

## INTERVIEW WITH PAUL AZINGER

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SPEAKER: Well, I would like to welcome Paul Azinger to the interview room.

Paul, welcome, and maybe just share your thoughts. Finally you turned 50 in January, I believe, and joining some old friends, guys you've been playing with the last several years, maybe just your thoughts on making your debut.

PAUL AZINGER: Well, I played the Tour for 28 years, which I think when I first started that would have been something I would have never considered. There was no such thing as a Champions Tour or Senior Tour. There was no cell phones, no cable TV, you know, so it's a different world. I'm glad that I've made it, I'm looking forward to playing.

It's a different mind set, though, I have to say. It's different coming out here, the feeling that I have the last couple days, seeing everybody and coming to a new arena, a new venue, so to speak.

But it's like, I don't know, I just am excited about it. I'm happy to be here. We'll see, if I play decent, how much I play.

I think there's a generation that's coming that

if they're eligible for this tour, they probably don't really need the money, so it's probably about just their desire to stay competitive and I think I still have that desire. I want to be competitive, I want to be able to compete, but I want to embrace it and enjoy it for what it is. It's like your reward for being able to hang in there as long as I did on Tour, and that's an honest assessment of the way I feel. I look forward to playing it.

SPEAKER: Did you play in Hawaii?

PAUL AZINGER: No, this is my debut.

SPEAKER: Are you competitive as far as your golf game goes?

PAUL AZINGER: I hope. I don't know. I haven't played a tournament in seven months. Last year I played seven or eight tournaments or something. I made just the one cut, I missed several cuts by one or two shots, and I putted not so well, but I hope.

I've been really busy the last month and a half or so and I haven't played that much, so I don't know.

SPEAKER: If you have a question, if you could ask in the mic.

PAUL AZINGER: I'm not going to stress about

it, I'm just going to play the first shot and enjoy the round. I think if you put expectations, it's like the cart ahead of the horse, I'm not going to try to have great expectations or anything. I'm just going to try to embrace this whole idea that I can be competitive, compete.

I can't play the Tour right now except for the few tournaments I've won in the past. I might play the PGA and the Memorial, maybe Bay Hill. I got invited to another couple tournaments on the regular Tour.

This is a Ryder Cup year. I've got a book coming out about the Ryder Cup, it's going to be coming out in May, so I'll be doing a book tour.

And I've just done an iPhone app. There's a company called Golf Shot that is the -- it's the number one app on the iPhone, golf app on iPhone. Of the 140,000 apps on iPhone, it's ranked 15th. It's a golf app, it's a golfing GPS, 30,000 courses on it. I've got to know those guys and I've attached -- there's statistics and data that come with it.

We're getting ready to launch in February, this month, in two weeks probably, Golf Plan, which is going to be quick tips and drills and a plan

actually; a day one, day two, day three, day four, day five, week two, you know, that sort of thing that's going to be an iPhone app that's going to be called Golf Plan, so I'm excited about that. It's going to keep me kind of thinking about things maybe other than just playing golf.

Plus, I know that there will be a book tour that comes with the launching of the book about the Ryder Cup and that story.

SPEAKER: After your battle with cancer, have you ever regained the same skills that you had before that?

PAUL AZINGER: You know, no, I don't think I ever really did. I mean, I don't know, it's hard to say. I mean, I got ranked back up in the -- I think I got as high as 18th in the world again, so I would say probably.

I wasn't winning, but winning's not easy. I won once after I got sick. When I changed equipment, everything changed, and I changed equipment for the money. I mean, I'll just tell you, and you know, so -- but when I changed equipment, everything changed for me. Had I just played the same equipment, you know, it's likely I would have maybe played a little better.

But after I got sick, I played on a Ryder Cup team, I played on a President's Cup team and I won a tournament, so it could have been worse.

SPEAKER: How about your putting, did it --

PAUL AZINGER: I've been putting really well. I made a putting change and a putter change and I've been putting really well for the last month or so at home, what little I've played. But, you know, putting is the great variable. Everything comes down to a putt.

SPEAKER: When you got to the locker room the first time, did you expect any razzing?

PAUL AZINGER: The first person I saw was Curtis and he's great. It's just been great to see everybody. Everybody's kind of waving and saying, "Hey, we know we can beat you, you're not a threat."

SPEAKER: What do all your friends that you see back here tell you about how it's different than the regular Tour?

PAUL AZINGER: Everybody that I've talked to says, "You're going to love it," and I can see that. It's a different attitude. You can just see the Tour officials, it's like the officials are here with this attitude that we work for you and we want to keep you -- make you -- do everything we can for

you to make your experience a good one. You can just get that sense that everything's different. The players are all, you know, they just seem like they just really love being here.

