

GEOFF OGILVY



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INTERVIEW WITH GEOFF OGILVY.

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

WEDNESDAY 2ND DECEMBER 2009

AT THE MEDIA CENTRE, NSW GOLF CLUB.

FACILITATOR: Let's welcome Geoff here. You played today. What was the course like today? Completely different?

GEOFF OGILVY: Yeah, I didn't actually, luckily enough I didn't play yesterday. I sent a few messages out to the golf course yesterday morning and asked how it was and everyone mentioned how it was so I decided that it probably was going to be counterproductive to play a practice run yesterday so I didn't.

Today was really nice, probably a normal south-west day at New South Wales, if there is a normal day out here. Really playable, the course is in great shape. I quite enjoyed my round. I had lots of good shots, a few bad ones so I understand it's going to blow north east for at least the next couple of days so it's not really an accurate representation of how it's going to play the next couple of days. But it was an enjoyable morning in New South Wales.

FACILITATOR: Terrific. Questions please.

QUESTION: Geoff, Shanghai HSBC, a welcome return to form there at the weekend?

GEOFF OGILVY: Yes, I played well on the weekend in Shanghai. Yes, it was good.

QUESTION: You started the year with a bang, like last year again. Then you wandered off after the US Open?

GEOFF OGILVY: Golf's a hard game. I think I obviously started, that's probably the best period of golf I've ever had from this time last year till the end of March at least. It kind of hung around a little bit until the US Open-ish

and then I played rubbish for a while. Then started playing better again in Shanghai.

I think golf is hardest when you're trying really hard and when you have been playing really well and then you don't, your expectations are higher than maybe they were before and you try a little harder to get back and maybe I tried a bit hard and then you end up getting worse. Like golf is like that, you can have good periods and bad periods.

I didn't play like I wanted to. It's a shame that three of four major of the year were at the period I wasn't playing my best. I think I'm a better player now because of having a struggle in the middle of the year and I'll be a better player next year because I think I worked out a few things about myself. I didn't like to play poorly in the middle of the year but maybe you have to have a stretch like that to realise the error of your ways every now and then.

QUESTION: What did you work out?

QUESTION: What did you feel about yourself?

GEOFF OGILVY: Oh, just how to practice and how to approach it. They don't mean anything if you explain to anything else. Little intangible things about how to approach preparation for a tournament perhaps. How to react when I'm not hitting it as well as I want to. About the amount of time I would apportion to different parts of practice, whether it be on the golf course or on the range or chipping green.

And continuing to learn to stroke my ego, if you like, as opposed to cut myself down in your own head. You know what I mean? I think a little bit of that happens in my head. A lot of golfers do it to themselves and your confidence just slowly disappears when you tell yourself you're hopeless, you know? Which I don't all the time and it's getting better but you still do it when you have a bad period and you have been playing great. So little things like that.

I mean not anything externally that would be visible but it's just all part of the bigger picture of golf I guess, learning yourself rather than learning the game. Does that make sense?

QUESTION: Will you put those lessons into practice next year do you think Geoff, what you've learnt this year?

GEOFF OGILVY: Well hopefully, otherwise they weren't very good lessons or I'm a bad learner. As I said, I think I had a really good period at the start of the year and a probably below average - I was above average for a few months and then I was probably below average probably for a few months and I think both of those periods I got quite a lot out of and I think because of that I have, to start using language I don't like, I have more tools, I guess, to approach a year. To hope to have a more consistent type of - play as well as I know I can more often anyway.

QUESTION: So why was the turn-around this year?

GEOFF OGILVY: My turn-around probably was at the President's Cup and you've heard 100 players in here tell you before "Oh, I've really been playing well, it just took a while to show on the score cards". That's kind of true.

I played really well against Stricker. I played quite poorly the first couple of days. I played well really Stricker and a couple of light bulbs didn't go off but there was a couple of little things that clicked into my head that I felt better about leaving there. So I had a couple of weeks to kind of think about it, come back here. I went to Singapore and I didn't play very well but I felt good about the way I hit the ball.

