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An Interview with:

SCOTT McCARRON

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for joining us at the Legends Reno/Tahoe Open media center room. You've had three top 10s in this tournament in the past, second in '04. And you had three top 10s this year, including a tie for 4th at the HP Byron Nelson Championship. In your estimation, sum up your year so far and what you're looking forward to this week.

SCOTT McCARRON: It's actually been a pretty good year. Moved from Reno in August of last year down to the desert, so I was able to prepare for the season a little better than I normally have up here in Reno. But we moved back here for the summer.

As soon as the kids got out of school we're back up here that next week and we stay here all summer long, which has been great. We get the best of both worlds as far as the weather is concerned. It has helped me for my game, preparing and getting ready for the start of the season. Been a pretty good year. Missed a couple of cuts; but I've had some good chances; three top 10s and had a couple other chances where I was in there, didn't play that well on the weekends.

But my game, I think, I feel is better than it's ever been. I'm driving it pretty darn straight. Third in accuracy. I feel like I wake up every morning I'm going to hit the ball pretty good. Nice feeling.

THE MODERATOR: Before we open for questions, talk about, it's been a busy week for you already, your involvement with First Tee and the clinic you're involved in. Talk about the community and your involvement with them.

SCOTT McCARRON: The First Tee Program, they're going to get over a thousand people going through that program this year.

So when my wife and I first got involved and got started we had about 20 kids. And it's really grown. And the people here have just done

an unbelievable job. Liza Schumacher has taken over and done a phenomenal job with the program.

We're happy to give back any chance we get. We had a nice clinic yesterday for about 40 kids. They had a skills challenge and it was a lot of fun. Last night, went out and threw out the first pitch at the Reno Aces baseball game. First game I've been down there at the new stadium. It's fantastic. A lot of fun, busy week and look forward to getting started tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Earlier this year you talked about a new way to read greens. Can you talk about how that came about and how it works?

SCOTT McCARRON: It's through a guy named Mark Sweeney. He does AimPoints on the Golf Channel. If you've ever seen the blue line that reads the greens, he's the guy that's come up with the technology to do that.

So he's got a system of how to read greens. And I worked with him right at the start of the season at the Bob Hope and started to put it in play pretty quick. And I really enjoyed what he's taught me. And I think it's a great way to read greens. It's certainly helped my game.

Q. Can you provide some detail?

SCOTT McCARRON: I could tell you but then I'd have to kill you. (Laughter).

Q. Go ahead.

SCOTT McCARRON: Basically he takes -- it's a mathematical approach. Every green at certain areas has a percentage of slope. And all our pins on the PGA TOUR have to be between .05 percentage of slope to, let's say, 3 percent.

Anything over a 3 percent slope on a 10.5 stemp green the ball is going to roll back. If you have an idea what the percentage of slope is, whether it's 1, 2, 3, 2.5, those type of things, if you know what the stemp is, what it's rolling out, then all you do is plug in, find the straight putt, wherever your ball is in relation to a clock it's going to break X. Now it seems very difficult and confusing when I explain it. Once you do it, it's so easy it's



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unbelievable.

Q. Are you typically an analytical sort of guy?

SCOTT McCARRON: I haven't been, just a feel and see a putt, see a line, go out there and putt it. But when I read a putt now, especially on something that's maybe playing front-to-back or left-to-right, depending on where I am, I know it's going to break three or four inches.

Now whether it breaks three inches or four inches it doesn't really matter, I've got a margin of error of four inches, basically. But definitely stroking the putt with a lot more confidence because now I have an idea, I'm confident what it's going to do. Where before you were guessing. Speed-wise, you have to hit the putt a certain speed a foot past the hole to use this chart. You're not jamming in putts. You're not dying in putts. Every putt you're trying to hit the same speed.

Q. Also if you could talk a little bit about the courtesy car issue this year. I know --

SCOTT McCARRON: I have the most unbelievable courtesy car this year. Thanks to SportHaus, I've sold cars through SportHaus and bought cars through SportHaus. So Mike Winkel at SportHaus has given me a twin turbo Carrera Porsche. So for me this is the best courtesy car I've had in 15 years. So I see no problem.

