



August 10, 2007



Southern Hills Country Club

Hole #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Out	Total
Yardage	464	488	451	372	653	200	384	245	374	3,631	366	173	458	537	223	413	507	358	465	3,500	7,131
Par	4	4	4	4	5	3	4	3	4	35	4	3	4	5	3	4	4	4	4	35	70
Score																					

An Interview With:

SCOTT VERPLANK

KELLY ELBIN: Edmond, Oklahoma resident, Scott Verplank ladies and gentlemen, in with a round of 4-under par 66 and the leader at this moment in the second round of the 89th PGA Championship. The 66 is Scott's lowest score in 14 PGA Championship appearances.

Scott, nice playing. Congratulations.

SCOTT VERPLANK: Thank you. Thanks for inviting me in.

KELLY ELBIN: Thoughts on what had to be a pretty special round.

SCOTT VERPLANK: Yeah, it was -- obviously I played very well. Really what happened was I got in position where I could actually make a couple of putts. I birdied 9 and hit it close another couple of times.

Yesterday I hit the ball, I mean, just -- I hit the ball yesterday and today as good as I've ever hit it. I just hit lots of fairways, lots of greens, very solid shots and putting at birdie most holes. You know, actually been struggling reading the greens a little bit.

Obviously I made a few, but I've had a lot of good chances. So I'm hoping that I'll get my eyes checked, get my eyes fixed where I can see the lines a little bit better and maybe fill it up.

KELLY ELBIN: Can you go through the four birdies starting with the one on 9.

SCOTT VERPLANK: 9, I hit a sand wedge in there, I would say it was ten feet just short left of the hole and made that.

11, I hit a 7-iron about six feet just left of the hole, a nice putt there.

15, I hit an 8-iron about 12 feet right behind the hole, a nice putt.

Then 17, I had to kind of punch a pitching wedge under the trees on the right. I was in the fairway but I was a little bit -- a little bit blocked out. So I hit a very nice shot and I came up about I would say eight feet short of the hole and snuck that one in there.

Q. Talk about the support you received from a very loud Oklahoma State gallery and what the fan support meant to you out there.

SCOTT VERPLANK: You know, it's always nice to have people pulling for you. There is extra people out here that obviously recognize that I've been an Oklahoma State person. And to have all of those fans, I've heard a lot of "Go Cowboys" and "Go Pokes."

I was saying earlier this year, I won in Dallas and it's kind of like that. I had a little extra fan support, a few extra calls and a few extra calls from the gallery. You know, I'm in my own world and it's always nice to know that people are pulling for you.

Q. I know the day is not over, but I was wondering if you were aware of the stat that all six majors here at Southern Hills have been won by a player who either led or had a share

of the lead after 36 holes, and how meaningful a statistic do you think that is?

SCOTT VERPLANK: Boy, I don't know. I hope it's a really rock-solid -- (laughter).

You know, if I'm one back, I hope it's not very good. But if I'm leading, then I hope it holds true.

You know, I'm just happy to really play as good as I did the last two days. You know, the fact that it's at a place close to home and a little extra special support and lots of my family and friends here; so pretty neat to be here.

Q. Phil Mickelson said just a little earlier that playing in the practice rounds with you, he had a sense that your game was very well suited for this week; why?

SCOTT VERPLANK: Well, just because of the way the golf course is playing, the way it's set up, you've obviously got to hit it in the fairway. And the gnarly stuff around the greens, you're really helping yourself if you're hitting a lot of greens.

Like I said, I hit the ball yesterday and today as good as I've hit it all year. And obviously it works pretty well around here.

Q. Can you talk about the par save at 13 and how that probably held the round together at that point?

SCOTT VERPLANK: Yeah, that was obviously big. But, I mean, I was -- you know, I wasn't really too worked up about it because I hit a perfect drive right down the middle and I hit a beautiful 3-iron, what I thought was a beautiful 3-iron, right at the flag. And I'm kind of licking my chops thinking, well, if it will land soft on the green, I'll be in with a putt at it for 3. I guess it caught the top of the tree. I never saw that, but I walked up there and the guy goes, "Oh, it's in the water." Great.