Then Shanghai, started making cuts on the weekend and you have a couple of good scores in a row. I felt really good at Kingston Heath actually. I hit the ball really well, I just didn't make any.

Then Dubai I played great. So it was just a gradual process probably and I think the catalyst was probably close to championship President's Cup kind of time, and it took a few tournaments to show up.

QUESTION: Is this more like an Australian golf tournament now after Melbourne?

GEOFF OGILVY: It's more what we're used to. That was a different kind of environment that we've played in Australia before, for a while at least. I've never played in an environment like that in Australia. This is back to normal. But that was a fun tournament. That was pretty well organised and it was fun to see that many people that excited about golf again.

So I wish I'd played better and it was enjoyable and it was five or six of the best days weather wise Melbourne has ever had in a row, it was incredible. Everything was text book about that week and it was a fun week. This is, like you said, back to normal, I guess, which is fine. I mean there's nothing wrong with normal, it's great.

This is the first Australian Open we've played around here, it's the first gold tournament I'm going to play around here so it's pretty exciting.

QUESTION: So is the confidence back to normal at the end of this week and how you like your chances this week?

GEOFF OGILVY: I think if I play like I did the last few weeks I played, I think I've every chance to do well. There's obviously some draw dependency out here, there could be a lopsided draw, nothing, you just pick the nature of playing against the ocean. The British Open has lopsided draws every year.

Hopefully you either get the right side of that or there isn't a lopsided draw and you play well and hit the right shots at the right time and hole a few putts, and I don't see a reason why - I'm playing well enough to do well anyway.

In Dubai I played really well but Lee Westwood beat me by about ten because he had the week of his life. You never know if someone's going to do that. I feel decent about my chances, yeah.

QUESTION: How do you feel about the wind?

GEOFF OGILVY: It's obviously that complete issue with this golf course. I mean dead still it's probably not - I mean there's some really challenging holes out there with no wind but most of the challenge comes from the wind. And holes that are easy today are impossible when it turns around to a north east and vice versa.

Like 15 to 16, one of them is going to be easy and one of them is going to be hard, or the other way around. You're never going to get them both easy and you're never getting them both hard. So I think it presents interesting challenges the way you play the golf course. Because the wind would tend to flip flop, it will be completely opposite, north-east or south-west most of the time, I guess.

You've almost got two different golf courses that you could have from morning afternoon too which adds a fun element. So you've really got to be smart, I guess, in the way you approach the game. This golf course, you can come unravelled pretty quick if you start spraying off the tee. I think if it gets really tough, I think conservative play off the tee to keep it out of the rubbish.

I understand that a couple under par might be a pretty good score today and just approach it like that. I think the course is a stunning place to be but it adds to the interest with the wind and the way it can vary.

QUESTION: So Geoff, is it more a case of surviving the course or attacking those holes which are deemed easy?

GEOFF OGILVY: Well it's a bit of both. Today the 18th hole is a driver and four on par 5, so you hope to have a birdie. I mean you could make a 3 and you hope to have a birdie.

If it blows the other way, and 17 is just a little nine on par 3, but if it blows the other way it's a knock down 5 on and try again on the green and the driver 3 wood 9 on hole 18.

So when they get down wind and easy, you attack them with an eye on that could all go wrong, but you are attempting to make birdies obviously. And when it's 15s into the wind, your mission is to make 4 and get it done any way you can.

So I guess the nice thing about this golf course is that it's never going to be completely unplayable. Like there's always going to be some holes that give you a chance and there's going to be some holes that don't give you much chance. Depending on the wind direction, depending on what those holes are. So there's always going to be holes out there that you can birdie and there's always going to be holes that are really hard to make par, regardless of the wind direction, which I think what makes it interesting.

QUESTION: Geoff, you said you haven't played this course before. How would you rate the other venues?

GEOFF OGILVY: Rate in what way? Is it good?

QUESTION: In terms of --

GEOFF OGILVY: Good. It's obviously a stunning place to be. We've played Australian Opens everywhere now, it's right up there with one of the cooler places we play golf tournaments.

