



August 7, 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:

## PHIL MICKELSON

KELLY ELBIN: Phil Mickelson, ladies and gentlemen the 2005 PGA Champion joining us here at the 89th PGA Championship at Southern Hills. He's participating in his 15th PGA Championship. He was third at Southern Hills here at the 1994 PGA Championship and tied for 7th in the U.S. Open when it was played here in 2001.

Welcome back. I know you've played some practice rounds. Some thoughts on the golf course so far.

PHIL MICKELSON: I think all the players are really enjoying the way Southern Hills is set up. It's set up difficult. But it's fair. It's got opportunities for players to separate themselves, whether it be shots out of the rough. Shots around the green, chances to make putts. It seems like it's a great setup to test the best players in the world.

KELLY ELBIN: Open up for questions, please.

**Q. How much different is the setup than what you saw in the past? Obviously, because you played well here -- is it that much different and also why have you played well here, what about it suits you?**

PHIL MICKELSON: The setup is similar to some of the tournaments we've had in the past. But there's not some -- we don't have that situation

with 9 and 18 where the green speeds were totally different than the other greens.

And there's some special spots that are challenging that I think are going to be really cool. I liked the shaved part behind No. 2 green. The shaved part to the right of No. 12 brings water into play; No. 7 shaved right of the green. But it also gives, there's a bunch of shaved areas that allow your short game to come out as well.

And I think that this course just tests players very well, and it is similar to what we've had in the past. It's a lot longer. There's a number of holes that have been lengthened. The reason I think I've played well here is that the grass is grasses I've grown up, the same stuff I've had in my backyard chipping. Even though the rough is thick and tough, it's hard to get the ball close to the hole around the greens, you can hit shots and get it close if you know how to play them.

And because I grew up on those grasses, I think I've been able to salvage par and save strokes better here than on some other courses.

**Q. Phil, could you just update us on how you stand physically and then given any problems that you may still have, how that affects you mentally and emotionally when you're going into a big, tough week like this?**

PHIL MICKELSON: Well, I'm really excited about playing right now, because last week was the first week that I didn't have to numb up the back of my hand to be able to hit balls. I was able to practice and actually practice for a few hours a day and work on my game.

I've been able to put more time in my game now in the last week or two than I have in the last three months. And so I'm really excited about getting back out and playing. I'm excited about the upcoming FedExCup Series, but especially excited about trying to play well here at Southern Hills.

Now, I haven't played well in the last couple of months, but I also haven't been able to practice. So I'm hoping that given a different practice regime and being able to work on my game, I'm hoping to have a much better performance.

**Q. Phil, can you expand a little bit on what you said earlier on 9 and 18? What do you remember from those greens from '01 and they've rebuilt those; so what have you seen out of them now?**

PHIL MICKELSON: Well, they look the same, except they're a little softer sloping in the front part, and so there are some front pins that are going to be extremely challenging and exciting and usable.

And I think that will add a whole different element to it. In '01, they weren't able to be mown at the same height because balls would run right off the green down the slope 60, 80 yards short of the green.

Now there's some great pins that are usable, and I just think that it creates more of a variety of shots. When you can put the pin front right or left on those pins rather than just having every one in the back.

**Q. Sergio is going through some of the things you went through earlier in your career with some near misses in majors. Looking back, what was the hardest thing to deal with when you come so close and you didn't get over the hump?**

PHIL MICKELSON: Well, I believed, just as Sergio believes, it's just a matter of time. He's too good a player for it not to happen. So I certainly felt that way. It was just a matter of time. It took more time than I had hoped.

But honestly the hardest thing about it was coming in here, I think. Because I felt, or always believed and never really wondered if I would ever win one. I knew I would I just didn't know when. I think he feels the same way. But answering questions about it can be difficult.

**Q. This year, how would you look at it? Would you say that it was an average year for you, incomplete, or still to be decided? And also another question off-topic, have you ever fooled around with a belly putter or long-handled putter, and what do you think about those?**

PHIL MICKELSON: Have I messed around with a belly putter? I have. For a day or two I had one made up to try it. I think it certainly can be a benefit as far as getting the ball started on-line and having your stroke be good.

But there's so much more to making putts than just having a perfect stroke. Because you have to line your putter face properly. That plays a much bigger factor into getting a ball started on line than your stroke does; how you aim it; then you have to read the green right and hit the right speed. So although I think it can help you with your stroke, it doesn't necessarily equate to making more putts.