I went back pretty far. I went back 130 yards. I had to go back that far to get into the fairway to keep that point between me and the hole. Obviously it was opportune to hit a nice pitching wedge up there about five feet and make the putt.

Q. You've displayed a lot of emotion when you won the Byron Nelson earlier this year; just talk about what's going through your head now feelings-wise and what does it mean

to be at the top of the leaderboard at this point?

SCOTT VERPLANK: It's pretty similar. But like I said, I'm thrilled that I'm sitting here for one, and I'm thrilled that I have played so good the last two days.

So I haven't -- you know, my emotions are fine. I've decided I was going to really try to enjoy this week, have a good time here, because there's a lot of extra demands that could really wear you out if you let them, like you guys -- just kidding. (Laughing).

You know, with friends and family and tickets, just the other night -- I don't know what night it was, Monday or Tuesday night; I was like an accountant trying to get all of these tickets done in the right envelope. I think I put like 15 envelopes at Will Call and I'm like, okay, that's enough, I'm done with that.

Like I said, I'm very happy to be sitting here where I am and hopefully have a decent chance for the next couple of days.

Q. You've been around quite a while, you've struggled, the health problems and injuries; how do you look at your career? Are you pleased the fact that you've overcome so much, or are you disappointed that perhaps you haven't won a major?

SCOTT VERPLANK: You know what -- somebody -- who wants to answer for me? (Laughter).

A little bit of both. Probably more pleased that I've overcome as much as I have. I can't force winning a major or anything else. But you know what, I'm kind of -- my mind-set is maybe, I'm a late bloomer. I was a very early bloomer. I was probably Top-10 player in the world when I was 21 years old when I won the Western Amateur.

I've had a lot of landscape in between. Maybe I'll be a late bloomer here. I've tried to stay in pretty good shape.

Q. Do the injuries and the diabetes, do they reduce your effectiveness? Is that one of the reasons that you slipped a little bit?

SCOTT VERPLANK: Absolutely.

KELLY ELBIN: Question is whether the medical condition affected his play.

SCOTT VERPLANK: I would say that's pretty much all of it.

Q. When you came to Dallas, you had been struggling a lot and you put the new shafts on. I'm wondering, was that really all it took? Because since then, you've been playing very well. I'm wondering, is there anything else technically that you've done since then?

SCOTT VERPLANK: You know, yeah, I mean, I've done a few things with my golf swing that obviously have worked and been better.

But, you know, just a few -- I wasn't ever really that far away. Usually most guys out here, they think they are a mile away and they are usually an inch or less.

But no, I mean, the of the shafts have really helped. I've made a couple minor adjustments to the setup and backswing and over time, they have gotten better.

Q. You were just talking about how when you came out as an amateur, there were a lot of expectations that you would eventually be in this kind of position and maybe often. Did you always feel that you were a suited player for major play and that one day, whether it was early or late, you would get here?

SCOTT VERPLANK: No, I wouldn't say that. I mean, you know what, I would think that -- like I said, when I was 21 years old, if I would have kept progressing at that rate, then, yeah, I would think that I would be, h been sitting up here a lot more often than I have been.

But you know, I don't know. I didn't think I was going to come out and win every golf tournament, because I have other things that I deal with that most other people don't deal with. I'm happy that I've won five times on the TOUR. I'm disappointed I haven't won more. You know, if you can make heads or tails out that have, good luck. (Smiling).

Q. Phil said after his round that he thought there were a couple of pin positions that were a little vulnerable, for lack of a better word. But I'm curious, how much can you attack pins on these greens?

