



PGA

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Oak Hill Country Club ~ Rochester, NY

Table with 22 columns: Hole #, 1-18, Out, Total. Rows: Yardage, Par, Score.

AN INTERVIEW WITH:

JOEY SINDELAR

KELLY ELBIN: Joey Sindelar joining us at the 69th Senior PGA Championship. This is Joey's first Senior PGA Championship. Old home week for you Joey, nice to be back I'm sure and be amongst some friends.

JOEY SINDELAR: This is awesome stuff for several of us this week. And of course Slu and Lonnie Nielsen of course and Mike Hulbert and I, you know, I can, it seems like yesterday when we were young guys coming up here just driving past the fronts of these golf courses and being nervous, let alone coming in.

Then if you ever got on the range that was really scary stuff. So this is obviously a magnificent golf course in a very, very good golf city. Horseheads, New York is not exactly a good golf city, although we have a few little gems. But apart from it being near Rochester for my life, my first 50 years and then going to school at Columbus, Ohio, those were two very, very nice golf cities that I've been lucky to hang in.

So this is good stuff and I have a lot of friends coming up, looking forward to being here and watch us get black and blue for the week.

KELLY ELBIN: Have you had a chance to play any parts of the golf course yet last couple days?

JOEY SINDELAR: I didn't. I came up last fall and I came up last week. Thinking that they would be busy and that I would get some better work in that way. As it turned out with the weather

getting goofy it was just as good anyway that I saw it last week and didn't have to -- although I caddied Monday. I caddied at CCR for my son who played in the U.S. Open qualifier. So I was working. But in a different way.

We get a totally new look at things from the caddie side of the golf bag.

But I'm sure it hasn't changed from a week ago, except the rough's probably an inch longer. And I was expecting the temperature was going to be warmer. But it's actually a little bit cooler. So we have had a very interesting windy year on TOUR. And I kind of thought we were going to be in for calmer, but all we got is colder and windy. So it will be great by the weekend and it's fun to be back on bent grass and poa annua, for us northerners.

KELLY ELBIN: Thanks. Let's open it up for questions, please.

Q. When you were here a week or so ago, to be here in that setting, without other distractions, you got to see the museum, and the clubhouse there, talk about how that hits you and how special it would be to make a strong showing here this week.

JOEY SINDELAR: As kids we're all about the golf course and hearing some of the stories and getting out there and what's it really like. And so we were, Michael and I were partially, I say now partially aware of what's gone on here, because when I walked in the museum and saw the entire scope of the golf history here, it's pretty amazing stuff. They did a beautiful job in that area. I wasn't even aware of it. And I walked through -- and I'm looking forward, as a matter of fact, one of the first things I said when I called home was we all got to,

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the rest of the family is coming up probably Thursday night and I want them to go in and see it. Because it's very, very well done and a lot of meaningful stuff has happened here. So that was a blast.

Q. How did your son do by the way?

JOEY SINDELAR: Good. 74. 4-over. I think he was fifth or sixth out of 45 amateurs and pros. They took three. And, but, you know what, he couldn't have even gone to the next stage because of high school state tournament. But this is that whole, this is fun for me to relive this stuff where sometimes you're entering these qualifiers for the big events just to touch it and feel it and be nervous and again another fabulous golf course just a mile away or whatever it is. And it was a big thrill for him and of course a big thrill for me to be able to caddie for him. So he did well.

Q. In terms of the weather this week, we're going to get good weather on the weekend, but how do you guys, I know we talked about this before, how the cold weather, the seniors just don't like the cold weather. That's not even a joke, it's true, you know. So these first two days are going to be difficult. How do you survive to the weekend in the conditions you're going to play in? What's going to be the key for you?

JOEY SINDELAR: You want my secrets, huh? I think that the biggest lesson I've learned in my career is that you forget that it's the same for everybody else. You step on the tee and you're nervous, no matter what the weather is. This is Oak Hill. This is a Major. Senior Major. You forget.

And I learned this, this hit me fairly squarely not until actually a handful of years ago when I heard Vijay Singh talk about being nervous. There's a guy that wins a lot of golf tournaments and he's talking about being nervous coming down the stretch. And I thought -- and I'm not a nervous and jerky kind of a guy out there, but you get butterflies going and in tournaments like this where the screws are really tight, the rough's up the fairway's are narrow the greens are fast, you're going to make mistakes and I think we often forget

that everybody else is going to make those mistakes too.

