

**LEGENDS OF GOLF INTERVIEW:  
LEE TREVINO, JACK NICKLAUS AND GARY PLAYER**



**May 7, 2016**

**Q. Okay. Let's get started. Do you want to ask the three Legends a question?**

**Q. Same question for all three of you. Much is being made today of the new rivalry between the young guys, the Rorys and if Jordans and obviously the Master's and when you think you've got that all sorted out, it doesn't play out that way. How important was it for you guys to have the rivalry you had as a group, and how important is that for golf today, for these guys to, you know, kind of be beating each other up?**

**LEE TREVINO:** We never had a rivalry. You know, you guys are the ones that do all that. You guys are the ones that write all about rivalries and everything. We play a sport. We play a sport of numbers. We play different golf courses, which mean and they have different prizes, which is the majors and what have you, and we just happen to have been we're competitors and we play against each other. And yes, we do beat each other up, but I never had a rivalry with anyone. I you know, they were all my friends and naturally I tried to beat them, and if I got beat I just practiced that much more, but I never had any problem with anybody. No.

**Q. I don't mean to imply there was a problem, but I mean I'm thinking the three of you probably all each lifted each other's games, made you that much better.**

**LEE TREVINO:** Well, Jack lifted it for us. He set the bar, you know, and he went a little downhill, I remember, when he didn't play very well, what, in 1979, and you guys, you guys were starting to write about he's finished, and what did I say? You know, in the wintertime when you go in a cave, you find a sleeping bear, leave the guy alone, don't wake him up. You guys woke him up. He comes back, wins two majors. Don't wake him up. Don't wake him up. But he set the bar, that's what he did.

**GARY PLAYER:** Funny enough, I was in his house. Jack's memory is not that good any more. I was in his hours and *Sports Illustrated* wrote about the end of Jack Nicklaus' career, and I remember it like yesterday. He took that *Sports Illustrated* and he threw it down like that on that table. And as you say, you know, we will tell you when we're finished. Nobody's graph goes up all the time. You look at Tiger; he was on his way to do things that had never been done, and all of a sudden it doesn't happen. Nothing goes up all the time, does it? But as far as I'm concerned, I thought the word is maybe a competitive spirit that still exists, which is what made America a great country, competition, and to want to beat him and to want to beat him, but when you do get beat, and I left, because I have a grandson that's a very good tennis player and he's been

ranked in Philadelphia and the other day he had an easy shot to win his match and he came back and he was so low and I said to him, I said "You know, Lee Trevino just said to me that we lose 95 percent

**LEE TREVINO:** 98.

**GARY PLAYER:** He said we lose 98 percent of the time. "Luke, you just lost a few matches. Wake up, man, you have to realize that you have to lose to be good." And I think it helped him a lot because, you know, you're always thinking that I'm the only one who's losing, but coming back to that, I think the rivalry, or whichever way you want to determine, is excellent, and I think it exists today with the whoever they are, I think you have Jordan Spieth, you have who is the best putter in the world today. You've got Jason Day, who is the best swinger in the world today, and Rory McIlroy and you've got Adam Scott, those are the three best swingers, Jordan is the best putter, and golf is putting and mind. All I hear from the media is how far everybody hits the ball. I want to give you a story about him. 1986 at Augusta. He wins it, the oldest man to win it. When I won it at 42, I said nobody will ever beat that. He does it at 46. Now, not only that, he's on 17. 15foot putt. Left side of the flag. Ballesteros hit a drive, had a one shot lead. 330 yards. 330 yards, put it next to the water. That drive meant nothing. But every time you hole a putt, that means something. Golf is putting. And look at Jordan Spieth. He went into Augusta with his B game. He played crap the last day. And he still should have won it, and he still beat Rory McIlroy and Jason Day and all those guys and they were playing fabulous. Interesting, isn't it? So, rivalry is a very healthy thing. It gives us a game that you guys love to write about.

**JACK NICKLAUS:** A little while ago you asked a question about

**LEE TREVINO:** Question, right?

**JACK NICKLAUS:** No, I have to agree. The rivalries are really determined by the guys who play. Who play. It's a game. You're playing a game, and, you know, one year it might be, Lee might be my rival. The next year it might be Gary, might have been Tom Watson, might have been Arnold. It really doesn't make any difference. And I may not have been one of their rivals. You guys he is right. You guys make the rivalry. The competent figures is what's fun for us. Actually, I suppose it is more fun in many ways if we're coming down the stretch and everybody is saying "oh, you're going to get Gary and Lee and Arnold today?" I said well, you know, I'm trying to get the whole field. That's what you have to do is to win a tournament. A lot of the times, Arnold and I played so hard against each other, a lot of times we forgot that, you know, that there were other people in the tournament. I remember in '75 at Augusta, we played in the third round, and we faced up the third round, I shot 73 and was just absolutely, just wanted to kick myself as hard as I could kick myself, because I played Arnold rather than playing the tournament and Arnold shot 76. I think 75 or 76. He played himself out of the tournament. I still actually ended up winning the tournament. Maybe it was wasn't '75. Maybe '72. I'm not sure when it was. But anyway, it was one of those years

that we played so hard against each other that we forgot to play the tournament. And golf is a little different than playing tennis, where you got the guy across the net is the only guy you have to beat. In golf, you have a whole field to beat. But I think that rivalries are good for the game. The competition is good for the game. It's fun to have it. I think the names and for the most part, every week there is one, and the names are anonymous in many ways because it doesn't really make any difference who is playing, it's just the guys that are playing well.

