

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW: JOHN DALY
May 4, 2016



DAVE SENKO: Well, we'd like to welcome John Daly to the media center here at the Insperty Invitational. John, maybe just get us started, turned 50 last week, just your thoughts on joining this tour and starting your Champions Tour career?

JOHN DALY: I'm excited about it. For me personally, gives me a schedule to play a lot. Good to see all my buddies out here again and have some fun. It's a more laid back tour. It's very competitive as I've watched over the years. The guys do go low so you've got to have your game, no doubt about it. But just to be out here, it's kind of like to be a rookie again in a sport -- it's about the only sport you can be a rookie in again and I'm just looking forward to it, looking forward to playing some golf again.

DAVE SENKO: You've played here before on the PGA TOUR when the Shell Houston Open was here. Have you had a chance to play the course this week at all and what do you remember about it?

JOHN DALY: Yeah, I came in early, I played Sunday. I was the only one out here and it was great. Kind of hit three balls. I really played almost 54 holes, just was out here for six or seven hours just getting used to it again. But, you know, it's cool because when you know every hole, you remember every hole, then you know you love a golf course. And the amazing thing is that I hit driver a lot more back in the '90s than I would now, I think maybe because the golf ball goes a lot further or whatever. But I put a 1-iron in my bag and this week that's pretty much going to be my driver except holes maybe like 5, 13, and maybe 1 I'll hit driver, but there's not really a lot of driver holes out here that I really need to hit.

DAVE SENKO: I know yesterday we talked a little bit about it on the conference call, but what have the guys who have been playing on this tour told you about what to expect out here?

JOHN DALY: Just, you know, everybody's been great. All the players have been great saying we're glad you're out here. But it's like with a small field, it kind of brings everybody together. The pro-ams, we're all together. So it's kind of a close-knit type family. You don't have 156 guys every week. You've got 78, 81 guys, and that even kind of makes it more special. But just like I said, just to see all the guys, you know, some of my -- look at Fuzzy and you look at Jacobsen and all these guys that were my friends on the regular tour back in the day and just to see them again and play against them again is going to be a lot of fun.

DAVE SENKO: We have some questions. Please raise your hand if you have a question. Melanie?

Q How's it been this week off the golf course? I mean, there's a lot of media hype about this, about you turning 50, a lot of things for you to do. This is only one small part of it. So what's -- I mean, most guys can kind of just slide in and become a member of the tour, but give us your perspective on what you've gone through the last few days?

JOHN DALY: It's been busy, there's been no doubt about it, but I played in the pro-am Monday, played one yesterday. Bryan was really -- he said you don't have to play in the pro-am Monday. I said, look, I need to play as much as I can. My game is really awful right now. I've been practicing, but when you haven't played competitive golf, you know, in nine months I've only played in four events. So I want to be prepared as best I can. This is a place that's special to me, back in the day, the Shell, when we played here before, went to Redstone and I wished I had three or four of these under my belt before I came here because I felt like I always played pretty good here. I've had some good finishes here. But for me it's been a lot of stuff to do, but Bryan's been great, he's been super to me and he runs -- with Insperity I played with those guys Monday, they're great people, they're great sponsors and they do it right. So I wanted to play with the CEO Monday. Bryan was happy I did that that for him and now I've got a lot of new friends with Insperity as well. So it works both ways. It is time consuming, some of the stuff, but for me I think it's worth it. It's my first one and I've got to take that, and here in the next seven or eight weeks I'll just be another guy out here. So just got to do what I've got to do and enjoy it.

Q I won't say intruded, but has it stopped what you originally thought you might do preparing going into your first event?

JOHN DALY: Yeah, I feel like most the guys would probably come in unless there's a pro-am or maybe an outing or something, you know, Monday or Tuesday, but most guys would probably come in on a Tuesday, play both either a Wednesday pro-am or Thursday pro-am like everybody's told me that's what they kind of do, but this week apparently this is one of the best run senior events out on here and they said they're all great, but this one for some reason is very, very special. There's a lot of activities to do here. There's a lot of pro-ams that, you know, we have an opportunity to play in and Bryan's been great and there's just a lot of stuff to do. We're in Houston, it's a great city, great place, and I've always loved being here. And the Mexican food is phenomenal.

Q How different will the mindset be playing on this tour going from a tour where the long ball is a very vital part of the game and sounds like it won't be as vital here?

