

24 January 2012



Preview Interview With:

TIGER WOODS

SCOTT CROCKETT: Thanks, as always for coming and joining us. Tiger, very many thanks for you for coming and joining us. Welcome and happy new year to you.

TIGER WOODS: Thank you.

SCOTT CROCKETT: We are used to seeing you over here on The European Tour but in this part of the world in Dubai. Give us your thoughts on being here this week in Abu Dhabi.

TIGER WOODS: My first time Abu Dhabi. I've been to Dubai numerous times. HSBC has been a huge supporter of my foundation for years, and played in the Shanghai event, and just have not played this one until this week, so I'm looking forward to it. I hear nothing but positive things of the golf course. I know it's been a long one. But somehow the scores seem to be pretty low.

So it will be nice to get out there today this afternoon and kind of take a look at it and see how it's playing, and trying to figure out my sight lines and some of the green speeds.

SCOTT CROCKETT: The end of last year was very positive for you, obviously with the win in the Chevron and also your performance in Australia which was encouraging. Does that give you an extra impetus coming into this year?

TIGER WOODS: I think Australia was pretty big for me to go down there for two weeks and play in that type of wind, and to hit the ball as well as I did, I really controlled my golf ball for two weeks, and you know, I think that led to what I did at the World Challenge. I hit the ball just as well there, and made a couple of putts, and especially on the last two holes there. You know, consequently, got a W.

SCOTT CROCKETT: You said in the TV interviews, you feel in good shape; are you looking forward to the year with a healthy mind and body.

TIGER WOODS: Actually it's been quite a few years since I've been physically fit. So I'm looking forward to getting out there and then playing and give it a full season, which I haven't done in a while, so I'm really looking forward to it.

Q. When was the last season you think when you went out and you felt 100 per cent, no pain?

TIGER WOODS: I don't know, probably -- I don't know, eight, ten, 12 years ago.

Q. Seriously, so, what, 2003? 2004?

TIGER WOODS: Well, I had surgery in 2002. I had surgery in 2008. A couple other ones in there, too. It's been a while.

Q. And what have you been doing the last six weeks since Chevron?

TIGER WOODS: I took two weeks off. I didn't do anything golf-wise. And then after that, started to gradually kind of progress into the game. I started from the green back, like I normally do, putting and chipping, eventually irons and ultimately driver and then playing golf.

So just what I normally do this time of year. So it was nice to kind of get away from it for a little bit. I've worked really, really hard getting ready for Australia, and then the World Challenge, and it was nice to kind of take a couple-week break and just get away from the game for a little bit.

Q. Having obviously described and saying that it was nice to get away from the game, was there in any sense a feeling of frustration that the close of the season came when it did, given the form that you had shown going into it?

TIGER WOODS: No, not at all. Because I went quite a bit of energy getting ready for those three events, and I really did need to take a break. Just kind of more mentally than anything, just get away from the game, because I was working hard

and just really into try to get any game peaking for those events. I spent quite a bit of time just preparing, and you know, when I have kind of set my mind to something like that, I need to take a break from it.

So it was nice to take that break. It's the only reason why I take breaks throughout the year, because I set out certain goals throughout the year and try to get ready. Since I was not able to get ready for the major championship season last year, I kind of spent a lot of my energy getting ready for those three events, and turned out to be pretty good.

Q. Was there any regret or tough decision at all because Torrey is this week, and it's been so good to you; you've had so much success there, and it's been a good launching point to a lot of seasons for you. If you would just talk about not playing that event.

TIGER WOODS: Yeah, you know, Torrey has been a golf course I have enjoyed playing since junior golf, since I used to play at the Junior World there. Unfortunately just scheduling-wise, it just didn't work out.

As I said, HSBC has been a huge supporter of the foundation. It's one of the reasons why I'm here.

Q. You've had great affinity with Dubai all these years, and if you had to point out just one factor, which really attracted you to come Abu Dhabi this week, what would that be? And secondly, can you tell us how your experience was for the photo shoot this morning?

