

**PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW**  
**July 29, 2020**



**MIKE WEIR**

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**CHRIS RICHARDS:** So, Mike, do you want to just talk about how excited you are to be out here for your debut on PGA TOUR Champions?

**MIKE WEIR:** Yeah, I was excited. I was excited back in May when I turned 50, for the other event that was supposed to be in Michigan here for the Senior PGA. Obviously, here we are now, and been anticipating this for a while. Yeah, really excited. A golf course I know, played a number of years in the late '90s, early 2000s. This is actually a course I Monday qualified for one of my first PGA TOUR events. I think maybe I was still in college or was just out of college and I Monday qualified for this event. Great memories. I actually made the cut. I remember getting paired with Mark O'Meara on the weekend one of the rounds. So great memories out here and close to home.

**CHRIS RICHARDS:** Talk about not only coming back to a place you're familiar with, but also so many friendships and players you've known for decades. What's that been like, just on two different fronts?

**MIKE WEIR:** Yeah, two different fronts, to kind of get back and see some of the guys that I played on the Tour with, guys I looked up to when I first got on the Tour and actually played a lot of my practice rounds with. I tend to always gravitate towards the older guys and trying to learn from them, even in my 20s, when those guys were in their 30s and 40s. So there's a lot of guys out here that I've always admired and respected. They're still playing great golf. I have no illusions that you can just walk out here and you think you're just going to play great. You have to put in the work and you have to be ready to play and compete. Guys do some great scoring out here.

**CHRIS RICHARDS:** Who are some of those players that you remember playing with?

**MIKE WEIR:** Couples and Bernhard and Davis Love and O'Meara, and Fred Funk I played a lot with. Yeah, so there's a bunch of guys. Yesterday was my first day on site, got to see a few of those guys, so I'm sure over the coming weeks I'll get to catch up with a lot of them.

**CHRIS RICHARDS:** I'll open it up for questions.

**Q. How's it feel to be on the Tour of Champions now that you're here and so forth? Do you feel older?**

**MIKE WEIR:** I don't, really. I guess when I'm warming up and hitting balls and getting started, that's when you kind of feel it. Once I get in the flow of the swing and stuff, I feel pretty good. The warmup takes a little longer to get going than probably back in my 20s and

30s. But I feel good and ready to -- we have a -- we have a big stretch of tournaments here. We have one week off next week and then it kind of gets into the full mode of the season. I was trying to anticipate that and be ready for that physically, to play eight of nine weeks or something like that. I haven't done that in years. I played a couple of events in a row, had a month off, played one event, had a couple weeks off. That's kind of how my schedule's gone the last five, six years probably. So it will be nice to get in the flow of tournaments and playing week after week. That's when you really get to see where your game's at and where you need to tweak it and kind of keep moving forward.

**Q. Tell me about the course, because you played it under the Buick Open before. This is the Ally Challenge, but this is not your typical Ally Challenge. There's no grandstands, there's no 17, there's none of this thing. Tell us about your impressions of the golf course now that it's scaled down, I suppose.**

**MIKE WEIR:** Well, yeah, it's kind of -- I relate it to when I go play Augusta maybe a month before the tournament, when they're just prepping the golf course. It's just a golf course without all the fans and the grandstands. That's what this feels like. I remember it with the fans, and they always had a great turnout here, and of course 17.

But the golf course still has held up well over the years. It's in tremendous condition. That rain didn't help. I think the course was starting to play nice and firm when I played yesterday, and the greens were quick and starting to get a little bounce to them. I'm sure that's what they would have loved to see it play like that, but that rain softened things up a little bit.

It's held up well over the years. I haven't been here in 15 years or so. The course is still great, but obviously with the situation we're in, it's a little different atmosphere without the fans and grandstands and things.