JOHN DALY: Here it won't be this week because I don't want to embarrass myself because I haven't played in so long. Like I said, if I had three or four tournaments under my belt I might have more confidence to hit more drivers and take that risk, you know, that chance. But for me, I just want to keep the ball in play if I can, hit a lot of greens and give myself opportunities the best I can and just kind of get a feel for everything. Luckily I do know the course a little bit over the years, but I just want to get some confidence in my golf game and I think for me to do that right now is just concentrate on hitting a lot of fairways, trying to hit a lot of fairways. If I have any doubt, you know, with the driver, I'm just going to hit the 1-iron and just, you know. There's not -- when I played Sunday I didn't have anything -- except for 5, I hit a 1-iron, 6-iron and that's the longest par 4 out here. No. 18 can be if it's against the wind, but I hit 1-iron, 8-iron into 18 on Sunday. So I'm not going to be having a lot of long irons into the greens if I do hit a 1-iron, but I will have a lot of 7-, 8-, 9-irons that I better work on pretty hard because they're not very good right now either. So I'll just play it by ear, see how it goes. I think I'm playing with Fuzzy or Peter Jacobsen, they're two of my best buds when we played together on the regular tour. So we're going to have a lot of laughs, have a lot of fun and it's going to be real competitive as well.

Q How much more fun is it playing with your buddies like that? Is there kind of a game within the game?

JOHN DALY: It is. It doesn't get any better than that. Me and Jake and Fuzzy, we're going to be rooting each other on. All of us want to play really good golf, and I want them to play good as they want me to play good. You don't get that a lot on the regular tour, you know. I mean, we want to beat each other out here, there's no doubt, but we're not -- we want to see everybody play good out here and I think these guys as well as I feel is we want to beat each other at our best. I think that's what they have done throughout their whole careers is we don't want to get beat -- we don't want to beat ourselves. We want to beat them as much as they want to beat me, but we want to beat it with the best of our game.

Q Obviously this is a big golf community. What are you expecting out of the fans this weekend?

JOHN DALY: I don't know. I mean, I hope a lot of people show up. I know they've advertised it tremendously. The Golf Channel has been wonderful and all the networks around here have been wonderful, so I hope a lot of people will come out and watch. You know, this is like -- for me it's still I get a little nervous being around these legends, some of them, a lot of them because I idolized some of them when I grew up. My best friend is definitely Fuzzy out here, but still playing with him makes me a little nervous because, you know, these guys are my heroes growing up. So hopefully the fans will show up because they're legends of the game and there's a lot of major winners out

here. Not just from the senior majors, but also on the regular tour majors back in the day. So I think the coolest thing about it like I said, it's a small field so the fans can see everybody play that they want to see. So hopefully a lot of people turn out. Friday we have the Loudmouth day, of course, first thousand in the gate get a bobblehead doll of me, which is a lot prettier than I am, no doubt, but hopefully there will be a lot of fans show up. It will be great.

Q John, can you talk about your relationship with those fans? You've always been a fan favorite, the pants, people just love seeing you. What does that mean to you that all these people after 20 years still just love to see John Daly?

JOHN DALY: Well, the greatest thing about it is there's talk about me being in the Hall of Fame, should I get in, should I not get in. But I'm already in the Hall of Fame because I have the fans, and that's pretty much how to answer that question. I relate to them. I've never lied to them. I've always been up front with them, whether it's good or bad, and I think a lot people related to what I have gone through in my life and, you know, I think that's pretty much it. I feed off them as much as they feed off of me, and there's nothing wrong -- I don't mind a rowdy crowd when things are going good or bad. Doesn't matter. I just love it. It's great. I just love the fans and this is a great, great sport city and they get behind their teams as most cities do and they're good -- just great fans here.

Q You talked about your bad parts of the game. Are there good parts of your game right now?

JOHN DALY: Not with a lot of confidence right now. I feel like the best part of my game right now I feel is the 1-iron off the tee. I feel like I'm hitting that really, really well. I'm not hitting it horrible, I'm just not hitting it solid the way I know I can hit it.

Q Thoughts on the bobblehead, John? Looks like you a little bit or not or --

JOHN DALY: A lot prettier than I am.

DAVE SENKO: Any more questions? Okay, thank you, John.

JOHN DALY: You got it.