TIGER WOODS: There are probably several reasons why I've wanted to come Abu Dhabi. The guys who have played here have said just wonderful things. As I said so far a few times earlier is that HSBC has been a huge supporter of my foundation for years.

You know, I've tried to make it a requisite that I'm playing different places throughout the year and playing new events. I'm trying to play new events, and this is a new event for me. I've never played here before, and this is exciting for me, and this is an incredible field that they have assembled here. So looking forward to getting out there and playing.

As far as what we did earlier, it certainly was interesting (smiling). We are supposed to be following the guys at the bottom, the rhythm, but the guys up on top are at a completely different rhythm. So I didn't know who we were supposed

to follow. Rory and I were trying to figure it out, what we were supposed to do. The guys at the bottom were doing it at one pace, and the guys up top are doing it at a completely different pace, and who do we copy? So as I said, it was interesting (smiling).

Q. Along those lines, you being healthy for the first time, I'm sure this is the off-season you could train as hard as you want to and hit as many balls as you want to; what kind of confidence does that give you coming into the season?

TIGER WOODS: Well, I haven't been able to practise until I got healthy and that's what was exciting about going down to Australia. I was finally healthy enough to practise, and I had not practised a whole lot after I got hurt at Augusta.

You know, I missed most of the year, and then to finally be able to get ready for a tournament properly and to do the type of lifting that I think I need to do to be ready, I was finally able to do that; and hence, my game came around, so it's very exciting.

Q. When you talk about schedule, what sort of tournament numbers are you talking about this year?

TIGER WOODS: It will be my normal full schedule, so whatever that number normally is. It's in the 20s. It will be about that.

Q. Can I ask you a follow-up question? Are you the sort of person to make a New Year's resolution, and if so, what would that be?

TIGER WOODS: Yeah, just get better. Just every part of my life, just try and get better.

Q. Does the payment of appearance fees ever influence your scheduling?

TIGER WOODS: You know, I'd have to say yes, it certainly does. That's one of the reasons why a lot of the guys who play in Europe, they do play in Europe, and they do get paid. I think the only tour that doesn't pay is the U.S. Tour.

But, you know, a lot of the guys play all around the world and they do get appearance fees. Only place we don't get it is the U.S.

Q. And there was a report this week

saying you had cut your price for this week; can you comment on that, if it's true or not?

TIGER WOODS: Do you know what it is? (Laughter) okay then.

Q. \$50?

TIGER WOODS: (Smiling).

Q. Luke Donald raised some eyebrows at the end of last year, identifying Rory McIlroy as having the most talent he had ever seen, more even than you in your prime; I just wondered if you could talk to whether you see Rory as the most talented player you've ever seen, and also how you see Luke Donald's accomplishments and whether he deserves his world No. 1 ranking, despite not having won a major?

TIGER WOODS: Well, you don't have to win a major to become the No. 1 player in the world; you have to be consistent. You have to play well in the big events, and it's about accumulating points. That's how the system has developed.

But as far as being the most talented player, I think the most talented player that I've ever seen in person was Seve. Never seen a person do the things with the golf ball that he was able to do and the creativeness that he was able to do. To me, he certainly had the most talent that I had ever seen in person. I had never saw Hogan hit a golf ball. Never saw Mr. Nelson hit a golf ball. I never saw Jack in his prime. But I did see Seve when I first came out here, and I was able to play with him a few times; it was impressive.

Q. Looking ahead this year, what are your goals in terms of winning a major, winning a certain number of tournaments, and what would prevent you from winning seven, eight tournaments, like you did in your heyday?

TIGER WOODS: I'm looking forward to -- the game plan is still the same. Every event I play in is to try and win. That's what's going to hold me back is obviously if I don't play well, and there's also going to be 155 other guys in the field that are going to have a chance, as well.

There's a number of factors, and that's what makes golf so interesting; that it is very difficult to win golf tournaments. And to do it consistently over a long period of time, it's not easy to do.

Q. Going into the season and this tournament, do you have a vibe at all about

how things are going to go this year? Are you positive, or is that something that never really affects your game?