And you asked a first part that I forget -- what was that? How do I look at the year? Yeah, I think that I feel as though I'm just starting the second half of the season. I feel like I've missed a few months. Even though I've been playing, I haven't really been able to work on my game. I haven't been able to perform the way I want to.

So looking back on the year, though, I'm excited that I've won twice and I'm excited to have won THE PLAYERS Championship because that's such a big event to us as players, and I had not ever played well there. I hadn't had a good performance there really in the past.

So to overcome that hurdle as well as see some improvement in my ball-striking was very exciting.

**Q. Could you expand, just the fact that you said the worst part of the major thing was coming into the media room, the press room. Is that because the questions start getting you down, or is it because you start thinking too much about not winning?**

PHIL MICKELSON: No. It's just that I felt like that no matter how well thought out or nice, what-have-you, the questions were, there was no good answer. No matter which way you went with it, it was always going to be -- it was going to come back to bite you, if you will.

So I just felt like it was a tough -- the toughest part was trying to answer them honestly and I always felt they were kind of loaded even though they were not meant to be.

**Q. How much does this course compare to Colonial, and obviously you like Colonial; you've won there. What is it about those types of courses that you like?**

PHIL MICKELSON: That's a great analysis. That's the first thing I said when I got out here and started my preparation, was that this course reminds me a lot of Colonial. The grasses on the greens are identical. And the grass around the greens are identical. There's a lot of similarities in the looks, the way the wind blows around the tops of the trees and the color of the grass brings out those similarities.

And so that was the first thing that popped in my head, too, was how similar it was to Colonial. I think that's a real big compliment, too, because that's such a great golf course, and Southern Hills is every bit as good.

I don't know how that really equates to coming in here and playing in a major championship, because the setup is a little bit different. A little bit more challenging with tight fairways and rough that's tough.

But I think that the setup this week is one of the best I've seen. I thought it was a lot like the British Open, which was well done in the fact that it tests all parts of your game. It tests your short game. It tests your ability to drive the ball in play and tests your ability to make putts and strategically attacks certain pins and play away from others.

I just think it's been very well done. I think we're all excited to play here.

**Q. You've got yourself into a pretty good groove of winning majors the last few years. I'm just wondering how hungry are you to get back on that track? And as a follow-up, if you are shut out from majors, how long does that wait feel from the PGA to the Masters?**

PHIL MICKELSON: Well, I guess we just have a difference of opinion. I feel like this was the fourth year that I've already won it. I'd love to double-up and win two. But that's just -- we look at THE PLAYERS a little differently. That was one of the big events that I was gunning for.

So with that being said, the greatest six months that I had was the time between winning the '05 PGA and the Masters in '06, because I was able to go into the off-season having won the last major and not have to worry about an upcoming major for six months.

And it's different than when you win the U.S. Open, and three, four weeks later you're trying to win the British. And after the British, nobody really remembers that you just won the U.S. Open.

And it seems like everybody remembers who won the last major. So winning the PGA was awesome. That was a special thing going into the '05 off season.

**Q. If you don't win the PGA, in your case you haven't won -- technically haven't won a major yet, let me throw that in -- how long is that wait, if you've gone majorless in a year, to wait until the Masters?**

PHIL MICKELSON: Well, technically, it would be a long wait. To have to wait six months for the next major, it's a long time.

But with that being said there's a lot of golf in the meantime that is going to be meaningful. A lot's going to take place in getting ready for the next major. And I think that after the PGA, we've always had such a lull in the game of golf professionally on the PGA TOUR.

And I think this year is going to be a little different. I think there's going to be some interest in those last four events. And I think that will help keep players focused, myself especially after the PGA.

**Q. We just heard Tiger say he deals with this heat by changing gloves a lot. How do you deal with triple-digit temperatures over the course of four days?**

PHIL MICKELSON: Probably no different than anybody else. Just drink a lot of water, try to stay in the shade and pace yourself. There's no sense walking fast.

But what's interesting is that I love playing in the heat for a couple of reasons. It loosens your muscles in your body up. You're able to swing a lot more rhythmic and the ball flies a lot straighter when it's hot because you don't have the resistance.

So the wind doesn't affect it as much, and the game plays a lot easier when it's hot. There's a lot more benefits than there are detractors.

**Q. Having won the U.S. Amateur, I realize you play aggressively anyway, how different a beast is that to conquer, and how does it affect strategy in a tournament?**

PHIL MICKELSON: In match play you can certainly play a lot more aggressive. The Olympic Club is a very difficult golf course, especially around the greens where a half- to two-thirds areas around the green you cannot get up and down to certain pin placements.

