



May 26, 2007



### The Ocean Course ~ Kiawah Island

Hole #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Out	Total
Yardage	394	535	390	458	185	450	537	170	425	3,545	439	562	428	445	194	421	540	197	430	3,656	7,201
Par	4	5	4	4	3	4	5	3	4	36	4	5	4	4	3	4	5	3	4	36	72
Score	4	5	4	4	3	3	4	3	4	34	4	3	4	4	3	4	4	2	5	33	67

### AN INTERVIEW WITH:

### TOM KITE

KELLY ELBIN: Tom Kite, ladies and gentlemen, in with a low round of the 68th Senior PGA Championship, a 5-under par 67 in the third round.

Tom, looked like you had a pretty good day out there.

TOM KITE: It was a great day. We were fortunate to get out where the wind, not that it laid down, I mean it always blows here, even when it doesn't blow. But at least we beat the high stuff. And it's starting to pick up a little bit now.

So I guess that's the only good news for playing poorly the first two days, you get that early tee time where you can get out and have a chance to get the golf course.

But we were just talking in the scoring tent, even when you catch the golf course under some very tame conditions, it's still a heck of a golf course. And you got to play very well and if you miss it at all, you just get roasted. And I feel very fortunate to get a good round in like that. It helped a bunch, for sure.

KELLY ELBIN: You started with your first birdie on 6. If you would go through the card.

TOM KITE: Made a good putt on No. 6. I drove it in the right rough and I thought I was going to catch a little flier with a 6-iron, it came out a little soft. Made about a 30 footer for birdie there.

Birdied number 8. Or excuse me, number 7. The par-5. Hit it just in front of the green and played a little you know run upshot up the hill to about six feet. And made that.

Made eagle on No. 11. I hit 5-wood just off the back edge of the green, pin was kind of toward the back and I had a fairly easy little pitch shot. And I played a nice little pitch that stumbled in somehow.

Then I birdied the par-5 16th. Hit pitching wedge about 12 feet. On my third shot.

17, I hit a 6-iron about 10 or 12 feet there also and made that.

Only bogey of the day was on 18. I drove it in the left, left of the fairway and I was in the sandy lie where people had been walking, I had almost a buried lie and all I could do was pitch it out in the fairway and I was not able to get it up-and-down from about 95 yards.

KELLY ELBIN: Thank you, Tom. Open it up for questions.

**Q. You mentioned earlier that it was I guess a bonus to get an early tee time after playing badly the first two rounds. Do you think you made up enough shots today to put you in the thick of things?**

TOM KITE: We'll have to wait and see. Certainly I don't care whether you shoot 53, if you bogey the last hole you come away with a little bit of a bad taste in your mouth. And I'm feeling like I had been driving the ball well and hitting my irons very well all day, I'm sitting there thinking of making birdie and get back to even par and then we'll see what happens.

But obviously that hurt a little bit. But chances are probably not. Eduardo and a number of those guys are playing very well right now. And I would anticipate that they will continue to do that.

But still, that golf course is hard. And you just don't have to slip up much at all to -- I mean,

we saw a number of players, it happened to me, it happened to Crenshaw, it's happened to practically well I won't say every player, but certainly a large majority of this field has hit some shots that probably are less than stellar shots, but they don't come away with bogeys, you come across with double or triple or worse in a lot of cases.

So I'm certainly not wishing any bad luck on any guys out there, but we'll just wait and see.

**Q. The birdie on 17, are y'all playing the same tees that you played?**

TOM KITE: Same tee, but we had a front pin today. Pin was only I think it was like 15 on the front and actually the wind has changed a little bit, a little bit of direction. It's not -- it's coming more off the ocean where before it was kind of coming down the beach straight out of the east. And so this is an or maybe west. Well this was south, southeast a little bit. So the wind was quartering a little right-to-left more than one 17, than it has for the last couple days. But the shorter distance just because that pin was toward the front of the green.

**Q. You have I believe it's three runner-up finishes this year. How close are you, what's been the difference between finishing second and closing the deal for you this year?**

TOM KITE: Well, I've, I keep catching buzz saws, the guys that I finish second to this year, Hale Irwin blew everybody away, Fred Funk blew everybody away at Turtle Bay, and then I lost in a playoff to Jay Haas. So it's not like it's chop liver that I've been losing to. Those guys are pretty good players.

But I'm pleased with how I'm playing. I did not play well the first two rounds this week and it's been disappointing, because I came in here having three straight top-5 finishes and very optimistic about my chances. And to play as poorly as I did the first two days, especially the back nine yesterday, is very disappointing.

