

# GREG NORMAN



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INTERVIEW WITH GREG NORMAN.

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

SATURDAY 5TH DECEMBER 2009

AT THE MEDIA CENTRE, NSW GOLF CLUB.

FACILITATOR: Well fabulous to have you here. Shame you're not playing. I'm sure you feel the same.

GREG NORMAN: I know, it is a shame Kathy, and it's great to be here. Obviously to walk into a golf club without having your golf clubs is probably the first time in my career and I was hoping to be here. The surgeon was hoping I'd be here before we went into surgery. When he got in there he realised there was a lot more damage in there so unfortunately you can't control that. Here we are.

FACILITATOR: But recovery is going well now?

GREG NORMAN: Yes, recovery is doing very well. I can't swing a golf club or pick up a golf club till the third week of February, fourth week of February, so it's frustrating. I can't do the things I want to do obviously. I don't have to wear a sling any more but it's still frustrating and a little bit debilitating to some degree.

FACILITATOR: But you're here as an ambassador and at 1.30 you're doing a clinic with the kids, with Charlie?

GREG NORMAN: Yes, I'm actually looking forward to that. Giving back in a lot of ways, it actually allows you, when you don't play a golf tournament it actually gives you a lot more time to give back. You don't really realise that until you're out of it. When you're in the tournament, even like meetings last night and meetings this morning, stuff like that, you haven't actually got the time to do it. And the clinic is part of that.

FACILITATOR: Questions please?

QUESTION: Greg, let's get straight into yesterday. I know you probably didn't see anything about yesterday, you know this course intimately, you're a member here, you've done some redesign work here, what speed would you have had the greens running at? Given the conditions we get on this

golf course, what speed would you have had the greens running at for a national championship?

GREG NORMAN: Well first of all tough for me to comment on that because I wasn't here. I didn't see it on television. I don't know what the greens were running at going into wind.

QUESTION: Ten and a half.

GREG NORMAN: I do know these greens are fairly flat so I do know these conditions out here can get very, very tough indeed. But for me to make a comment, I don't know where the pin positions were, I don't know if the balls were rolling off the green or not rolling off the green, so I really can't involved in that. I wish I could but I'm completely ignorant to anything that went on here yesterday.

FACILITATOR: Next question.

QUESTION: How much work did you do here Greg, or were you involved in?

GREG NORMAN: We've done quite a bit. We've done the 1st hole, the 2sd hole, the 18th. I'm looking forward to getting out and taking a look at 18 because I didn't see the end result. Getting some feedback from some of the players. Some of the sandy areas, the waste areas we recreated between 4 and 8. So it's an on-going process.

I've seen it on television the first day when I got here, turned it on to see what it looked like. The golf course looks in fantastic shape and reading some of the comments from the players and hearing from them, and some of the caddies, they're all kind of praising the golf course, outside of what happened yesterday.

QUESTION: Are you doing any on-going work here?

GREG NORMAN: I've got a meeting with some of the powers to be in the golf club here right after this meeting.

QUESTION: Were you pleased when you heard it was going to be held here the Open?

GREG NORMAN: Very much so. I've always been a huge fan of New South Wales, I always call it the Pebble Beach of Australia. It needed a little bit of uptake, to tell you the truth, time had passed it by to some degree. But just from a pure golf course, just a few minor changes to this can really elevate the golf course into one of the great golf courses of this country. Just the scenery, the vista, the proximity to downtown Sydney and even proximity to the airport. You don't find too many locations like this in the world and that's why to me to be a member here it's an honour, number one.

For me to be involved in kind of bringing it back to life to whatever degree they want to bring it, over a slow period of time, it means a lot to me and I think the Australian Open being here is another feather in their cap. You will

get a great winner here because the type of golf course is going to produce good golf and you can see with Stewie and Adam Scott up the top on the lead board is starting to pay dividends for them.

QUESTION: Greg, talking about Adam Scott, you must be the greatest motivational expert of all time?

