

1 FEBRUARY 11, 2010

2 INTERVIEW WITH FRED FUNK

3 SPEAKER: Well, Fred, thanks for joining us.  
4 We'll get through this pretty quickly. You've had a  
5 chance now to play some pro-am rounds. I guess the  
6 obvious thing is, how's your knee feel?

7 FRED FUNK: Okay. The knee's a lot better than  
8 it was before the surgery. I don't have any pain during  
9 the golf swing, which is really good. I can get in the  
10 bunker now and dig in, which I couldn't do before. So  
11 the knee's getting better, still weak, and the golf  
12 swing is still a little suspect, but I'm really looking  
13 forward to the way the knee should progress instead of  
14 digress as the last two years have gone. The doc says  
15 six months to a year, I should feel like I don't even --  
16 I shouldn't even know I had a knee done, I shouldn't  
17 have any pain. So as far as that, it's really good.

18 I'm excited about this year because I'm looking  
19 forward to knowing that the leg is going to get better  
20 and better as we go instead of getting worse and worse.  
21 Hopefully I can get the game going early and right now  
22 I'm just -- I have no expectations, even though I still  
23 want to play well and I'll probably still get a little  
24 irritated when I'm not.

25 The goal is ready to play by May, to be ready

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1 by May, and when our major's come, the players come.  
2 U.S. Open, I'm in, so the main part of our schedule.  
3 For me, the focus is the majors on the Champions Tour,  
4 to play well in those, which I've done since I've been  
5 out here. That's where the big points are and that's

6 where I want to, you know, knock off a couple of those  
7 hopefully, at least get in contention. My goal is to be  
8 in contention in all those and climb up on that Schwab  
9 Cup because my big goal is to not only win out here is  
10 one, win at least one major, but to win the Schwab Cup.

11 SPEAKER: How long is it since the surgery?

12 FRED FUNK: It will be -- it's been two and a  
13 half, almost three months, just a little more than two  
14 months.

15 SPEAKER: Did the surgeon give you a timetable  
16 and are you headed out, or are you going strictly by  
17 what he's told you?

18 FRED FUNK: No, he said I'm way ahead of the  
19 game as far as where the normal knee would be for a  
20 normal person coming out. He said it looks like my knee  
21 is six to eight months out instead of just two months  
22 out. My goal was to play Hualalai and he told me I  
23 couldn't go the week before when I was ready to go and I  
24 thought I -- I knew my leg wasn't really ready to go, I  
25 knew my swing, I hadn't even played, but mentally I just

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1 was so tired of doing rehab and I was so tired of  
2 pushing and pushing and pushing to make Hualalai and  
3 then he told me, "I'm not going to let you go." I was  
4 like, I was so distraught.

5 But it was the right decision and right now  
6 I've just got to be careful because I'm doing a little  
7 less rehab now, more playing, and I'm on my leg a little  
8 more and it wants to build up a little fluid to protect  
9 itself a little bit and I've got to be careful with  
10 that, so I've got to just make sure I don't overdo  
11 things and set myself backwards.

12 SPEAKER: How much did it get you down?

13 FRED FUNK: What's that?

14 SPEAKER: Psychologically, when you go through  
15 the rehab post-op and usually --

16 FRED FUNK: Well, you know, I was actually  
17 excited this year. The last two years I went through a  
18 lot with the knee and I was going through rehab just  
19 trying to hope to maintain some sort of level where I  
20 could go and play golf and maybe be competitive. And  
21 then last year, when I had the staph infection, I wasn't  
22 even sure I was going to be able to play at all and then  
23 I got back out here and I ended up being pretty  
24 competitive and had a decent year.

25 I always knew that it was going to get worse

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1 and mentally that was tough, and it did. Two years in a  
2 row, by the time we got to the last few tournaments, I  
3 just couldn't rely on the leg to do anything and it hurt  
4 all the time and I just dreaded playing. Last year I  
5 didn't want to play; from Baltimore on, I just remember  
6 for the first time I just dreaded going to the golf  
7 course because I knew it was going to be a long, hard  
8 day. I wasn't playing to the level that I wanted to and  
9 it hurt and everything else.