So I think that with weather, besides all the things that I've already talked about, now with cold air and probably some wind to go along with it, it's going to be tough. You just got to remember that this is not going to be a week that resembles perfect or perfection on a golf course. This is going to be hard work and you just got to go out and do it. And that's kind of the way I would look at it. Try to be calm.

Q. Will you address the fountain of youth issue. At 49 you struggled on the regular TOUR and at 50 you're born again, you're the young guy.

JOEY SINDELAR: That's also an entire hour of talking for that one. Because also what used to be my biggest advantage is now my biggest deficiency, which is experience. I've been here, this is the unusual place for me this year and the Dick's sporting Goods tournament back down in Binghamton, former BC Open, but apart from that, this is all new stuff for me.

And it's not just the golf courses. It's how far do you dare drive it at rush hour in bigger cities. That you have, you know, it's the whole rookie thing again. So there's good and bad. But it is good news to have gone from the guy with the most aches to the guy with the least aches in just one change of a birthday. So it's been fun.

I'm forgetting also though and I don't know whether you guys have latched onto it, guys and ladies have latched onto it, but on the Regular Tour it's calendar year, where out here we have guys joining as we go. So I'm forgetting that Slu and Ian Woosnam and Sandy Lyle and John Cook, although they are, and especially with Slu and Cookie, let's say, they played a couple last fall but I was thinking they had all last year. Well they didn't. They were only four or five events ahead of me.

So there's a bulk of us wandering around out here wondering where's the first tee, where is the restaurant, where do you hit balls. So it's been a very interesting thing for people who have been doing this a long time to kind of be seem I lost.

Q. Is there also an element though of

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feeling young again?

JOEY SINDELAR: Oh, sure. Yes, I'm sorry. That was your question, wasn't it. Certainly and I think even more so for the guys who stayed current on the Regular Tour, as they approached this TOUR. Because you kind of get -- the fun part about out there is there's no mirrors. I didn't realize that I was a 50 year old guy walking with all those young kids. And so I kind of thought I was younger until the very end when everybody kept pointing it out.

And now I am the young guy out here. And, yes, you should be the hay day years should be that firsthand full of years. So I think we all look forward to making hay while the sun shines for sure.

Q. Does it make for a more relaxed atmosphere on the Champions Tour a few players over the last few days have said that. That it's a little more fun, there's less to worry about, yes, you're competitive, yes, you want to win, but do you feel that it is a different atmosphere?

JOEY SINDELAR: There's no doubt about it. Although it does vary, there are guys out here who don't have -- I have status. I can effectively not make much official money and I can be here for awhile. And that's a huge thing for me. No cut, except for the five four or five big tournaments of the year. I have, if I don't play well, even with no cuts I'm still, I'm not under any of those pressures. What I find is that guys who, how do I want to say it? You know, let's face it, I can tell you this from some of my experience in the last month. If you're not playing well it still isn't fun and relaxed. This is a brutal sport. If you can't hit it where you're looking it's tough. But having said that, I think that -- ask me that question again. Sorry, because I was --

Q. Do you notice a different atmosphere than on the normal TOUR? It's a different mix --

JOEY SINDELAR: That's what I was -- I'm trying to figure out how to reduce this one. The guys, the first, what I think I noticed most is the guys who are the in first 15 of the week, you know, that serious competition, really good golf being

played, just like not, I'm not saying the golf is exactly the same, but the feelings are the same on Regular Tour, but what I notice is different is the guys who aren't in the mix, it's not life or death for most of them. It's, we're -- not only because of whatever status you might have, but we're at a different place in life. We have done this both right and wrong for years and years and I think the guys get it a little more.

So we're not as inclined to yell at the lady scorers or the marshals or that kind of stuff. And it is fun and I'm still catching up. This has been like a rolling class reunion for me for about a month. Seeing all the old friends and stuff. So it is an entirely different atmosphere.

Now this is my first Major and I have no idea what's going to go on here. Obviously, look, I mean we're doing something different than I did the first five weeks, which were fabulous, but this is clearly a notch above.

Q. You're one of the guys you were talking about would be Loren Roberts, who is clearly one of the top players out here right now.