**Q. They added a couple bunkers on 12 and 14. I'm wondering how the players like changes to classic courses that you've been to a dozen times before. Do you like seeing that, and why or why not?**

**MIKE WEIR:** I don't mind it. I don't mind seeing some changes. I think with today's game adding some bunkers to think about, instead of just driving it on the green with today's technology, is smart to do that. I think those are nice changes on those two holes. Overall, I think maybe for this tour you don't have to do as much. Obviously, for the PGA TOUR, with where the game is, you have to do some significant changes. Otherwise, these great golf courses are pitch and putt courses. I don't mind change as long as they're done smartly and with great intention to counteract what's going on.

**Q. The players describe Warwick Hills as a place they like to come to because it's fair, you hit a good shot, you get rewarded. Is this the ideal place to start your Champions Tour career?**

**MIKE WEIR:** Yeah, I think that's a good assessment. I think it's a very fair golf course.

There's a little bit of rough, and if you hit the ball in the fairway, you can attack the pins. If you don't, you're going to be playing a little bit defense. There's nothing gimmicky about it. It's just a nice, old-school, traditional country club that I think most of us guys around my age enjoy playing. I think, yeah. I'm sorry, second part?

**Q. As far as starting your --**

**MIKE WEIR:** Yeah, I think it's a good start. I'm very familiar with the place. It's kind of near my neck of the woods where I grew up, so it's a familiar feel to where I grew up in Ontario, type golf course. Yeah, good place to start.

**Q. What would it be like to win the Ally Challenge in your Champions Tour debut?**

**MIKE WEIR:** Well, obviously, I'm not thinking that far ahead of winning, but if that were to happen, obviously this would be really special to kick off the start. I just want to play good, solid. I would love to get in contention and see how I handle that, because it's been a while. But my game feels in a good place. If I play well, I think I could contend here.

**Q. We're right in the middle of a pandemic, so has it changed any way that you've prepared for this upcoming season?**

**MIKE WEIR:** Well, I think for myself, I've only played a handful of tournaments. I guess looking that we're in the end of July here and I've only played six or seven events -- most of us probably aren't very tournament-sharp and that sometimes leads to making some little silly mistakes sometimes, when you're not tournament-sharp, so need to be mindful of that.

But outside of that, a little more time at home, for sure, just practicing and playing with buddies rather than playing competitive golf.

For myself, it's exciting to get back to tournament golf. Then we have the little subtleties that everybody has to deal with, with testing and everything. Those are some of the changes.

**Q. How difficult do you think it will be to go through competition without fans on the course? I know when we talked to a couple other players, they talked about how that helps maybe build momentum or adrenaline. Have you thought about how difficult or easy or what changes that will be like?**

**MIKE WEIR:** Well, I've played three or four Korn Ferry events, three, I think, and it was -- there was no fans. So kind of used to that. It does have the feel of just kind of going out with your buddies, but at the same time you know it's a tournament and you want to play well. I think kind of the opposite. I enjoy having the fans. I would rather have the energy of the crowd. When you get going, you can kind of really thrive off that. I don't know. For me, I have to probably try to bring my energy up to match that, and that gets your attention better and your focus a little bit better when you're in that mode.

**Q. Without grandstands and people, does it change the way you approach certain holes, maybe your aiming points that you had way back when?**

**MIKE WEIR:** I don't know so much. Yeah, maybe sometimes with fans it frames a hole or you might be able to aim at a grandstand in a distance, a corner of a grandstand. You just have to look at the natural things, trees and things, to pick your aiming points. Those little subtleties I think, yeah.

**Q. Does it affect your depth perception from the standpoint of when the grandstands are there or not there?**

**MIKE WEIR:** I haven't really thought of that. Possibly. At the same time, when we're home playing regular golf, you're not playing with fans and you kind of get used to that. Sometimes -- there's no doubt when you're in competition, you're in the heat of the moment and you have big crowds around, it tends to frame things in nicely and that's -- I've always kind of enjoyed that. Kind of brings the attention in a little bit more.

**CHRIS RICHARDS:** Anything else for Mike? Thanks, Mike.

**MIKE WEIR:** Appreciate it. Thank you.