Q. I did see a couple guys driving Kia Rios the other day.

SCOTT McCARRON: I'd like to race them up the hill. I'll tell you what, most of us know what it takes to put on a PGA TOUR event. To have courtesy cars, it's an expense. It's an expense for somebody, whether we have to go out and purchase the time for the cars, renting it, or whether the dealerships around the local area have to donate the cars. We have to give something back.

So we know what it's taken, especially in these economic times, that's a very small price to pay to be able to put on a PGA TOUR event. So I haven't seen any guys complain about it. I used to rent cars all the time 15 years ago and it was no big deal.

Having courtesy cars each week has been a nice perk, and this is one week that you gotta rent one.

Q. If you could talk about the shape of the course and the contenders this week, who do you like out there?

SCOTT McCARRON: Well, the golf course is in great shape. I think it's probably the most lush I've ever seen it. It is green. It is healthy. We had some rain in June that's really helped the golf course.

The greens are actually rolling pretty well. We've had the poa annua creek banana guys are starting to see a lot of that. But I think they're rolling pretty smooth right now. They should be rolling about 11 or so, 11.5 on the stemp, depending on -- looks like we'll get some winds in the next couple of days, probably have to slow them down a little bit. We've got a lot of young guys, real good players that are playing this week.

I just played with a kid Nicholas Thompson, I like his game. You've got some grizzled veterans, Rocco Mediate, gave Tiger a run at the Open a year and a half ago. Some guys you haven't seen in a long time. Neal Lancaster played real well last week at Buick. And Guy Boros played well. We've got an eclectic group of young players and some older guys.

Q. The FedEx Cup points changed a little bit the way they do the points. Is it a good thing? How do you see that?

SCOTT McCARRON: I think it's a good thing, because the whole season means a little more. You carry over your points going into the FedEx Cup season as opposed to stopping and having a whole new point system.

Where last year, I played well right before the FedEx Cup. Finished second. Got in. Then I missed the first cut and was basically out. Where a guy like Kevin Sutherland was right around the point system. He finished second in that first one, and he's in all the way. It puts a lot of emphasis on the very first tournament. I like carrying over points to make the season more meaningful. And I think they did a good job.

Q. And also doing something on this tournament depending a lot on local caddies. I know you switched caddies about a year ago, did you not?

SCOTT McCARRON: I switched caddies because I was out for a year and a half and my caddie had to go out and get another job. When I came back I had to find another caddie. I found a

great one in Bradley Whittle. He's been out here 22, 23 years and won a major with Wayne Grady a long time ago. He's caddied for a lot of guys. He's a great guy. Happy to have him on the bag.

Q. Can you talk a little bit about when you pulled up on Monday or Tuesday do you get hit a lot from guys: Hey, do you have a caddie? That sort of stuff? Do you get it here?

SCOTT McCARRON: No, I don't. No. They know I have a regular caddie. And they know that I'm set.

Q. Before your surgery, you were kind of steadily improving, it would seem. You were on a track getting better. Do you feel like you're now kind of back to where you were sort of at your best before?

SCOTT McCARRON: Well, I honestly think I'm playing better golf than I ever have. Just being able to drive it -- I was always a long ball hitter but didn't know where it was going for a lot of years.

Now I feel like every morning I wake up I'm going to hit a lot of fairways. I've had to change my game. I don't know if that's because of, one, getting a little bit older not hitting as far or because of the surgery, I'm just not able to move the golf ball out there like I used to. So I've had to reinvent myself and be a little cagier and hit the fairways and hit more greens. But I do, I feel like I'm playing better now than I ever have.

Q. Did you have to retool your swing afterwards or pretty much went back to the same?

SCOTT McCARRON: Pretty much the same swing. I just can't quite go after it the same way. I've learned a lot. Worked really hard with Jim Hardy over the last few years and taking ownership of my swing, understanding my swing. Where before I relied on too much my teachers like Jim to fix me when I was off.

And I really started doing that at Byron Nelson a year ago, we sat down for about an hour, had about 30 questions for him: Why I do this? Why this happens? Started taking ownership of my own game. And I think that's been a big step for me. It's funny we do that at 40 something years old. I wish I would have done it at 25.

Q. That's interesting, because Parker McLachlin talked about the same thing, taking ownership of his swing. And he's a young guy.