GREG NORMAN: Why?

QUESTION: Selecting him for the President's Cup and you've seen his form since, and at the President's Cup?

GREG NORMAN: Well yes, I think from Adam's perspective, just looking at it from a player's point of view, I only did look at it from a player's point of view. What happened behind the scenes in somebody's private life is their world. Adam might have been under a little bit of stress and duress, might have been affecting his game for whatever reason. I don't know anything about that but I have total belief in him as a player.

When I spoke to Adam quite a few times leading up to the President's Cup I needed him to understand that and I needed him to understand if you're going to be on the final list, one or two to be picked for the President's Cup, are you committed? And if you are committed, are you committed to getting yourself back in the position that you were number 3 player in the world.

So I believed in him. He just needed to believe in himself and just get refocused a little bit. President's Cup did that. I know he didn't score the points that he really wanted to score there but his play was exceptional. He ran into a couple of buzz saws during the matches but now he's starting to show and I'm happy for him because all it is is a confidence factor, getting himself back, his feet underneath him on the golf course and he's showing that right now. So I hope he keeps it going. And I hope Stewie keeps it going too because he hasn't had a great year either.

FACILITATOR: More questions?

QUESTION: Now that your life is quietening down, are you turning your design work more to China?

GREG NORMAN: I've opened an office in China in the last couple of months, yes, I think there's great opportunities out there, not just the golf courses I've inspected, but a lot of my other businesses as well. We've had opportunities to bring parts of my company into China in a fairly substantial way over the years.

So yes, it's going to be on the radar screen. I think all of Asia is on the radar screen, east of the India, India included. Middle East is not going to go away. Dubai is just an anomaly, they'll get that sorted out over a period of time. All the other emirates over there are going to be fine in a period of time. The Middle East is going to be good.

The only laggard really in the world of golf is America and it's going to be a laggard for a while. Everywhere else is picking up steam and credit's freeing

up, golf course design jobs are starting to come our way a little more on a regular basis. Projects which had really slowed down since September '08 are now starting to be brought back on-line. So activity is happening everywhere else outside America.

QUESTION: Don't forget Brazil around and the Olympic Games, you've got a couple of projects there, haven't you?

GREG NORMAN: Got a couple of projects in Brazil, yes. Who ends up hosting it, what golf course I'm saying, for 2016 nobody knows but we're there, we have an opportunity. We building one right next to Rio so we'll just see what happens.

QUESTION: Haven't you got a leg in there with the Brazilian Olympic committee?

GREG NORMAN: One of the owners, yes, he's part of the Brazilian Olympic committee. That doesn't mean to say anything is going to happen.

QUESTION: You stalked about Adam and Stewart, Australian golf really needs these guys back up contending every week, 10, 20 in the rankings, Australian golf needs them back up?

GREG NORMAN: Absolutely. I think the success of what Tiger Woods did at the Masters is indicative of what the Australian public and you guys are screaming out for. We need that and it's there. Australian support for the game of golf has always been there and it's proof in the pudding with the success of the Tiger coming to town.

I think the Australian players should take stock of that and realise okay, let's just pick up, our responsibility is back here and help them with the game of golf. I'm so glad to see Geoff Ogilvy and Stuart Appelby and Adam Scott here this week and all the other players who that have come over.

So I think they know it, they know the importance of it. Just the scheduling sometimes is so crammed at the end of the year, the fall season, it's tough for them to get a definitive direction on where they want to go because they're getting pulled in a lot of different ways.

QUESTION: You brought up Tiger Woods name, what do you reckon, dodge that one?

GREG NORMAN: Dodge that one?

QUESTION: About what's happened in the last week or so?

GREG NORMAN: That's his private life. I'm not going to go there with that one.

QUESTION: Once your shoulder recovers, how many competitive golf would you like to play this year, next year?