TIGER WOODS: Well, something I'm looking forward to this year. That's something that -- I have to say, because I was able to prepare and get fit enough to prepare last year and towards the end of the year. I demonstrated to myself what I can do with implementing what Sean wants me to do on the golf swing; if I'm physically fit to do it.

Played really well my last three events, so I'm really looking forward to this year, and continuing and building on what we have done towards the end of last year for sure.

Q. You've said you were upset that Hank is bringing a book out; it follows the fact that Steve put his foot in his mouth a few times. I just wonder how disappointing it is when people fail to repay the trust that you've put in them and how much of a distraction it is when you say that you're mentally healthy for the first time.

TIGER WOODS: Certainly it's something that I have to deal with. I get asked at press conferences what these guys have done, and that's just part of it.

Am I disappointed? Yes. Frustrated? Certainly, because I have to answer the questions. And it's not -- it's been a while, you know, since I haven't had to answer those questions. So I've answered them and I guess I'll have to continue doing it.

Hopefully they won't -- this will come to an end.

Q. Could you see Abu Dhabi being your season opener for the foreseeable future, or in some senses, is this a trial and Torrey Pines won't be ruled out in the long run?

TIGER WOODS: You know, obviously it's just scheduling, too. I've wanted to play in this event, and Torrey has been -- I wouldn't say I haven't started out every year there, but certainly in the last few years, I've started out there.

Since I'm not playing Dubai this year, decided to have another tournament here and just happened to work out to be this one. For the foreseeable future, who knows. I don't know what the scheduling could be down the road. I haven't looked at next year's schedule and foreseeable years after that. Once we figure that out, I'll let you

know.

Q. How would you see appearance fees working on the PGA Tour, and would you see any negative in it? Obviously it's against the rules there and has not been done, but could you see any benefit or are there too many negatives to it?

TIGER WOODS: Well, I think that where we offset it is our prize money is pretty high. We certainly play for more money than any other tour in the world, and the average winning -- I think the average winner gets a million bucks a week, so that's more than any other tournament, or any other tour, on average.

So I think that we have at availability to play for more money than any other tour.

Q. I'm not sure if you're aware or have any interest in, but there's a test match cricket going on?

TIGER WOODS: Yeah.

Q. Are you interested in cricket? Cricketers are very interested in golf; are you going to pop in tomorrow afternoon?

TIGER WOODS: No, I'm a baseball guy. But have I followed cricket? I have, a little bit. From what I just saw in the news, it's been -- I think it's been like a batsman's paradise here. That's all I know; what, three guys have gone for centuries or something like, that whatever it is. I don't know.

But as far as watching cricket, I do watch, absolutely. Especially when I'm travelling overseas. But my being from the U.S., our passion is baseball, or football.

Q. Can I just ask whether that interest in cricket comes from the similarity to baseball, or is there something someone's taught you about it?

TIGER WOODS: Yeah, you know, because I grew up playing baseball. I was a pitcher myself and my dad was the catcher. My dad played in the negro leagues, professional ball. That type of game certainly has been in my blood. And then to travel around the world and see the passion that people have for cricket -- you know, baseball is huge in Japan and the U.S., and pretty much the Caribbean area, but outside of that, cricket is just huge.

So as I've travelled and I've played all around the world, I've started to watch more and more. I've met some of the guys; that certainly

helps, provides more interest in it. Because now you have a personal interest in it, so that's what makes it a little bit more exciting.

Q. Could you talk a little bit about Luke Donald's achievement last year in winning both Money Lists? Obviously you've done it in monetary terms, but not as a Member of The European Tour in the past. How great of an achievement was that in your estimation?

TIGER WOODS: Yeah, it's a heck of an achievement to have to play both tours full-time and the travel that that takes, and the consistency that you must have to do that.

Luke played, seemed like he was in the Top-10 in just about every tournament he played in, and that's the only way you're going to do it. You've got to get wins and you've got to finish Top-10s every time you tee it up in order to pull something like that off; especially in the bigger events, obviously the bigger purses, that's the only way you can do it. He was very consistent throughout the year. He got W's along the way. He deserved to get it.