**Q. How emotionally draining is this golf course compared to some of the others in this country. I mean, it just seems that, especially when the wind blows, that it's almost incomparable.**

TOM KITE: It beats the living day lights out of you. It really does. You hear nothing but praise for the golf course. Everybody just sits there and says, it's fantastic. There's a lot of -- Pete built a lot of flexibility into this golf course in terms of the set up. And what the rules guys can do. And I commend Kerry Haigh, I think that he

does such a great job in setting up Major Championships when he gets a golf course like this or like what he did at Whistling Straights for the PGA a couple of years ago.

You don't have to -- the golf course stands on its own. And what were there six scores under par through two rounds? And then -- and quite honestly he didn't set the golf course up quite nearly as difficult as he could have. And yet it was still holding its own.

So the golf course is fantastic, everybody is raving about it, Pete just did a fantastic job here, a marvelous design, but, it's a hard, whatever adjective you want to put on it.

(Laughter.)

**Q. Follow-up, being a guy that always loved playing in the Colonial are you surprised at what's happened to that tournament and in that it was one of the best ten tournaments on TOUR for a very long time and you can argue that it might be the third biggest tournament in the world this week with BMW overseas and this tournament being such a big deal.**

TOM KITE: Well, you got to keep up. Colonial is a wonderful tournament, got a wonderful tradition. But they're kind of landlocked and there's not a whole lot they can do to strengthen their golf course and make the golf course more challenging. And when you see those scores the tournament records thereof of 18, 19-under, that doesn't make you think of the old Colonial. And unfortunately they need to go ahead and strengthen that golf course and toughen it up and put some, if the bunkers need to be deeper, the bunkers need to be deeper. But really penalize the guys for hitting the ball off line. And they haven't quite been able to keep up or they haven't kept up with the times.

**Q. You talked about how wonderful this golf course is and how punishing it is, how often should a tournament be played here? I mean how often would you like to comeback to this place to play a tournament?**

TOM KITE: I would come back any time they want me to. I love this golf course. Quite honestly, this year we have got the, for our five Major Championships on the Champions Tour, we have got the best rotation of anybody. The PGA TOUR would 20 times rather be playing the rotation that we have than the ones they have, I can assure you. Not to knock what they have coming up, at Oakmont, but when you catch Whistling Straights and Muirfield and Sun River

and Baltimore Country Club and Kiawah, it doesn't get a whole lot better than that. So it's a nice rotation. We are very blessed this year.

**Q. You had talked about this course, is it possible that there may be too many variables here, I mean they're going to bring the PGA Championship here in a few years, is it possible that there's so many variables here that the week could go horribly wrong?**

TOM KITE: Oh, it will go horribly wrong for some. I can guarantee that. Any time you play a golf course like this -- but you know, the thing you have to understand is that a golf course like this separates the field. We play a lot of golf courses with big greens, everybody shoots low. Big wide fairways, everybody shoots low. Nobody separates themselves. I mean it's whoever makes a couple of putts.

Here, you have a chance to really, if you put up a good score like what I shot today, or what Eduardo has had the first couple of days, you have a chance to really separate yourself from the field. And you're unbelievably rewarded for being able to negotiate and get around that golf course, maneuver around that golf course and not have any disasters happen.

I think with all -- well, we would most of us would 20 times rather play a golf course like that, that separates the field than to play one that's just you know where everybody can shoot a good score. You'll have some that will disagree with me, but quite honestly, I can assure you that the top players on our TOUR welcome golf courses like this.

When you look -- look at the leaderboard. Those are the names you want up there. You want to see Eduardo, you want to see scenic price, you want to see Crenshaw, you want to see the top players playing well in a tournament like this.

**Q. You were here several years ago with --**

TOM KITE: This is the first time I've ever been here.

**Q. I thought you were here --**

TOM KITE: Even though I was quoted as saying that the third hole was the hardest short par-4 I have seen -- I came down here when the golf course was under construction to see it, but I did not get picked for the Ryder Cup, I finished I think 11th or 12th in the points and was not picked. And so the first time that I actually played the golf course was on Monday.

**Q. I was under the impression you had**

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TOM KITE: I've been quoted as saying that the third hole is the hardest short par-4 in America or in the world, but until Monday I had never seen it, so that's a fictitious quote dreamed up by somebody.

**Q. Is it the hardest par-4 --**

TOM KITE: It's a hard par-4, there's no question about it. No, I had not seen the golf course until Monday.

KELLY ELBIN: Tom, you only had 27 putts today versus 32 anything in particular for the four putts.