GREG NORMAN: That will totally depend on how quickly I can get back. Just the sheer process of having to go back and start working out in February to get strong again. Obviously my golf muscles are completely gone away to a degree so I have to get those back. That will take six to eight weeks from the end of February and I really don't want to get a heavy practice schedule in that time period because my muscles won't be ready for it. So what comes first, the chicken or the egg?

I've really got to get back into a physical conditioning first and like I said, that's six to eight weeks. Then I've got to start practising, so there's probably another four to six weeks. So you know, it takes you into July basically. I really cannot give any idea what's going to happen, how it's going to happen. I know it will come back practising. I know I want to get back.

Believe it or not the work he did on my shoulder I'm actually looking forward to seeing the difference with my golf swing because I know my shoulder was pretty bad for quite a long period of time, to see the difference that he did on some of the reconstructive work. Even to this moment in time it's not doing anything. I know with my golf swing it's probably going to be a little bit tighter and better actually.

QUESTION: You've committed to the next two Opens so the desire to compete is still there, isn't it, just in time?

GREG NORMAN: Absolutely. I miss not being out there to tell you the truth. It's always in your blood. Watching it on television, New South Wales Golf Club, there's no question. Even though the weather conditions were pretty tough, you want to be out there because you kind of enjoy those type of conditions. So yes, I want to get back, I want to play. Just to the extent of what my shoulder is going to allow me to is going to the barometer.

QUESTION: Peter Senior topped the qualifier for the Championships. Obviously you're very familiar with Peter over the years. How would you expect him to perform on the Championships?

GREG NORMAN: Peter would do very well. He's been a great performer, consistent performer ever since I've been playing golf against him, since '76, '77, '78, that's time period. So I would expect him to go out there and do very well for himself.

QUESTION: What about the other end of the scale, what are the young Aussies who have caught your eye playing over in the States?

GREG NORMAN: Nitties, I've been watching him quite a bit actually. Very impressed with his game. I think the fortunate part about Australia, we do have a great wave of players coming through. But on a regular basis, James would be the one that I'd be really keeping an eye on. I even thought about him for the President's Cup to tell you the truth. So there are players out there, we've got plenty of good hooks to hang our hats on, that's for sure.

QUESTION: At the New South Wales Open Vintage, was it pleasing? And Nitties performed well there?

GREG NORMAN: Yes, I think the feedback I got, everybody loved the golf occurs. That was another one that I was enticed and thought about coming down and playing because of being financially involved in there as well as building the golf course. So the feedback I got was good.

QUESTION: And a lot of local boys did well there?

GREG NORMAN: Yes.

QUESTION: Did you expect that?

GREG NORMAN: You'd always expect that. The local boys are really the majority of the field anyway so you'd expect that.

QUESTION: And the Pro Am Format and could you have gone around with Gregory?

GREG NORMAN: Yes, I think there's a lot of push for that type of format. I know we're talking about doing something like that in another part of the world and I think there's opportunities that are coming forth because the success of the ET&T has been out there on the forefront.

There's so many great players, whether celebrities or whether they actresses or actors, or sportsmen and women, they love the game and it's not just here in Australia, it's all over the place. It's really starting to permeate all the way through. So we have to give them an avenue for the world to see how good they are. So just like pro celebrities are a perfect way of doing it.

QUESTIONS: Can I just get your take on the One Asia tour and what they're trying to achieve?

GREG NORMAN: Well that's a logical step. Asia has really got to be, from what I see just in the United States, the women, they're dominated by the majority of the Asians. So the media interest with that flows back, Y.E Yang winning the PGA championship, automatically flows back.

Asia is a coming back. Even in the third world countries we see we're building a lot of golf courses in Vietnam, for example. We're looking at golf courses in Malaysia right now, Asia, all the way into China and Korea. So that whole avenue is starting to grow.