JOEY SINDELAR: Yes.

Q. Coming off a great week. You played with him a long time on the Regular Tour, he's played well at this particular venue too, what, I mean, outside of his great putting, why is this guy so good right now on the Senior Tour when he's playing really, really well?

JOEY SINDELAR: I just played with him once last week and it was pretty typical. He doesn't make mistakes. You wanted to dismiss his putter a little bit, but you can't. Because the putter is -- and he's also a -- the rest of his short game's pretty impressive as well.

But he actually, I think hits the ball better than he did back in his early TOUR days. And he's just -- these courses, look, length is always an advantage and he isn't a long hitter but he's certainly adequate. And, no, he's not going to be the eagle leader or anything like that. But if you don't make many bogeys -- and I played with him last Sunday and he just kind of hovered around, birdied a couple early, and then he kind of just

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made pars and pars and I thought okay, well, you know, he birdied a couple early to get close, if he would have birdied one or two more he would have been right there, but he didn't.

But he hung in and all of a sudden two hours later another batch of them came. He made more putts. Not saying he didn't hit the ball well, but he made a couple more there. And doing what Loren does and all of a sudden he's putting pressure on Andy and the wind starts blowing a little bit and he's right there and he finished, I don't know, what did he finish, third or something like that. Second.

And it's, you know, it's going to be interesting for me to watch and I've already seen pieces of the guys can flat out put it in the hole out here. A lot of us, I mean when you're younger you, I thought you always compared older people with losing their short game skills and the yips or whatever, you know, the motor skills go away. Well I'm telling you, these guys out here, they put it in the hole. It's amazing. Cap Cana, I thought my first event, Nicklaus course, wind blowing, the bay, typical Nicklaus kind of thing, I thought it was going to be a bombers golf course. A long hitters big advantage.

Well the wind blew just hard enough so it was hard for the bombers to get their second shots on the green and some of the guys who don't hit it as far might hit a driver and a 4-iron up next to a long par-4 and I might cream a drive and hit a 9-iron that spins off the green right next to him and all of a sudden he's a short gamer and I'm not. And that game was over.

I still look back at that weak and can't believe the scores they shot in those conditions. So it's been fun to watch how the game is played here. Definitely less speed on the golf ball out here, but they can put it in the hole.

Q. Given all you just said, Loren this week, is he a legitimate threat on this golf course the way he plays?

JOEY SINDELAR: Yeah, well, yes, because I would think that the opposite of what Loren Roberts would be, would be last week. Last week was a bombers golf course, it was wide, the fairways were wide and the trees were way wider than that, and the greens were big and if he wasn't

going to succeed somewhere I would have expected that.

Here, you've got to hit the fairway, look at shots even on -- I was going to say even on 1 and 2 and 4, but every hole. And he drives it well. So if he, if he hits it in the fairway, he's not going to be as good as gouging it as I am or some of the bombers are, but he's probably not going to have to gouge it as much as the rest of us.

So I think he's a great fit here. It's hard to count him out anywhere when you can putt like that. He doesn't have weaknesses elsewhere, he's just a magnificent putter.

Q. Where would you assess your game heading into this week? Where are you and where do you want to be?

JOEY SINDELAR: I'm very, very pleased tee to green. I've been trying to explain to my family what's going on. I was walked out the first couple week, I was nervous. A lot of people don't understand. Nervous? You played golf all your life you're moving from the biggest stage over to not the biggest stage. I don't want to say -- this has been really cool stuff but we had stared at that turning 50 for way too long and it got way too big and I had fun visiting with other guys who had the same experience. I had to settle down and I'm now settled down and ready to go and very happy with my game.

I think the only way I can explain it to my sons, who are 18 and 15, is that my scoring software has a virus. And I just I'm just doing stuff for instance last week I played pretty good, it wasn't the sharpest, but I'm 9-under going into 16 hole, 13 ended up winning, I got a 5-iron into a par-5 downwind and I bury it in the lip of the bunker with a pretty good shot. And one swing goes deeper, next swing goes deeper, third one is unplayable, luckily got it up-and-down for a double and then 3-putted the next one. And finished 11th.

So it's like I'm ready for it, it's kind of waiting, I keep saying I can't keep doing the stuff I'm doing. The golf gets like that. You got work through it and let it go.