So although you want to play aggressive and you want to try to win the Amateur and with birdies, a lot of times especially in the Olympic Club, there's going to be a lot of holes where you want to let your opponent make the mistake. I think that will be kind of an interesting thing to watch how that plays out.

**Q. We just had Paddy in here and Angel and we asked them, what's the hardest thing to deal with after you win your first major; what was it for you?**

PHIL MICKELSON: I gotta tell you, there's a lot of good you get to deal with. I don't remember too much bad that came with it. I remember a lot of things that came along with winning the '04 Masters.

I don't know, I mean it's hard to maybe lower expectations when you've won a major and you know how great it feels. You sure want to get it again. You want to have more wins. I don't know if that's the hardest thing.

I think that's a good motivating factor for a lot of guys when they get a taste how great it feels to finally win. It spurs them on to more wins.

**Q. On Monday they'll finalize the Presidents Cups teams, and traditionally, first-time international guys don't usually get captain's picks. But some young guys, Lucas is hanging on in the 10 spot, and Hunter Mahan has risen up the charts. Do you think it's out of the question to give a captain's pick to a guy who hasn't played in one of those events before and maybe would that experience be good for the American players?**

PHIL MICKELSON: I think that on a team you want to have a good mixture. You want to

have guys that have been there before, because they know what to expect and can help the guys who haven't on pacing themselves for the week and getting prepared properly.

But on the other hand, you also want to have guys that are young, up-and-coming guys that are hungry that have not been on the team before because they bring an element of excitement and perspective that sometimes the guys that have been on 10, 12, 14 teams might lose for a while.

So I think that would be a great asset for the team to have players of that caliber of a Lucas Glover, Hunter Mahan. And I haven't looked at the list. But I think it would be great to have players of that caliber who have not been on teams, and it can only help for the Ryder Cup, as well.

I think we've played very well in the Presidents Cup, and I hope we continue that good play in Montreal. It would be great to get some good, young players on the Presidents Cup Team and have them continue to play well for the Ryder Cup.

**Q. You mentioned earlier how 18 was set up last time and it was very difficult. Other players have mentioned the same, kind of going off of that, what is your favorite 18th finishing hole that you've played?**

PHIL MICKELSON: Baltusrol for sure.

(Laughter) I don't know that I have a favorite. A finishing hole, you want to have a hole that has a two-shot possibility that's birdieable and is a tough par.

I think the hole here on 18 at Southern Hills is a great finishing hole because you can hit a good 3-wood and hit a 6- or 7-iron and make birdie.

It's also a hole if you mess up slightly off the tee and try to play too conservative, now you're hitting a long, 2-, 3-iron into the elevated green or get too cute you've got water to the right or to the rough if you go to the right rough you can't make par unless you get up and down for 110 yards.

I think the fact that there's a very good possibility of a two-shot swing on 18 makes it a great hole.

**Q. On your hand condition, are you at the point where you're not going to have to think about or worry about it biting you at some point? Is it that good now, and also what are**

**the doctors saying about where you are in the recovery process and how much longer it would be before you're 100%, or if you're not already there?**

PHIL MICKELSON: Yeah, I heard that -- I've been talking to the doctors. They think another two weeks, I should be 100%. I'm pretty excited about that.

I can certainly feel it turn the corner. But on the same token I'm still aware that it's there. But I don't have to numb it up to be able to deal with impact. And it's been getting a lot better. And I'm excited that I'm able to practice working on my game.

So I think going into the FedExCup, I should be 100%. But I feel very close to 100% this week.

**Q. When you say "numb it up" are you talking about cortisone or --**

PHIL MICKELSON: Lydocaine, like Novocain on the back of my hand.

**Q. Looking at the last few years at this particular tournament, Tiger and Sergio and Tiger and Rich Beem, yourself birdied the last hole, you can state the case that PGA has produced the most exciting finishes of all the majors maybe over that seven- or eight-year span. I'm wondering, is it the setup, the field?**

PHIL MICKELSON: Yes, it's the setup. It's clearly -- in my opinion it's clearly the setup, because the PGA is a group of professional golfers who understand trying to differentiate the better players from players that aren't as talented. That means they incorporate all elements of the game.

If the penalty for a missed shot is the same for everybody, like water is, or U.S. Open rough, there's no opportunity for guys to differentiate themselves. It's a 100-yard hack out of the rough and there's no skill in shot-making. There's no ability to get it up by the green and challenge those shots.