SCOTT VERPLANK: Well, it just depends on the hole. Some of the pins are accessible but they have had a couple of three-from-the-front pins, which I've never seen before. So a hole that you think you would have a pretty nice shot, pitching wedge in there, the pin is so close to the

fringe, which is so close to the bunker; they are pretty tough to get close to.

I think obviously the scores will tell you that there's not a whole lot of green-light flags.

Q. I'm wondering, as good as your run has been the last couple of months, how much of it has been the physical golf swing and how much of it is a building of confidence upon each other success?

SCOTT VERPLANK: Well, you know what, it's hard to distinguish that because once you get one thing going, it kind of snowballs.

I think obviously starting to hit the ball more solid a couple months ago helped. But once you do that, I'm kind of the guy that I only have to hit a couple decent shots to start thinking I'm pretty good again.

But I don't -- I keep that to myself. (Laughing).

Q. Does this stretch compare to as good as any other stretch you've had?

SCOTT VERPLANK: Well, I guess numbers-wise, yeah. I had four Top 10's in a row, and then whatever you said, five out of six or something.

Yeah, that's more at the level that I feel like I can play at and maybe that's where I'm at right now, so hopefully I'll keep going.

Q. I just had two questions, with regard to the diabetes, when the heat is as it is now, do you have more challenges and more things to deal with than if you didn't have to deal with that?

SCOTT VERPLANK: Yeah, I mean, it's a challenge for me but I don't know what everybody else is dealing with. Yeah, it's tougher, at least I assume it's tougher. But like I said, I don't know what everybody else is doing. I try to take care of myself or I minimize as much as possible.

Q. Do you have to do anything different than you would, deal with anything differently because of the heat?

SCOTT VERPLANK: No, honestly, I've been playing out here a long time. I've kind of been through all the hot, cold, windy, rainy; I have some idea what to do.

I've been -- I think like everybody else, I've been struggling with the heat. I mean, look at my

shirt, and it used to be orange. I mean, it was light orange, now it's kind of dark orange.

Q. Completely unrelated follow-up, I know you probably don't want to get ahead of yourself but what would winning a major mean to you, particularly here?

SCOTT VERPLANK: Well, it would be difficult to answer that because I've never done it.

Obviously it would be probably a lot like Dallas where I would be very excited and it would mean a lot to my family and my close friends. You know, obviously here I'd have some extra support. You know, I think it would be very helpful. So I think it would be pretty cool.

Q. I wouldn't think that you are commuting back and forth from Edmond this week -- or maybe you are, if you did address that. If you feel like it, can you talk about how you think maybe wearing an insulin pump has helped your career, if it has?

SCOTT VERPLANK: Let's see, the first one, no, I'm not commuting. I lost a rotor on my helicopter. So I was going to do that, but one of the blades broke. (Laughter) Sorry, it's in the shop. But that would be nice, though, if I could do that.

As far as the insulin pump, yeah, it's helped my career because it's just made me more stable. It's quicker; I can figure out what I'm doing faster, which, you know, it's helpful to me. I can tell my sugar levels and all that. So I am a little more consistent.

Q. You've obviously been a good player out here for a long time, you haven't had a lot of these chances. What would be the biggest struggle within yourself this week or the biggest battle that you've got to fight the next two days?

SCOTT VERPLANK: I would assume it's the same battle everybody else fights. You just play your own game and not try to think too much about the outcome.

Like I said, I just want to enjoy playing here and having fun. I hope that I keep hitting like I've been hitting it, and like I said, honestly, I hope that I make a few more putts. After about nine holes today, I was thinking I might be changing putters before tomorrow, and I don't do that very often.

So we'll see. I'm playing good enough to contend, anyway, so we'll see what happens.

Q. And do you have enough orange shirts to get through the rest of the week?

SCOTT VERPLANK: No, I don't, really. I think this one was tie-dye earlier -- I don't know what it was. No, I'm going to stay with the lighter colors as much as possible.