But when I look at the names on that list, it's like a Who's Who in the game of golf. I know every single person on that list. I can't say that about the regular Tour, you know? These are stars, every one of them are stars, and it's a shame it doesn't get more recognition. They can play, but I get it, they're older.

SPEAKER: Are you surprised that time has gone by so quickly, the 28 years and here you are?

PAUL AZINGER: It's hard to believe. I can remember watching this Tour way back in the day and just thinking how old everybody looked and was, you know, and now here I am and everybody looks pretty young to me.

SPEAKER: Do you have any thoughts on the grooves issue, what transpired on the west coast?

PAUL AZINGER: Yeah, I brought out my old clubs from 1992 and they aren't even legal and they're V grooves under the new guidelines. So it's like they went backwards so far they're into the '40s or '50s or something, so it's very difficult.

But I had my clubs checked and my wedges checked. I'm using Ping pitching wedge and sand wedge. I called Ping and asked them to send me what was their legal version of those clubs and they sent me a couple of clubs and had them tested yesterday and they're perfectly legal.

But I didn't want to deal with the peer pressure of -- you know, I've got several of the clubs pre-'90 that are phenomenal, but I don't want to deal with it.

I think in the end it's probably going to be better for the game, but you're dealing with, you know, the hundred million or more people who play the game, one-tenth of one percent probably and you changed an entire rule for that group.

But what I heard yesterday was that statistically back in the day of V grooves, driving distance didn't correlate with wins and it was driving accuracy correlated to great play and victories.

I remember back in the day when there was Top 10 guys on the driving distance stat, a lot of them would lose their card. Now you look at the driving distance stats and it almost relates directly to money. Some guys finish 180th in driving distance

and they've -- excuse me, 180th in driving accuracy for the year and can win four tournaments, five tournaments, so it's completely different.

I get their logic behind making the change, but it's very much up to interpretation. I heard one player had a whole set of clubs and only the 6 iron was illegal, and then he had it tested three weeks later and the 6 iron passed. So it's just -- you've just got to make sure you don't knowingly play the wrong clubs, that's all, so that's why I've had them checked.

SPEAKER: What's your opinion on other players speaking out about, you know, objecting to players' clubs?

Like you just said, a club can get tested after it was reported legal three weeks later. What are your thoughts on a player calling another player out like that?

PAUL AZINGER: I don't know of anybody calling anybody out. Has anybody called somebody out or something?

SPEAKER: Well, in the case of Phil Mickleson.

PAUL AZINGER: Well, Phil played a legal club. That's the thing, he played a perfectly legal golf club. It's in the rule book as legal.

So, you know, I don't know. Everybody's an individual, they can say or do what they want. The reality is the club was grandfathered in.

I wanted to come out here and play that club, to tell you the truth, but I just don't feel with dealing with the peer pressure of it. What the heck, I just don't feel like dealing with it.

SPEAKER: Paul, would you have considered being a Ryder Cup captain again? Do you think that the PGA will ever have (inaudible) Ryder Cup captain two years?

PAUL AZINGER: I don't know. I think that their philosophy is there's more potential captains than Ryder Cups. It is such a great honor to be asked to be a captain. There's only 25 guys who have ever been captain and there's only 16 living captains, so the privilege of being that guy is something that should be passed around.

I don't think I would ever do it again now. I would have considered doing it again probably, but I'm happy now, trust me.

There's only so much you can do as a captain, and my philosophy was to create the best environment for them to be successful and it's discussed in the book in great detail.

There's a razor thin line at that level between winning and losing. Vegas has a one-percent edge in blackjack. That's all they want is a one-percent advantage, so what can you do? If this is the line, I want to just create the best environment to get them on -- if you could create an environment to get them on this side of that line, which is the winning side, then that's what I was going to try to go for.

We talk about how we did it and what we did. We had the Navy Seals concept, bringing 12 guys together as a team and fracturing them into small groups is what we did, and we put them together based on like personalities, not like games. We valued relationships over assets. Relationships trumped assets was the philosophy. And then just giving the players ownership of their little teams within their little pods and then just empowering them and letting them do their own thing. That's how we did it.

One of the most telling quotes I think after it was all over, Stuart Cink said, "This is the most unique Ryder Cup I ever played on because," he said, "I didn't see another guy hit a shot but the three guys that were in my group until my match was over on Sunday. Then I watched JB Holmes play the last

hole and that was all I saw."

And so they were so absorbed in each other and they just played great. The bottom line is they played great and the book will give them all the praise and all the glory for what they did. But it's going to tell the story of what I believe was to create the best environment possible for them and that's the book.

It's an interesting story. I mean, I've held it in, I haven't told anybody anything. There's so much in there that nobody knows about.

SPEAKER: What's the name of it?