So I'm happy. The answer to the question is I'm pleased going into tomorrow. I couldn't ask for a better tee to green and I feel comfortable and like it's growing and becoming what I want it to be

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and I'm just waiting for it to happen.

Q. Slu said a couple hours ago that coming off the 64 that the golf ball has no memory. Going into this week you know the course and everything, is that an advantage and how much is momentum from having a pretty good showing last week and coming home?

JOEY SINDELAR: For me that's big stuff and I'm sure for Slu, because he has -- look, I don't mean to be negative about anything, but he hasn't done what he's capable of out here. Slu's good enough to be winning tournaments and shooting 64. So he's probably going to be saying similar things. He's building to it, ready to go. That's how he and I would operate. We like that building up to it.

And then it's real, there's nothing fake in there. And you're hitting good shots, scoring, things are happening.

Then on the other hand you look at a guy like Mark Calcavecchia, he can miss four cuts in a row and win on the fifth week. And I'm sure there's guys on this TOUR that can do that. I'm not one of those, I'm not usually an out of no where, usually if I'm bad I'm stinky bad. And if I'm good, I'm hopefully going to stay for a little while.

And Slu and I would be in that category. So a good week for both of us. And look at the tournament he had at the team tournament and I forgot what he did in between, but clearly the water's boiling for him as well.

KELLY ELBIN: For the record, Joey was tied for 11th at the Regions Charity Classic last week. Could you talk just for a second about what players will need to do well here at Oak Hill to succeed from tee to green.

JOEY SINDELAR: Well, the fast answer is virtually everything. I mean, you got to name your poison out here. You know, you stand on the first tee and there's several choices is it three wood or driver. Well, and then of course this week where is the wind and where is the cold. But if you take the 3-wood you might hit the fairway more times, but if you miss the fairway, can you chop it to the green where if you would have hit the driver, that extra 15 yards might have been the valuable thing.

And I think that's, and again, what's different about playing courses like this, that we don't see every year, is we don't have that database stored in there to know, to have made the mistakes, you know, what we do is by playing these courses over and over again and hitting bad shots that turn out good and hitting good shots that turn out bad and understanding all that.

We're not that intuitive here. So we're going to have to make some educated guesses and when you stand on number 1, I mean for me, unless it's down wind I'm just going to go ahead and hit it.

But then you come to No. 2 and do you challenge the bunkers, what are the bunkers like, you know. So we're all going to be dancing around that stuff.

I just think it's going to take good golf. Surely great putting by itself will not win, but great putting is always helpful. So, but you better be hitting some good shots because you will not scrape it around this place and win. It's not going to happen. It's too hard, even at 90 percent of full value it's still too hard to scrape it.

So whoever wins is going to have to have made some good decisions, hit some great shots, and again you're still, on some of these greens, you're still not done once you get there. So it's just going to be one of those just like a Major should be, it's going to be good and hard in every department.

Q. Jeff talked about this week, this TOUR, being a reunion for him and you and Mike Hulbert and Wayne Levi. Do you reflect on your career at this point at this time more looking ahead more or and what was in the upstate water that helped the four of you have such long careers?

JOEY SINDELAR: Yeah, that's a funny thing is that I don't know the answer to that last one and surely something is in the water. Because it was an odd time.

I could understand that if it happened now because we're now in the video world and you can pretty much tele conference with any teacher you wanted to. But I could remember my dad and Mr. Hulbert sent Michael and I to Muirfield village in the 1970's to see Jack Grout just to see if we were

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on the right path. He didn't know who Jack Grout is, except he taught Nicklaus, but, you know, but that's how lost we were. We weren't lost, but we didn't know, we were so detached, golf seemed, TOUR golf seemed like it was somewhere else.

And, but somehow we all got it done and we're today that I would think it would be an easier task. I don't know why. The good part is the talent pool was nowhere near as good whether we learned the game as it is now. I would not want to be starting over. I would not want to be my son who wants to chase this. I wouldn't want to be that right now. There's just too many. Too many good ones.

Look back when we played and it was doable and you went away to college and you could, I don't know, somehow we all got it done. So if you find the answer to that, I would love to know it. But I'm certainly thrilled that it did.