The thickness of rough around the greens prohibits talent from coming out, because it's too much guess work of the ball coming out. You chop it on the green. The greens are so hard and fast; it runs down to wherever the low point is.

The PGA gives you chances to get up and down around the greens. The rough is tough, but it's fair. The areas around the green, there's a lot of shade areas around the green that test your

short game. The rough off the tee is challenging, but playable.

You can possibly get a lot of shots on the green or around the green, certainly. And that tests course management, tests overall skill. Tests short game. And so the whole element of a player's game is tested. And I think that's why the PGA is such a fun championship to watch because shot-making is at a premium. Guys can be aggressive and take chances on certain holes.

They can play for par on others, whereas we've gotten away from that in some others.

**Q. When other players see first-timers break through and win major championships, and this takes you back to maybe before you won multiples, what is the impact on the psyche of the rest of the field? The rest of those who have yet to break through?**

PHIL MICKELSON: I think it's encouraging and motivating for players who have not won majors to see first-time players win; to see guys that you maybe knew had the game to win, but didn't expect them to win. To see those guys break through and win championships is motivating for everybody else, because it proves to them that these guys have played together for years.

And they've taken money off of each other. They've had competitions come down between each other, where different players have won. And it proves to a lot of the guys out here who haven't won majors that they have the game to do it. And that they're talented enough, because their buddy they've played with for so many years has just done it.

**Q. Considering the negative hubbub surrounding around Michael Vick and Barry Bonds and others, life in the fish bowl can be kind of tough; how have you handled that? And second question, how have you seen Tiger being able to handle all of the attention that he gets? How do you think the two of you have handled that?**

PHIL MICKELSON: I'm excited to be a part of the game of golf. I love being in this sport, because we have such quality individuals in the game. And no matter what walk of life you're in, whether it's sports or corporations or whatnot, nobody's perfect. I mean, there's always a human element. And nobody's perfect.

In golf, with still nobody's perfect but we have such quality individuals with high character that's self-policing in so many ways, that people would much rather be disqualified than break a rules or have a rules infraction, that is such a different attitude from other sports where it's not a foul if you don't get called for it.

And so I'm just proud to be -- I'm proud to be involved in this sport. I think that that's one of the areas that makes golf special and makes golf unique from other sports. And as far as Tiger, Tiger has brought a lot of recognition to the game of golf. Obviously he's the most recognizable athlete I think in the world.

And that has made everybody in the game of golf prosper, even everybody here in the media center, a lot of us have increased pay or increased jobs or whatnot because of the coverage now that Tiger has brought to the game of golf.

**Q. Just regarding the FedExCup, I'm wondering if you think it's going to work and do what Finchem and everybody wants it to do in the long term, or do you see flaws there? As a follow-up, what are your plans, to play all events?**

PHIL MICKELSON: I think long term the FedExCup has some real value. I think that in the first year, like everything, we try to work out some kinks. And my intention is to play.

My intention to play actually stems more from the fact that I feel physically fitter and I missed some tournaments in the middle of the year. Hadn't played to the level that I expect. My desire is much higher at this point in the year than it has been in past years.

And I am looking forward and wanting to play more competitive golf. So with those four being kind of the last big push, I'm expecting and looking forward to playing those events.

I would like to see some things different with the way the FedEx thing is run, and I've talked to the Commissioner about that. And I think some of those things are being looked into to try to better it.

But your first year it's never perfect. You always try to refine it to make it better.

**Q. Can you be specific at all about what you would like to see?**

PHIL MICKELSON: Specifically, yes, for the last year I felt it would be really cool if we had

this big check or we had cash to pay the winner. I think that would be cool. (Laughter).

But instead, I mean guys won't see it for 20-plus years, and so it takes some of the luster out of it or excitement. I mean, you've got this corporation's putting a \$35 million check into this thing and the players aren't going to see that money for 20-plus years until well after they retire.

And that means that the excitement level for that cash -- like K.J.'s wanted to give it away to charity and other guys wanted to do other things with it; they don't have that ability. I think that would make it even more exciting if we did something like that -- like Vegas used to. Like silver dollars, when they came out with silver dollars. I don't think we'd do that, but to have a big check or like the World Series of Poker with piles of cash. (Laughter) I think it would be cool. But it's just me. I don't know.

KELLY ELBIN: On that note, Phil Mickelson, thank you very much.

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