Q. How long have you actually been looking forward to this one? Would it go back to when it was first announced that it was going to be at Southern Hills?

SCOTT VERPLANK: Oh, yeah. Since it's so close to home and it's a big deal, it's obviously a big tournament, yeah, I've been looking forward to it. But it has not been the sole focus. Three weeks ago the British Open was my main focus.

With the surroundings, the environment, all of the people, the extra people that are pulling for me, it's pretty cool to be here.

Q. How old were you when the diabetes was discovered, and when you said you take care of it yourself, how do you take care of yourself, especially in this heat? How old were you?

SCOTT VERPLANK: Nine. I just monitor what I'm doing. I check my blood sugar. I have this insulin pump that is helpful with insulin. You know, I just -- like I said, I'm in my own little world and kind of have to be.

Q. How often do you have to do it? How often would you have to monitor yourself during a round?

SCOTT VERPLANK: I do it, I don't know, five or six times a round. I just have to. If I don't feel any good, I'm not going to play very well.

Q. Right now about four of the top 5 guys on the leader board are age 40 and over. Is that against the norm or against conventional wisdom considering the heat?

SCOTT VERPLANK: That and maybe the Human Growth Hormone everybody is taking -- (laughter). I shouldn't say that. Yeah, don't touch my stuff, all right!

I think part of it is probably the golf course, the style of golf course. You have to place your shots and pay attention to each hole. They are all

a little different. You can't just stand up there and bomb driver every hole and get away with it. The rough is too kind of funky and the greens are too hard to hit from the rough.

So I would say that has as much to do with it as anything.

Q. Along the lines of enjoying this, what do you do the rest of today and the morning, do you watch television, get away from this, hit balls; what will you do between now and tomorrow's tee time?

SCOTT VERPLANK: That's a great question. I don't know.

No, I'm going to practice a little bit. I'm going to work on my putting a little bit, and then I have my wife and four kids and nanny and my dad and a couple nephews, and I'm going to guess that they are all going to be at this pool at this house I'm staying at. So I might want to stay here as long as possible. (Laughter).

No, I'll probably do that, go swim with my little three-year-old. I won't do a lot of swimming but I'll watch her. Either be in the water or inside out of the heat, and I'll watch some TV. There's never a dull moment when you've got four kids. So I pretty much do what I'm instructed to do as soon as I leave the golf course. (Smiling).

Q. We've talked a lot about the obstacles that you've had to overcome that maybe others don't, but we know you to be one of the more upbeat guys out here. How do you do that? How do you endure it and how do you keep that frame of mind?

SCOTT VERPLANK: Well, you know, obviously because you have to. But I don't know, you know, it's a little bit of a -- it's a little bit of a show to you guys. If you heard me talking under my breath when I'm out on the golf course, you probably wouldn't think I'm that upbeat.

No, I wouldn't say it's a show, but you have to be. I have to be. I've been so far down at the bottom of the barrel, I know what that's like, and you can only beat yourself up so much. So I kind of learned that -- that's why I'm hoping that I'll be a late bloomer, because I've been through all of the other stuff where I beat myself up and now I'm just trying to give myself a better chance.

KELLY ELBIN: Scott, you missed just one fairway off the tee today. Is that perhaps the key to having success here?

SCOTT VERPLANK: Oh, I was so pissed, too. (Laughter) Which hole was that?

KELLY ELBIN: 15.

SCOTT VERPLANK: Oh, that's the only fairway? I missed it by this far (indicating an inch). My ball was halfway in the fairway and halfway in the first cut of rough. The guy -- I'm going to go talk to the score guy. It was in the fairway. (Laughter).

Yeah, that's the key. Obviously I'm hitting off good lies and having a chance to hit decent iron shots. So I'd like to keep that up. But driving the ball in the fairway here is very important.

KELLY ELBIN: Scott Verplank, the leader at the 89th PGA Championship. Thanks.

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