And in terms of reflection, this has been a very electric several months for me. Because you're retiring, but you're not retiring and you're, you know, you're leaving a whole set of people behind, but yet you're rejoining people that you knew before them. And you're never going to be paired with Tiger and Vijay again, unless of course I could win one of these Majors and get back to a Major and play really well.

That's interesting to me. Because that is the greatest golf being played on the Regular Tour. And I'll miss that. But what I also have found is that I'm not going back to the room and going, okay, what are they doing at Harbour Town. You know, it didn't do that to me. I didn't know if it would or wouldn't. And it didn't. I'm very content here.

As are, you know, when Bernhard Langer said, when Bernhard Langer can say, I don't miss it, I mean, of course, you know he misses it, but I don't long for it. That's how good this is. This is very competitive, but yet it's a perfect, it's a perfect mix for where we are all in our lives.

Our kids are either nearly out or out and doing their own thing and it's just, it's now have work to be very competitive but not enough that you can't go enjoy the special things that happen in life that you kind of had to miss some of when you were 30 and had to just go, go, go.

And so it's very reflective but not in a, not in a, yes, in a teary way, but not in an, I wish I was there way. You know, it's, you'll see this week. This is cool stuff. And the guys can really go.

Q. Would the TOUR be better with, the Champions Tour be better with more cuts other than just in the Majors? Or is this that compromise that you're ready to accept past 50?

JOEY SINDELAR: I'm okay, I think the no cut thing is magnificent. And I think that it's a nice blend to be having a handful of events that do have them. I didn't have to say that word for five week, my first five, and now I have to talk about it again. I don't mean because of you, I brought it up on my own.

And I'm still, to tell you how new I am, I was playing not the way I wanted on Friday, my first day being Friday, and I looked at my caddie John after 10 or 11 holes and I wasn't within two or three shots of where I wanted to be and I said, laughingly, what's the cut going to be. Because that was, you play like that, you needed to know.

Well then and it's funny, I'm not quite used to it yet. But look, I'm too new here to be saying what's better and what's worse. But from hearing what I'm hearing and from feeling what I have now for a month and a half, I think that a huge part of it is just right. It's, there's enough casual and there's enough of this (indicating) you know this we're right back to big time stuff right here and I think it's a pretty cool mix.

Q. As a follow-up to his question of two questions ago, when you were growing up not knowing whether it was doable, chasing this dream, when in your career did you realize you had made that jump to that plateau where you could do it. When you could play against anybody? When was that transition kind of made?

JOEY SINDELAR: You know, I'm not really sure I thought of it in those terms. If I was talking to a youngster, if we took that framework and I was talking to a youngster about how should you measure yourself, you would want to be pretty -- that's too hard to answer -- you asked me specifically but I didn't think in those terms and it's

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very hard to measure because guys have arrived here from so many different paths.

You know, Larry Nelson didn't start golf until he was in his 20s and he won this tournament. Not on the Champions Tour, the big one. So this is a weird thing because it doesn't, it's not just the physical, can you make a free throw 99 out of a hundred, does it fit your life-style.

You know, when it gets going and when the lug nuts just come right off, how quick can you get them back on. I can't tell you how many great players aren't playing any more. It's amazing stuff. And why some of us are here and the others aren't is a very weird thing.

But probably when I won, when you get on the TOUR you're happy, but probably when I won in Greensboro and I had, you know, when you win, that was '85 for me, I got on in '84 and that was in '85. And when you win you get the year you're in plus two. And I suppose that's as big as a breather gets for a guy who was a rank and file guy like me.

The superstars are -- well my buddy Wayne Levi, I guess we got the Wayne Levi Rule because of him because at the time he had that great year and continuing, it was 1990 when he had the great year, he was Player of the Year, he won about four. At that time if you won one you got the year plus two. But if you won four, you still only got the year you're in plus two. And I think he actually lost his card two years later from so two years from Player of the Year. And our own upstate guy they kind of added that year and so they add a year for each additional win.

But most of the guys don't get to feel that comfort that the superstars have from winning. They reach that point and they're going to be here for -- they're not looking at falling off the edge. You know, the edge of the earth seems very close when you're on not entirely eligible: So I hope I got to your question one way or the other.

KELLY ELBIN: Joey Sindelar, thank you very much.

JOEY SINDELAR: My pleasure. Thank you. Nice to see everybody.

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