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SCOTT McCARRON:

Parker won last year. And he realized after the last round that he felt he needed to change his swing and started working with Sean Foley and taking ownership of it as opposed to -- he was one of those guys, if his timing was off, he was all over the place. He's making great strides in controlling his golf ball again.

Q. There's been a lot said about this course being maybe too easy to drive the ball off the tee and you're hitting a lot of 8, 9s, and is that elevation? Is it the way the course was designed?

SCOTT McCARRON: Being a Jack Nicholas course, a lot of them are fairly wide open off the tee. Jack usually gives you a lot of room. I think it's more of a second shot golf course.

These greens are tricky. You can really tuck the pins. And there's a lot of elevation changes. So when we're dealing with elevation changes, the altitude, when you've got percentages, and now we're going to have wind the first couple days, this is not an easy golf course.

It will play very difficult. The winds all over the place, especially on the back nine start, to swirl a little bit because you're in the trees.

I think par-3 16 could be one of the toughest par-3s we play all year because of that, the wind swirling. If there's no wind, yeah, the golf course is -- we can tear it up pretty good, just because you're not going to get into too much trouble off the tees. But when you add the elements, the wind and take everything else into play, it can be pretty tricky.

Q. Do you have any rituals or routines going into tomorrow's tournament? Do you do anything special today to get ready for tomorrow?

SCOTT McCARRON: I'm playing in the Pro-Am at 1:40. And then teeing off really early morning on Thursday. It will be like continuous golf. I think we all have some rituals and routines we do.

I certainly have rituals and routines when I get to the golf course: Making sandwiches to take out on the golf course, what I eat on the golf course. Try to keep that pretty much the same.

There's a lot of things, especially when you travel week in and week out, you try and make it exactly the same every time you tee it up so you feel the same as close as possible.

Q. Is that hard to do going --

SCOTT McCARRON: It's harder to do -- it can be harder to do especially this week when I have a lot more demands on my time and a lot more things going on. But still first and foremost I've got to play in a golf tournament and I've come here to play to win. I have to do the same things I always do.

Q. Is there any key to winning here? What is the most important thing?

SCOTT McCARRON: Shoot the lowest score, obviously.

Q. Besides that. Is it driving the ball off the tee?

SCOTT McCARRON: It's not so much driving, because, again, it's very wide quarters we get to hit off. It's second shots and it's reading these greens.

I don't know what the statistics are, but these greens have got to be the toughest greens to putt on TOUR just because you have Mount Rose slope on this whole golf course is built on a very, very severe slope.

So putts look like they're breaking one way, they go the other way. You've got to have a lot of knowledge. We've played here enough years that guys are starting to figure that out. But I think putting is probably one of the biggest keys here this week.

Q. Do you have an advantage; you've lived here, played here a lot, do you think that gives you anything else over anybody else?

SCOTT McCARRON: I think it's two-fold. I think there's certainly an advantage, anytime you can play a golf course more than the other guys, you have an advantage.

I don't get to play here as much as I used to, just because I've been traveling so much. I think I've only played here once or twice leading into this tournament. So it's difficult to say that that's an advantage coming in.

But I've certainly logged more rounds here than probably anybody else. And with that being said, sleeping in your own bed and having some friends and family around, I think it certainly can be an advantage.

THE MODERATOR: One last thing, you mentioned the 16th hole. This week is the Kodak challenge hole, the year-long competition, million dollar purse at the end. Is there much talk in the locker room about that? I know it's in the middle of the room, the guys are paying attention to it. Are they talking about it a little bit?

SCOTT McCARRON: Yeah. I know Chris DiMarco is really big on winning this thing. We like to give Chris a few jabs every now and then, always ask him what did you do on the Kodak hole.

Guys are talking about it. It's a million dollars. That's a big deal. The start of the year guys weren't thinking too much about it. But certainly now, as it's coming down to crunch time, yeah, guys -- I birdied the Kodak hole last week. I thought there's one more. But a couple guys have a pretty good lead on me, so I'll have to do something special.

THE MODERATOR: Of course Chris being from Orlando in the final event that's where it's going to be culminated and decided, so I guess he's probably pretty focused.

SCOTT McCARRON: He's jacked up for this Kodak thing. He'd rather do that than make the Ryder Cup team, I think. (Laughter)

THE MODERATOR: Thank you so much.

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