10 Now I know once I decided to have the surgery  
11 that I was rehabbing and working hard knowing that I was  
12 going to get better at the other end instead of just  
13 knowing eventually I was going to need a new knee and I  
14 had a really bad knee. With the history they've had  
15 with putting in artificial knees, I felt pretty positive  
16 that I was going to come out okay with it, and so far,  
17 so good. It's been good.

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18 SPEAKER: What does it do for you to see people  
19 like Couples and Azinger come out here? I read  
20 somewhere it was going to fire you up to --

21 FRED FUNK: I don't think I've ever been quoted  
22 on that. If I have, I never said anything. I think  
23 it's really great that Freddie's out here and Paul's out  
24 here and all the guys. We're getting some guys with  
25 star power that just puts new energy out here on the

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1 Tour that we'll always need. Freddie's really exciting.  
2 There's very few guys, I'm sure a lot of guys have said  
3 this, that really move the needle that are out here on  
4 the regular Tour or our Tour. Freddie's one that really  
5 moves the needle. People love to watch Freddie. As  
6 players, we love to watch Freddie. His peers love to  
7 watch Fred play golf. He's an exciting guy to watch  
8 play. The dynamics he plays, the level he plays at, the  
9 way he can still hit a golf ball, that unique syrupy  
10 swing he has is so fun to watch. Hopefully he's going  
11 to play a lot out here, hopefully his back will hold up,  
12 and I think it's fantastic.

13 We've gotten more and more competitive as the  
14 years go by. You've got Tommy Armour, who's been  
15 playing great out here. Michael Allen's been playing  
16 great and still good enough to stay out on the regular  
17 Tour and probably will. Tom Pernice's goal is to still  
18 stay out here. You've got Corey coming out and numerous  
19 others that are coming out. It's really good for the  
20 Champions Tour. We've got a lot of really current guys  
21 that have been playing good and are going to be up there  
22 every week.

23 SPEAKER: What do you think of the golf course?

24 FRED FUNK: I like the golf course overall. I  
25 think -- you know, I played 12 holes the other day

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1 before we got rained out and then today with totally  
2 different wind conditions. I think some of the green  
3 designs are a little suspect. I don't like the  
4 characteristic of greens running away from you,  
5 especially when they're as firm as they are. You know,  
6 you've got troubles on the back of the greens on a lot  
7 of these. Anything over these greens are a lot of  
8 trouble and it feeds that direction. For the average  
9 guy, I don't know why the golf course design guy would  
10 do that, but they did.

11 And, I mean, the greens are large. You've just  
12 got to play to the front of the greens and play smart  
13 and you know you're going to have -- to me, especially  
14 the way I'm hitting it right now, I would think with a  
15 lot of guys, it's hard to get close to a lot of these  
16 pins. Some of them, you're just trying to get it on the  
17 green. A 30-foot putt is a close putt. You get in  
18 there inside 30 feet, you're doing all right. And then  
19 other ones, you can take some dead aim at some of them.

20 I think it's a difficult course, especially the  
21 par 3s to get close to these pins. A lot of room off  
22 the tee on most of them but your sight lines are  
23 awkward, mainly because you just don't know how it  
24 plays, how different it plays with the variable wind  
25 conditions that we have. It's like number 3, the par 5,

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1 I hit four iron in the other day, it was blowing  
2 35 miles an hour behind us. Today it's blowing into us,  
3 there's no way, it was 600 yards. It's just ridiculous  
4 the difference between the two drives. It was 150 yards

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5 between where I hit it two days ago and today.

6 SPEAKER: Let me ask you a question. Do you  
7 subscribe to the theory that you have until you're about  
8 56 and then you hit the wall, or do you see it  
9 (inaudible), these were just exceptions to the rule? Do  
10 you think you basically have six years, or do you think  
11 it depends on the player?

12 FRED FUNK: Well, I think the stats prove out  
13 that that's pretty rare that you win after age 55 or 56  
14 out here, although I think it's changing a little bit  
15 because guys are really taking care of themselves,  
16 they're really working hard to stay competitive, they  
17 still love to compete.

18 You've got -- you know, I think Irwin, I think  
19 he's going to have a great year this year. Gil Morgan  
20 still hits the ball as good as ever at 63 or whatever he  
21 is, and Tom Watson speaks for himself, he's playing  
22 great.