I've never played an Australian Open at Royal Melbourne but Royal Melbourne would be my favourite course in Australia. Kingston Heath is always a great tournament to play. This would sit right up there with that, Metropolitan, Kingston Heath, Royal Melbourne, it's right up there in that group, which are the best golf courses. I mean part of the best golf courses in the world too, not just Australia. This is right up there with the best.

QUESTION: Being here this week, does it surprise you that you haven't played this course before?

GEOFF OGILVY: Well yes or no. They haven't played it for ten years. At that point I think it was the PGA and I think I was still an amateur when it was PGA so I couldn't play it. They haven't been here since I've basically turned pro so it's not amazingly surprising.

QUESTION: Maybe the European events, were you on PGA tour then, were you?

GEOFF OGILVY: No, I wouldn't have been, I can't remember. Do you know what year that was?

QUESTION: In the early 2000s.

GEOFF OGILVY: 2001 was my first year in the US so if it was from then on, I would have been, would have been in the US. I played that tournament at The Lakes. Was it after that?

QUESTION: You played here one year. I think it was after The Lakes. Was it Paul Casey?

GEOFF OGILVY: Yes, if didn't play I must have been in the US because if I was in Europe, I would have played it

QUESTION: I think I would have been 2001.

QUESTION: Jack, you're the highest ranked golfer. Are you feeling pressure as favourite?

GEOFF OGILVY: Not really. It's a tournament that I come to and I mean I want to win every golf tournament that I play, but this one is obviously right up there with ones that we all want to win. I mean the Australian is pretty high up there for us.

I don't really feel any pressure. There's a lot of good players here. As I said, if I play well, I feel like I've got a pretty good chance to be up there. If I don't

play well, I won't be. No real added pressure. I would just like to play really well, you know? Golf is more enjoyable when you play well.

QUESTION: You mentioned Tiger earlier. We've heard all that's gone on, have you got an opinion?

GEOFF OGILVY: What's going on?

QUESTION: Tiger --

GEOFF OGILVY: No real opinion. It's an interesting situation he finds himself in. Hopefully it goes away and we just get back to watching him play golf.

QUESTION: You've played a lot with him and around him. Does he ever give any indication that he struggles with the fame, the spotlight?

GEOFF OGILVY: No, he seems pretty comfortable with it actually, to be honest with you. It's an unbelievable life that he has. He's been in a fish bowl since before he turned pro, or the instant he turned pro at least.

I wouldn't want that type of existence that he's got. It's pretty tough and he's obviously finding out how big a star he is in the last week or so, interesting.

QUESTION: Given that it's flowing from the south for the three days leading into the tournament, it's going to turn around tomorrow, how much learning are people going to be doing on this course if they're not very familiar with it tomorrow?

GEOFF OGILVY: It's a different golf course completely. I think most guys have heard the weather reports so they're probably out there looking at that with that in mind. With an understanding of I'm not going to be hitting 3 iron if it's 2 tomorrow. I'm going to be hitting the driver as hard as I can and vice versa, because that's the sort of flips you have.

16, for example, was a driver 2 iron for me today. Tomorrow it could be a 2 iron 8 iron. I mean it just reverses the whole thing. I think most guys have heard the weather forecast now. It's not ideal to have the wind, to have a practice round three days in a row one direction, especially quite a strong one direction and then flip around.

It's way less than ideal but most guys have played a lot of golf tournaments out here and they're fairly aware, if they've looked at the forecast, and most guys look at a forecast of golf week. They'll have an idea that it's going to go the other way and they'll be out there with a slight eye on okay, what would I do if it's the other way around?

I think we can all sort of visualise how it's going to play. Again, in practice it's in a whole different thing. You actually have to hit the shots that you haven't hit and your lines all change and your club selection changes. So it's a different - you're at a disadvantage if you've never played here before in both winds but, as I said, they're all professionals. They're all pretty good at working all that out.

QUESTION: Would that make it one of the more difficult Australian Opens you've ever played in?

