is, you know, it's quite good to be able to stick your nose in when you're not comfortable with anything. That might be a weird way of looking at it, but from where I'm sitting that's a pretty good way of looking at it, then you could go from there. I need to do that. I need to say I can get myself in there when I'm not playing very well, and that's a big bonus, as well.

Q. You mentioned earlier about people were saying you had lost your edge. I take it you disagree, but were you kind of just fighting what everyone was saying about you?

THOMAS BJORN: I don't tend to term fight things like that. I tend to fight the problems I have. I have a big fight with my golf swing, and if I don't feel mentally strong enough, I take a fight with that.

What people think about me in this game, you know, I can't control that. I have a very strict way of dividing things. The things that I can control, the things that I can effect, those are the things I worry about. The things that other people think and do, I can't control that, so that's for them to make those decisions.

When you're in sports you've got to divide it into two groups.

Q. When you were on vacation, were you mulling all this over or was it a snap decision at that point?

THOMAS BJORN: I've got three little kids (laughter) that take enough time, so I don't really worry too much about golf when I'm on vacation.

Q. Where are you based out of, and could you elaborate on some of the more arduous trips and some of the problems that traveling does give you on the golf Tour?

THOMAS BJORN: I just shot 63 in a major championship. I think I'll be happy with that and just going through schedules and all that, I think that's -- we do a lot of traveling in this game, but right now I'd like to focus on what I'm doing this week.

Q. Were you aware of the course record, and out on the course, at what point were you aware that you were approaching it and what were your feelings inside when you thought about that?

THOMAS BJORN: I actually looked at the card that's in the locker room, and I actually looked at it, and I also realized who shot 63 around here. I was quite well aware of what was going on, but I felt very calm with what I was doing. I was just staying with my game.

You know, a guy asked me when we walked up here that I needed to hole that putt on the last to shoot 62. When you've got 63 down the hill, you're not going to get cute with it. This is get down in two and get out of there, and that's what I was trying to do.

This 63 is not about records, it's about this championship, and that's all it means to me, that I got myself into position where I can play from here, and I'm going to try my hardest tomorrow again and then we'll see.

Q. Even though you may have played in hotter conditions, did the heat actually help you play well today?

THOMAS BJORN: I just think what I did right today was I made sure that -- the intake of water and the intake of food. I stayed very consistent throughout the round, and I made sure that I was never going to get tired. I just stayed with it. I want to make sure that I keep doing that for the rest of the week, get my energy levels up. That's all you can do in the heat. You need to

practice and you need to know yourself because eventually it'll get to you.

Q. What was your intake of food and water?

THOMAS BJORN: I think I pretty much drank a bottle of water on every hole. I've eaten a couple of bananas and a couple of energy bars in the round and I made sure I had a good breakfast and some extra stuff when I went out. You need a lot of energy in this kind of weather.

Q. You spoke of things that you can control. As somebody who's battled the mental side of this game, what can you do to be in control mentally tomorrow?

THOMAS BJORN: Stick to the things I stuck to these first three days. Stick to trusting my golf swing, stick to playing my game and don't get carried away with the situation I'm in. As I said, I came in here with no expectations, and that's what I'm going to keep doing tomorrow, try to stay in the moment and hit those golf shots and focus on the things that I've focused on because it's obviously working. We'll see how tomorrow pans out but I'll stick with what I'm doing. That's the good side.

Q. I'm just wondering when did you look at the plaque, the score card on the wall?

THOMAS BJORN: That was early in the week. I was just standing around the locker room and started looking at some of the things that were hanging on the wall. No matter where you go in the golfing world there's always a wall with **Jack Nicklaus** on it.

JULIUS MASON: Thanks very much for coming down, Thomas.

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