23 The ball doesn't know how old you are. You  
24 just go out there and you play. These guys are hitting  
25 it plenty far and it's just a matter of how their short

1 games are that week and how well they're thinking  
2 because it's not a physical thing, it's more of a mental  
3 thing. So I don't think there's any big hurdles the guy  
4 has to -- he doesn't have to jump through a bunch of  
5 hoops to be competitive at the bigger age, it's just we  
6 are getting better competition coming out every year  
7 that are hungry when they come here. That's another big  
8 difference.

9 So you've got -- I think you can still be  
10 really competitive if you take care of yourself and

11 you're healthy and everything's working. You've got to  
12 have all your body parts working and you can compete  
13 with a guy that's coming out at 50, 51. I don't think  
14 it really matters, especially horses for courses.

15 I think for me and I would say for the better  
16 players, the harder the golf course, the better. The  
17 major venues, that's where I have my best record. Those  
18 are the weeks I really look forward to it, where it's a  
19 premium not on length. This golf course is a bomber's  
20 paradise and it doesn't do me any good really to worry  
21 about where I'm hitting my driver because these guys are  
22 going to be outdriving me by 50 yards on these wide open  
23 fairways on a lot of them.

24 So it's hard to beat them on a venue like this,  
25 but you give me a narrow with some high rough and you

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1 penalize the guys that are a little off, those are the  
2 kind of weeks I like. I don't think an age is that big  
3 a difference, that big a deal anymore, not as much.  
4 Those stats, it's hard to argue the stats. I don't  
5 think anybody over 55 won last year and Watson wins this  
6 first one at 60.

7 SPEAKER: I did a breakdown of the stats on  
8 2000s, the decade, and the number has come down. It  
9 used to be like 78 percent were between 50 and 55. I  
10 think it dropped a bunch -- not a bunch, but it went  
11 down in the 2000s that there were more guys winning past  
12 the age of 55 than in previous years.

13 SPEAKER: How do you look back on how you  
14 decided to share playing the PGA Tour and the Champions  
15 Tour?

16 FRED FUNK: Well, it kind of backfired because

17 of health reasons for me. I had this opportunity, and I  
18 still do, I can be exempt through 2012 out on the  
19 regular Tour. Fortunately, I've been pretty healthy  
20 throughout my whole career and all of a sudden the knee  
21 went crazy two years ago. I just haven't been healthy  
22 enough to do both. This year I'm not either, at least  
23 not at this point. I'm going to play four or five out  
24 there, but I really would like to take a year if I'm  
25 really healthy next year and maybe play a little more

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1 out there, not quite a half-and-half schedule but focus  
2 in on the big ones I like out here, the really good ones  
3 that are out here, and then focus on the really good  
4 ones that are out there that I really like, like the  
5 Hilton Heads and Colonials and those kind of  
6 tournaments.

7 I've got to pick and choose and that's tough.  
8 A lot of those tournaments that they have are opposite  
9 some of our good ones. If you want to win, if you want  
10 to do well in the Schwab Cup, then you've got to commit  
11 and that's the tough part. I really do want to do well  
12 in the Schwab Cup.

13 SPEAKER: If one of these guys asked you for  
14 advice on how to split doing it, what would you tell  
15 them? I guess it would depend on who was asking.

16 FRED FUNK: I don't think they would ask me  
17 because they know I'm totally confused. I think they  
18 would ask maybe a Lehman that's trying do it right now  
19 or some of the veterans like Watson and them when they  
20 were younger and they were trying to do it. But the  
21 Tour schedule's completely changed. When they condensed  
22 it with this Fed Ex Cup and pushed everything really

23 tight and some of the venues have changed where it's  
24 really more of bombers' courses out there that are big  
25 golf courses with a lot of room to hit it, I don't  
11  
1 belong on those. There's less and less out there that  
2 even if I tried to play a full schedule out there, it  
3 would be hard for me to pick 15 that I thought I could  
4 really compete on. No, I need to be hitting on all  
5 cylinders, I need to be hitting the ball really solid  
6 and then I play mistake-free golf pretty much. I'm just  
7 trying to keep everything right there in front of me. I  
8 can't overpower everything, so I've got to be careful  
9 where I go as far as venues.

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