GEOFF OGILVY: It could well be. If it was like today, it was a tough course. Anything close to par or just under would have been a pretty good score today. If you had that four days in a row, that adds up to not just under par. If it was like yesterday, from what I understand 80 would have been a good score. It was basically unplayable. It could go from a tricky one to easily the hardest, it's all weather dependent out here.

QUESTION: I was just going to say not once have you been asked that question you've been asked in the last ten years. When are you going to win an Australian?

GEOFF OGILVY: No, it's nice. Obviously it was very nice to win at Coolum last year. I quite enjoyed it so hopefully I can do it again.

QUESTION: After the sort of long year, is it harder to still stay up by this time of year, or is motivation easy when you come to the Australian Open?

GEOFF OGILVY: The Australian Open is generally easy. It's definitely a long year for us. Golf is less of a season, off season sport now. It's more of a 52 week a year thing and take your breaks when you can.

Have two or three little patches in the year maybe you can take two or three weeks off and get away, which is what I've tried to do. It's been quite a full on schedule at the end of this year so definitely a bit physically weary I guess, but not really. The Australian Open, as soon as you come in and you get to the Australian Open, it's one that gets you going more than nearly any golf tournament that we play anywhere. So yes and no, but the Australian Open definitely gets us ready to go.

QUESTION: Geoff, you mentioned about the intensity that you were playing in your head and being hard on your yourself. Is there any person or any other player that told you to be easier? Is that an Australian trait as well to be hard on ourselves?

GEOFF OGILVY: No specific player really. I mean I assume most people have a fair understanding of when they're being counterproductive mentally and when they're not, I hope. It's not always very easy to admit to yourself, you know? But it's a gradual thing, it's part of playing this much golf, getting older and just very, very slowly working out that it's not productive.

QUESTION: There's no-one that said "relax Geoff"?

GEOFF OGILVY: Plenty of times from 13 onwards, but no specific instance. It was just a gradual working out that it's nicer to be nice to yourself.

QUESTION: Geoff, how do you gauge the success of the year? Is it world ranking, money lists, wins?

GEOFF OGILVY: A few different ways, I guess. I mean obviously you want to win. If you told me in Christmas last year you'll win two big golf tournaments and make this much money I would have been quite happy. But then after the start, I got to third in the world, won a couple of big tournaments, was really looking forward to the rest of the year and then it was kind of a left down after that.

I feel both ways about the year. I don't really - I have an eye on the world rankings but I don't really go to bed at night obsessing about them. I just figure if I win golf tournaments, that will take care of itself.

The periods that I've played well, I've got right up there in the rankings. I just want to play like I know how I can play. I know that sounds so cheesy but golf is enjoyable when you're playing like you know how you can play. When you do you that, you do well and you enjoy golf more and you look forward to tournaments.

When you start playing bad, you don't want to play next week and you get tired. I mean nobody likes doing something that they know they can do better than doing it poorly. I mean all you guys, if you write a rubbish article, you're like it's not enjoyable. If you write a great one, you go hang on, this is why I do this. That's the same with golf and I just want to do that.

I just want to have more periods in my career that are like because that's why you play it. If that happens, then you win more golf tournaments so the good stuff follows. So if I can be happy with the way I play, I sit down at the end of the year and I'm happy. I could win three golf tournaments but miss 20 cuts, there'd be some happiness because I won golf tournaments, but there would be some - because for twenty of the tournaments I've probably been grumpy and not enjoyed it.

Obviously I want to win golf tournaments and that's the whole goal, to just play like I know I can play. That's when golf is enjoyable to me.

FACILITATOR: Last question please.

QUESTION: Do you have you have a better handle on that, having had the year that you've had?

GEOFF OGILVY: Slowly. Yeah, I mean every year I think I've got better the year after in some aspects and I think this year was a really good year to get something out of it because there was a really, really good patch and then a pretty average patch.

I think you learn the most out of your really good patches and your really bad patches. If you just have an average, normal year, then there's nothing really, less to learn from. But the good patch you can learn from and the bad patch you can learn from. So I think this is a year, if I am smart, I'll get quite a lot out of.

FACILITATOR: Thank you Geoff.

END OF TRANSCRIPT