PAUL AZINGER: I think we're going to call it *Cracking the Code, Team Building -- Building Teams for Sports, Business and Life*. It's not definite, but I think that's what we're going to call it.

SPEAKER: Have you talked to Corey yet to see if he will (inaudible) your philosophy?

PAUL AZINGER: No, I haven't talked to him. He hasn't asked me a question yet.

SPEAKER: What's it like to have Fred Couples in this tournament and how much effect do you think it will have on this Tour if he stays on it?

PAUL AZINGER: Fred is one of the biggest draws in the game and has been for 25 or more years, since

'81, since he won his first ever tournament at Congressional and everybody loves him. I think he's great. I would turn on the TV to watch him play golf. I would look for that. If I saw in the paper where he was playing well, I would look for Fred Couples to watch him on TV. There's not a lot of players you can say that about, but he's one of them.

SPEAKER: Were you hoping for a little bit better weather for your big debut here?

PAUL AZINGER: Well, yeah. Naples, I didn't even bring a sweater, so I might buy something out of the shop this week. It's just windy. I expect it to be windy, it's always windy this time of year. A chilly wind, though. Global warming has made its way all the way down here to Naples.

SPEAKER: The rest of the week is going to be worse.

PAUL AZINGER: I know. They're talking about another big freeze in the Tampa area. They've already lost four, five percent of the orange grove crop. It's significant.

SPEAKER: Yeah, I read that. How much have you worked with Jim Suttie, or do you guys just talk?

PAUL AZINGER: Suttie actually was heavily

involved in doing the iPhone app with me, the Golf Plan. I actually asked him to come and what we did in the plan was mainly just deal with -- we just picked nine ball flights, maybe 12 ball nights I think in the end, and we had a drill to fix them all.

So the way the app goes is, so you're missing to the right. Well, if you're hitting a slice, I say what's a slice? A slice is nothing more than side spin on the ball. There's three ways to hit a slice: Poor weight shift, poor path, or an open clubface at impact. I've got drills to fix all three, done, and then bam, we show the drill.

It's an iPhone, so you're looking on your telephone, you're on the driving range hopefully if you played crummy, and you got it. You tap on the phone. You hit six greens in regulation. You can go to your greens in regulation video, go straight to the video.

Coach Suttie has 40 years of experience, so he was right there with us, with me, and I said, "Let's start thinking about quick hit drills."

Every drill is between 30 and 45 seconds and there's not a drill that's on that phone, that app, that can't be -- everything that we use is right in

your golf bag, either a towel, a head cover, golf balls or tees to fix the drill.

I did spend time with him. I haven't worked with him much. He sent me videos of some of the swings I was making when we were there and so I looked at them, but I don't want to come in here all technical, I want to come in here visual and just ready to embrace the first swing of the day.

SPEAKER: You were talking about the GPS for the courses. Do you know how many of the local courses around here are included in that?

PAUL AZINGER: Every one of them. There's 30,000 courses all over the world. The app's going to be in 11 different languages. I'm going to be speaking, you know, Afrikaans probably eventually, dubbed in Afrikaans.

But every course. I mean, I used it all day yesterday on this course on my iPhone. I just sat there and looked at it. We're using our laser for yardages, but I'm looking at the bunker and just tapping on it and seeing how far the bunker was. It's global GPS. Augusta National's on there.

It's like Google Earth technology and they've got like six or eight young people in this room and they download courses. They get paid for each

course they download into the phone.

SPEAKER: How many courses?

PAUL AZINGER: 30,000. It's \$29.99 for the app. I mean, if you go buy one of those -- I don't want to disparage another brand, but if you go buy a device to go do that, it's like 400-something bucks and you have to download the courses yourself and you have to do them 10 at a time.

This is \$29.99 and there's 30,000 courses sitting in there right now. This is where the world's going. You've got people that walk, people that ride a bike, people that drive a car and people in jets. These guys are all in jets, so they're passing up everybody. They're so far ahead of the game and the way they think.

SPEAKER: What company?

PAUL AZINGER: It's called Golf Zoom, but the app is called Golf Shot and I've attached to Golf Shot Golf Plan. So Golf Plan will be a separate app, but it's attached to your statistics from your Golf Shot.

They've already had 16 million rounds played in the six months it's been -- it's only been on the phone six months. It's just blowing up, just a different world. I was lucky to hook up with them.

I'm not trying to do a running commercial, I'm just trying to tell you it is exciting for me and it will launch and it's going to be -- you'll always have to update it because I think on the initial launch there will be probably 60 or 70 tips. There's so much I left out, you know, and I just keeping, gosh, but we can always -- Brant Packer, the guy who's producing this week for Golf Channel, was there filming it. He was my boss when I was at ABC.

SPEAKER: Okay. Thanks, Paul.

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