Q. You've obviously said a year without a major year is not a great year. Do you get a sense that this is going to be a great year, because it's been a while by your standards?

TIGER WOODS: Yeah, who knows. Unless you have a crystal ball and you want to tell me about it, I don't know. Looking forward to it, though.

Q. Who is the best player in the world right now, and is it important for you to be the best player in the world again, or is it more important for you to chase Jack's record in Majors?

TIGER WOODS: I think it's just getting W's along the way. That's what I'm trying to do, trying to get better each and every year and try to get wins. Unfortunately I only had one win last year and I would like to get more than that this year. Really looking forward to that.

Q. So who is the best player in the world?

TIGER WOODS: I think Luke is ranked No. 1, isn't he.

Q. I think you talked last year about the

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one-way miss; at Chevron and the Australian Open, you showed a much different swing and it had come along; do you still feel that way?

TIGER WOODS: Yeah, I was able to control the ball in that wind. Hit it all different traqs and all different shapes. As I said, that was a big stepping stone for us. To play and put myself in contention and almost win the Australian Open, and then play even better at The Presidents Cup. That led into what I did at the World Challenge. It was just a building process. It was something that, I had to get healthy first, and once I did, that things started snowballing the correct way.

Q. Obviously the last two stroke-play events in contention: You win one; you're in the battle in Australia the last day. Did it feel any different than the old days, or did it come right back like you've been doing it forever, or did it seem different, because you had not been there that much?

TIGER WOODS: You know, that's a great question, because Notah asked me that same thing after Chevron, after the World Challenge there. He said, "Did it feel different?"

I said, "No."

He told me, "It's not supposed to."

I know how to get it done. I've been there before and it shouldn't feel any different. Just like what -- it's funny, they asked the same question of Jack in '86; did it feel any different out there. It didn't. (Smile.)

You just go out there and you play, and you just continue building and you focus on what you're trying to do to win the tournament. I think that's where a lot of my past successes allowed me to be able to do that.

I've won at all levels, from junior golf to amateur golf to professional golf, so I think a lot of that experience certainly helps.

Q. Did you ever think Hank would write a book about you?

TIGER WOODS: No.

Q. And if not, why not? Why did you think he wouldn't?

TIGER WOODS: I don't know.

Q. And just when something like that -- is it difficult to trust anybody, if everything is just going to get revealed in books and statements and telly and everything?

TIGER WOODS: One might say that.

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Q. That must be sort of sad in a way.

TIGER WOODS: You think it's sad?

Q. Do you think it's sad?

TIGER WOODS: I'm asking you.

Q. I find it sad, yeah.

TIGER WOODS: Okay. There you go. (Smiling).

Q. It's on the book subject again, I'm afraid.

TIGER WOODS: Yep.

Q. I'm assuming you would appreciate why people in general and golfers in particular would like an insight into your game and swing and how things have developed. Please tell me what's so wrong about Hank writing a book about you?

TIGER WOODS: I think I've answered all the questions on that.

Q. What's so wrong --

TIGER WOODS: I think I already have. I'm sorry.

Q. Not mine, I'm afraid. Thank you all the same.

SCOTT CROCKETT: Do we have one more question on golf?

Q. I'd like to know why you -- what it is that you love about golf, why do you love golf?

TIGER WOODS: You know, that's a question I got asked out there earlier. I've played other sports. I've played baseball and ran track and ran cross-country. I like doing it but I didn't love it. I love golf and I love what it takes to prepare and be successful at it, and I have so many great memories from it, a lot of it stems from the great times I had with my dad; late in the evenings my dad getting off of work and my dad and I going out there and practising together.

Those are just incredible memories to me, and now as a parent myself, and to be able to go out there with my little boy, Charlie, and to do the same things, and he's kind of taken to the game. It's just fun. To me, that's what I look back on my childhood and what golf brought to me, and it's just nothing but joy.

SCOTT CROCKETT: Tiger, we said earlier it's good to have you with us good luck this week.

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