TOM KITE: Well, I hit it closer for sure and obviously getting a chip in every once in awhile helps like I did on No. 11. But I putted very, very poorly yesterday, especially on the back nine. I was, it wasn't great on Thursday, but it was very poor yesterday and the way I've been putting, that's been a surprise.

So this is more like what I've been expecting, but I really had a tough time getting the speed of the greens. I kept knocking the putts past the hole. That paspalum, it doesn't look fast, but if you catch the putts especially downhill, downwind, my goodness, they have got some pace to them. And the ball just keeps rolling out more than I was anticipating.

**Q. What I was somewhat referring to previously was the potential of this course to have wind at that that's nearly unplayable, balls plugging in bunkers and people taking unplayable lies, wind blowing some sand out of bunkers?**

TOM KITE: Well, yeah, it's going to do that. If the wind blows, I mean you're going to get some strange occurrences here. It's stuff that we see a lot of times over at the British Open. It's just stuff that you don't see very often here.

Especially during Major Championship season. In the summertime everything is usually benign, if anything you get a thunder storm, it softens up the golf course and makes it play easier. This is a welcome change of pace.

Whistling Straights. You hope that the field staff does a great job and like I said, I think Kerry Haigh does as fine a job as anybody in the business in terms of setting up the golf course fairly. He challenges us, but he doesn't go over the edge. And some would probably say that Kerry may set it up a little too easy in some cases. I'm sure some people didn't want to see any red

numbers here at Kiawah this week. And so the fact that there were six people shooting under par and maybe a few more today because the wind is down a little bit, you know, that probably ticks a few people off.

But I think that Kerry does a great job and yeah, you can criticize the bunkers, if there's one criticism to this golf course it's not the design of the bunkers, but the maintenance of the bunkers, that soft sandy face. That can be tough. If the ball sticks up in there, obviously it's an unplayable lie then. That's just bad luck.

But, you know, in America it seems like we keep trying to take luck out of the game. And this is, you know, they fill in the creek in front of 13 at Augusta. So you never have the opportunity like Curtis Strange had when his ball went in there and he had a chance to play it out, he got it on the sandbar and he was able to play it out. Sometimes you get lucky, sometimes you don't. That's part of the game. They fill it in, they take all the luck out, takes all the fun out of the game. There's nothing more exciting in my mind than a shot that hits and starts trickling either coming back away from the hole or going toward the hole, and the shot seems to take a minute and a half before from the time you strike it until it finally stops rolling. Man, that's exciting. Everybody's on the edge of their seat, waiting to see where it's going to finish. I personally like that stuff. I consequently I like Pete Dye as an architect, because he builds it in. Not everybody will agree with me. And that's their opinion.

**Q. I'm writing Myrtle Beach and you guys haven't been there for about seven years?**

TOM KITE: Yeah, I wish we still had that tournament there. That was good.

**Q. The question I had was, is this a different TOUR now than it was seven years ago, does it have a different feel to it?**

TOM KITE: The Champions Tour is strong right now. We are in the midst of an absolute upswing that I think is going to go on for many many years. I'm unbelievably excited. I wish I was turning 50 right now coming on to the Champions Tour, because I think it is fantastic. Is it ever going to get back to what it was when Jack and Arnold and Lee and Chi Chi and Gary were winning every tournament? I don't know. But it's certainly way ahead of where it was when we were on a business channel that nobody could find us. And we have got great names. I mean quite honestly, I don't want to take a slap at the PGA TOUR, but you got about four or five names on the PGA

TOUR and other than that you got a bunch of people that nobody knows. Even if you follow the game. If you want to follow the name players that you know, that you have heard of, that have won tournaments, this is where you come watch. I mean this field, you go down this list of the guys that are playing here, and it's a very impressive lineup of guys that have got great resumes. Are they past their prime? Yeah. We know that. But can they still play? You're darn right. And are they fun to watch and will they acknowledge a crowd when they make a putt, will they smile every now and then? Darn right.

I think this is a, I think the Champions Tour is quite honestly, is a whole lot more fun than the PGA TOUR right now. I mean we don't have Tiger and we don't have Phil, but other than that, we're doing okay.

And the LPGA, you know, they have got some issues too. They have got some great names, but a lot of them are named Kim and Lee. And you know, when all the players that are winning on the LPGA or on the PGA TOUR are foreign, and you're an American audience, you want to see some American players win, this is the place to come.

So, yeah, I think the Champions Tour is on the upswing and I think that the upswing is going to last quite awhile. The excitement out here is growing with every day. It's really good stuff.

KELLY ELBIN: Tom Kite, ladies and gentlemen.

TOM KITE: Thank you all so much. I hope to see y'all tomorrow.

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