

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: FRED COUPLES
Thursday, May 1, 2014



FRED COUPLES: I'm here playing the Houston Open, it's my favorite event. It kind of drives me nuts, to be honest with you.

Q. Do you still have a special affinity for playing in Houston?

FRED COUPLES: Yeah, I went to school here, Coach Williams was a perfect coach.

Q. Obviously a lot of disappointment to pull out of the Shell, so it's great to be able to come and back and play this tournament?

FRED COUPLES: Yeah, the Shell Open, I tweaked my back the week before it. And then with Augusta coming up, I told Tim, I said I'm not going to wait because if you go now, you can pick whoever you want, because otherwise it's the next guy in line so that's why I pulled out. But I want to play in the Shell one more time and I was hoping it was this year, but right now, you know --

Q. You were going to play this event regardless, though? It had nothing to do with not playing the Shell?

FRED COUPLES: No, no, I didn't come here last year because I got inducted in the Hall of Fame. No, I play in this every year barring an injury. That's what I do. So I'll play as much as I can and I try and feel good when I play because it's, you know, there's no reason to play --

Q. Play through pain?

FRED COUPLES: Yeah, correct, so you already know. That's the same answer I'll give you. It's no fun. It doesn't make any sense. I've been doing it for a long time and now I know. I don't skip tournaments just to stay home. If I'm not feeling 80, 90 percent, I can still play as long as I'm playing. For instance, if I hadn't played in three weeks and I practiced a little bit and I kind of tweaked my back and I was going to come play after a month off, I would probably take another week off. But if I've been swinging a club and I feel like I know what I'm doing, I can still come to a tournament and play pretty well with being 80 percent.

Q. I know you're mad at yourself with the way you finished the Masters, but it had to be a hell of a rush up until then.

FRED COUPLES: No, it was fun, it was fun. You know, there were a couple -- the 10th hole, actually the 8th hole I knocked it on in two and I three-putted, which would have put me at 4-under and I think they were 7 at the time. They had just, you know,

they had only played a few holes and I barely got it halfway to the hole. And then on No. 10, not going through the round, but beautiful second shot and it trickled past and I didn't putt it down close enough to two-putt. The toughest shot I had was on 11 and I just couldn't see trying to go to the right of the green and I tried to hit it off through the tree and cut it and off the straw I hit it fat. Other than that, you know, that took a lot out of my sails there. Then I kind of butchered the 15th hole with a mid-iron to the green.

Q. But you're still sitting there and you're still thinking, I can win this golf tournament?

FRED COUPLES: I'm thinking on the 8th hole, I'm trying to two-putt from 60 feet, that will put me right there. I've got some hard holes ahead of me but even making the turn but thinking, you know what, got nothing to lose if I can shoot 3-under par here. Instead, I shoot 5 over, so it was a little bit south.

Q. But it's got to tell you the game is in pretty good shape to even be having this conversation the last day at the Masters, right?

FRED COUPLES: Yeah. For me to single handedly, like, if I played the Shell Houston Open. I played two years ago because I didn't play last year, whatever it was, I played pretty damn good and I finished well back. And the year before that I had actually a pretty good shot at winning. I bogeyed the 17th hole. So I can still do it on occasion but it's got to be the right course. But at Augusta, it's the right course. I feel like I look forward to it. When January comes, you know, I'm not thinking -- I am thinking about it. I'm getting my game ready for that because for me it's a huge week.

Q. What about this course?

FRED COUPLES: This one I love. This is one of my favorite course that we used to play on, and now on the Champions Tour this is a very good -- I've heard the greens are like concrete, so I think that's a good thing. But you know, a lot things happen. We have good crowds, we play what I consider to be a really good golf course and usually you have to hit the ball well here to score. That's what we need.

Q. You do have the added thing of --

FRED COUPLES: From Houston, for sure. Thanks.