

August 9, 2008



Oakland Hills Country Club ~ Bloomfield Township, Mich.

Hole #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Out	Total
Yardage	435	529	198	446	490	387	449	491	257	3,682	462	423	593	191	501	401	406	238	498	3,713	7,395
Par	4	5	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	35	4	4	5	3	4	4	4	3	4	35	70
Score																					

TAPED INTERVIEW WITH:

PAUL AZINGER

PAUL AZINGER: Hard course. I played the back nine the last two days ten over. Played the front nine 2-over. I mean, it's just really, really hard. I made two bogeys from the middle of the fairway on 10 and 11, and you know that just kills you.

And then I reached 12 in two and didn't get up-and-down, and that just murders you because there's not many chances. It's difficult to know what the strategy is. I don't know if it's bomb it as far as you can or get in the fairway, I don't know. The greens are so difficult. I think it's the hardest course – for me, it's the hardest course I've ever played.

Q. Can you tell if it's been watered today?

PAUL AZINGER: It seems a little softer, but it's early, so I don't know for sure if it's going to stay. The overcast might help. You might see some decent scores. I think it's doable. It's not unfair. It's just really, really hard. I mean, there are some unfair situations you can get in, for sure. It's not real golf when you hit it right and you're on the green on 17 and you're to the right. Nothing you can do. I don't think you can keep a putt really on the green anywhere near the hole.

Q. Surprising, do you usually expect a different setup at the PGA?

PAUL AZINGER: The golf course is just the way it is. If it dries out, it's just going to be so severe.

PGA I would say usually gets it right. I think they do the most fair, best setup of all the majors. But I think the golf course is just so hard. I mean, I see guys complaining and there's plenty of places you can't get close to the flag. But you've got to know par is a good score on those holes.

I don't think it's unfair. I just think it's really, really hard.

Q. You've got a guy that you were looking at for the team, kind of a hard week here; do you just toss that out?

PAUL AZINGER: Doesn't mean anything. This isn't the Ryder Cup week. We have three weeks to go. I want a guy who is confident, and if the guy's confidence is shattered when he left here, join the club. (Laughter).

Q. Of the guys that you know that are most likely to make the team right now, what kind of setup at Valhalla do you think would be most beneficial for them?

PAUL AZINGER: I actually talked to Charles Howell today about whether to have it set up really, really easy or really, really hard. There's a little something inside me that says either one could work. It's really interesting when you look at the board and you look at the history of the U.S.

Open and you look at the history of the PGA Championship, and it seems like the more difficult it is, the better off -- the more Americans show up.

But at the same time, I think that when you've got a bunch of guys coming in and playing well, you want to give them a chance to play golf. And so it's kind of a Catch 22; you know, what's better, really, really hard and hope for the best, or you set it up maybe a little easier and say, you know what, my guys are playing well, I'm going to let them play golf.

Here, you're not really playing golf as much as you're kind of just hanging in there. You can't play golf here from the rough this week. You just chop it out, and then you play from the fairway after you've chopped it out. I think truly playing golf is scrambling. I think the most exciting shot in golf is a recovery shot and there's not a lot of recovery shot hope here. If you're in the bunker, you can't really hit a good shot out of the bunker; you have to lay up. And if you're in the rough, you can't hit a good shot either.

Q. If a guy gets on a roll --

PAUL AZINGER: You have to realize if you set it up easy and their guys are playing worse -- it's difficult. Basically it doesn't really matter. I don't think it matters much. I think whichever team is playing the best comes out on top, whether it's really hard or really easy or somewhere in between.

So you can look, if there's an edge that you can get or gain, you look for it, but I don't know what it is.

Q. Probably going to need some birdies to get the crowd behind you, too.

PAUL AZINGER: We need to win holes. Got to win holes.

Q. With the lack of European winners in this championship since 1930, there are 13 Europeans who made the cut out of the 73.

PAUL AZINGER: We have 73 Europeans here?

Q. No, 73 made the cut and 13 made the cut, but Australians and South Africans combined are 15. Is it a global game more?

PAUL AZINGER: If I could sharpen up my IQ, I would figure that one out, but I'm stuck with it right where it is. I really don't know the answer.

The only thing I can think is generally the PGA Championship is really, really hot, and maybe that's a factor. I don't really know. I don't know.

Q. Do you envision your relationship with the team that week; do you envision being inspirational?

PAUL AZINGER: If they need to be inspired by me, then they are hurting. I don't know. I mean, if I'm an inspiration, I'm happy to be that. I'm not looking to motivate or inspire. Those guys are inspired -- is "inspire" a word?

Q. I think it is now.

PAUL AZINGER: It rhymed, though. It totally rhymed. (Laughter).

I think that they are going to be really motivated and they are going to be inspired to play well, and it's not really the captain's responsibility to do that.

Q. I remember you were very emotional and inspirational when you played on those teams.

PAUL AZINGER: I mean, not really. If I was a passionate player and got into some great matches -- I was fortunate. I always seemed to draw Europe's best players. I always played Seve, Jose, always, it seemed like, and I always played Faldo, Woosie or Montgomerie, and in singles, I played Seve and Jose and Faldo and Niclas Fasth one time and for the most part every one of my matches was always coincidentally against marquis names. Those were spirited matches, a lot of them were.

Q. You talked about having Kenny on the team; what does the dynamic do if J.B. were to keep it up and you get two Kentucky guys? What do you think the frenzy would be like?

PAUL AZINGER: You can only hope. It would be out of control. It's going to be great. I'm confident that the Kentucky crowd is going to be well behaved and extremely raucous and supportive of the team, and I'm relying on them to be our 13th man.

I think the crowd it makes a difference and I'm sure the players are going to want to go out and show off in front of their people and the crowd.

Q. Being the underdog, can you feed off of that in this competition?

PAUL AZINGER: I think playing the underdog role is not going to be an act; it's going to be a reality. I might play on that reality a little bit. (Laughter).

Q. How were the crowds out there

today?

PAUL AZINGER: They are good. There's not a whole lot to cheer about. They are a vocal crowd. It's hard to win tournaments in the last couple of groups. People are always shouting stuff sometimes, sometimes stupid stuff and sometimes stuff they mean well and all the best intentions, but that's part of what makes it difficult. You know, you hear it all the time.

It's a quiet arena with bursts of chatter and explosions of whatever. You hear people all the time say stuff, and you have to just kind of carry on. It's going to be really difficult for whoever is in the lead today to walk around and just hear everybody screaming support and all that.

There's not a lot of experience on the board in this situation at this point. I'm just telling you, it's like survival of the fittest out there. The front nine is not that difficult but the back nine is really, really hard.

I can't say enough, it's the hardest course I've played. I've missed the last few -- I didn't see Winged Foot. The thing to me is like Winged Foot and these other courses, Bethpage Black, Shinnecock, they had to be tricked up to be really hard day-in and day-out. I think this course is hard day-in and day-out just because of the greens. Oakmont's hard every day. This is hard every day. This is truly hard.

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