**GARY PLAYER:** Is Jason Day number one in the world now?

**Q. Jack, of all three of you guys, you are doing stuff now that you really don't have to do. I mean, playing last week and playing this week, and still playing the par three tournament at Augusta and the fans love that, we love that, but that's not something that you would have to do. Are you doing it because you love the game? Are there young guys out there that you see perhaps when they get to be your age, do you think they would still do something like, still put their game on display for their fans and stuff like that, or is that what you guys are doing, do you think a dying breed?**

**JACK NICKLAUS:** I don't really know what your question was.

**LEE TREVINO:** You don't have to answer it. He told you you didn't have to answer it if you didn't want to.

**JACK NICKLAUS:** He answered repeat the question. Actually, I think that I played my last competitive round of golf in 2005, and since that time, I've played an odd event I've actually ended up playing more the last year or two. I didn't play at all for six or seven years, and Gary and I played in the Legends together and we played here, and then they got me to Minneapolis, and the boys want to play in the father/son. Pretty soon, I'm playing golf again. And actually, I've enjoyed it. You know, it's been kind of fun. You know, we play a scramble, we don't have to shoot a score. You've got a partner, somebody to and so it's not like going out and getting serious and playing a golf tournament. We're not doing that. Do we want to I mean, the three of us, do we want these other two teams to beat us today? Of course not. We still have a competitive spirit. We still enjoy that. You know, I always said that my life has been, has revolved around competition (cell phone rings) nice song.

**Q. That was for you, Jack!**

**JACK NICKLAUS:** I appreciate that. That was rare. Anyway, my life revolved around competition and when I lost my vehicle to competition, which happened to be the game of golf, that's when I basically stopped playing. So, I've enjoyed having a little bit of competition in a different kind of way, and fun. I'm sure Gary and Lee feel much the same way. Neither one of them really play golf because they are trying to win tournaments any more. They play because they enjoy being out here, they enjoy being

together and enjoy having a little bit of fun.

**Q. Are there young guys on the tour today that you think will do that when they get to be**

**JACK NICKLAUS:** When I was their age, I said "you have to be kidding me." I'm a different age today. They will be a different age in a few years.

**LEE TREVINO:** Yes, I think they will. I think they will. I love doing this. The one great thing that the young generation has today was the technology that we have, like you filming this. Back in the old days, Jack will tell you there was very little film of any of those guys. If you go back in the history of it, of Jones, and you go back to Hogan and Nelson and all those great players, there is very little film of them, and you don't get to appreciate or pass that down and show to people. Nothing, I don't think, speaking for the other two, hopefully, nothing gives us more pleasure than to go out here and perform in front of these people simply because we are hasbeens, and you have to understand that to be a hasbeen, you had to be a "was," and if you're not a "was," you can't be a hasbeen, do you understand? So we hope and pray that we can hit two good golf shots in the complete round, and then and we're satisfied with it. But no, I think that the younger generation will do that. I don't think all of them will, but, yes, I think that they will still come out and try to play as they get older. It never leaves. It never leaves. You're always competitive. Even when we play today, and Hale Irwin and all the other guys that are playing, they will be.

It doesn't mean a thing, but we want to win!

**GARY PLAYER:** It's indicative of what takes place on the Champions Tour. I mean, some of these guys, they say "I will not go and play the Senior Tour." you hear that when they are playing a heck of a lot. This is a game that lives with you forever. It's the game of longevity, which doesn't exist in most other sports, and it's part of your life. It becomes like a drug. And besides, it keeps you healthy and you make a lot of friends. I mean, we teed off as a team last week up in Missouri, you should have seen the number of people there. It was unbelievable. And you watch today. I mean, what a compliment. It is fantastic. It is just a wonderful game and it stays with you forever. At this time now, you are making, you know, \$1.8 million for winning the Master's, and when we did it you won \$20,000. Those guys are making money. That's not the criteria. The criteria is they want to keep playing golf because they love it.

**Q. Is there one more question and we'll wrap it up?**

**Q. Mr. Player, in relation to that, how important is it for the state of the tour to have big names like John Daly come out and play the tour on a regular basis?**

**GARY PLAYER:** They do do that. Every single one of them. There has never been one top player, and I stand to be corrected, as they become a senior player, they all

come and play and it keeps the Senior Tour going. And the standard of play on the Senior Tour is unbelievably high. People very quickly forget, you know, that there are people Lee was the leading money winner. This was stopped very quickly, I won't say by who, it was stopped, he was the leading money winner in the world, playing the Champions Tour.

**LEE TREVINO:** 1990.

**GARY PLAYER:** You see that. I bet not one of you guys knew.

**LEE TREVINO:** I beat Greg Norman.

**GARY PLAYER:** And he was winning more money than the regular Tour. They stopped that very quickly. And guys came out and played this tour and won, and then went back on the regular Tour and they won. Quite a lot of us, at least four. So the standard of play is extremely high and so they and a lot of guys, you know, athletes are not known to be great investors and businessmen. Very few of us have a business acumen as such, and you didn't have much money, and the expenses get higher, the dollar gets weaker over the years, so a lot of guys have to come back and play, which a lot of you don't even realize either. They have to come back and play.

**LEE TREVINO:** John is not going to find it easy. It's not going to be easy for him. I'm sure he'll win, but it's not going to be the most surprising guy ever, he came up to me a couple, three or four years ago, and he says to me, he says, "you know, I didn't know it was this difficult to win out here." I mean, I won 29 tournaments; Hale Irwin won like 42 or something, and it's not easy. It's not easy to win out here. And I remember this particular player asked me, and he hasn't won yet after two years of playing and he said, "I didn't know it was going to be this hard," and it was Mark O'Meara. And Mark thought he was going to come out here and just march right through everyone, and it's difficult. It's very, very competitive. And playing three rounds, you've got to come out running. I mean, you can't have that bad round the first day because you're behind the 8ball here.

**GARY PLAYER:** Exactly. And he didn't exactly look after himself.

**Q. Everyone okay? Thank you very much.**