There's places in China like Hainan Islands, they want to get more global exposure on a tourist so as you start looking forward, 10, 15 years time, you see how Asia is really going to starting to put together a pretty good format of tournaments. They have to date but they really expand out to something like 12 to 20 tournaments and it's never going to conflict with the United States. So I think it's a tremendous opportunity.

When China comes on-line, which it is, and the objection and enthusiasm of the nomination of golf in the Olympics, China in 10 or 15 years, by 2020 will have more golfers than the United States. So you know they're going to start producing some great players because athletically they have a great history of producing great athletes, no matter what they put their mind to.

So you can see China is going to start producing some great players, Korea doing that, Japan doing that. So with Ishi Kawa. So you can see where One Asia or something happening in this part of the world, it's so logical and it's starting to develop right now and I think that's great.

QUESTION: And they have lofty ambitions of eventually sort of rivaling the US and Europe. Do you think that's possible?

GREG NORMAN: America is struggling right now. We all know that. You guys read that and I think it's a bit of a false economy right there today, there will be some corrections taking place, even today.

From a PGA standpoint, I think they're got some interesting times ahead with TV renegotiation with their network deal, corporations. You know, you're not getting the \$12 million for your title sponsor or \$8 million for a title sponsor. So there are corrections taking place in America right now and those corrections will continue going forward. That gives the opportunity for a European tour or a One Asia tour or Japanese tour, or even down here to pick up the slack because look at the TV cameras? You're still playing on a global basis, whether it's out or Florida, New York or California. Here you are in Sydney Australia and it's being beamed around the world.

So for a corporation, you want to look for the best value yet. Everybody is trimming their marketing budget so they're going to go to the best place they see the best exposure, the best value that they've got for the way the economy's situated. And right now that's why America is looking and travelling to China, commissioners doing trips through Asia so tells you something. They're also looking abroad to help shore up the way their position is right now.

That's not a criticism for America, that's just a reality. It's the same in any business. My business is probably 85 percent global and 15 percent US. That's the reality of what's happening so you've got to make this transitional shift the way the economy dictates it and golf is doing that right now.

QUESTION: Greg, you said Tiger's personal life is his personal life. But is there a worry that his image will affect golf's image what's happening to him, given he's such a big part of the game?

GREG NORMAN: No, golf's got an image bigger than any individual so that's going to affect the game of gold. We all feel for him he's got to sort out his own personal issues.

QUESTION: Do you feel sorry for him given the amount of publicity he's getting?

GREG NORMAN: Hey, he's number one player in the world. Publicity is going to follow you no matter what you do, whether you win tournaments, lose tournaments and whatever happens.

FACILITATOR: Last questions please.

QUESTION: Is there any scope Greg or need to have an Australian mega tournament, like one of these ones big enough to attract all the big players from the top 10, top 20?

GREG NORMAN: I would like to say yes, I would like to do that. I would like to see that take place. But again it's the scheduling, the fall season. You have to give it a year or two to see how America next year flushes out with their schedule. See how the tournament sponsorship comes in at the end of next year. Maybe there is that opportunity, who knows.

The President's Cup obviously in 2011 is going to be a great catalyst for somebody to be book ending either one of them because you have good opportunities to bring them down. Americans don't like to travel as much as the rest the golfers because they're used to travel. So to get them down for just one week would be tough. Get them down for either two or three weeks might be great and who is the benefactor off that? The Australian Open, hopefully or maybe the Australian Masters, or whoever, or the Australian PGA, whatever it is. So there's an opportunity there to really accelerate something like you're saying via the President's Cup.

QUESTION: Speaking about the President's Cup, have you had a look at the condition of Royal Melbourne?

GREG NORMAN: I flew over it two days ago. They're redoing the fairways, redoing the greens so that's the only comment I can make on it.

QUESTION: No fears about how it will come up?

GREG NORMAN: In two years? No, no problem. It should be okay. I would imagine so.

FACILITATOR: Thank you, we'd like to thank Greg and thank you ladies and gentlemen.

END OF INTERVIEW.