



INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: PAULA CREAMER
Wednesday, May 18, 2011

MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome Paula Creamer, who's the number 10 seed in the 2011 Sybase Match Play Championship. You'll take on Aree Song tomorrow.

Paula, if you would, just talk about being here in match play. You weren't able to be here last year because of your injury. What's it like to be back?

PAULA CREAMER: It's nice to be back. They switched the nines, that was really the biggest difference that I noticed. The golf course is playing really long. It's a good thing kind of that you're playing your opponent; you don't really have to worry much about playing the actual golf course, you just have to beat the person that you're playing.

But the greens are really good. For as much rain as we've had here, they're pretty quick. You know, they're soft, but like I said, you're just playing your opponent, you're not playing the course as much.

MODERATOR: If you would just talk a little bit about your first round match-up, what you're looking forward to.

PAULA CREAMER: Yeah, it's going to be a good match against Aree. I know she got her card in the fall so this is -- she had such a good junior amateur career and everybody remembers that putt that she made at Kraft that one year on 18 for eagle, but she's a really strong player. I know that I'm not going -- I'm going to have to go out there and play some good golf and not take anything for granted, see what happens. That's the greatest thing about match play, you never know, just me versus her.

MODERATOR: Questions for Paula?

Q. Welcome back.

PAULA CREAMER: Thank you.

Q. Two things. What about this being the place of your first LPGA win and how much that means, but also coming back here in playing in less than perfect conditions. I know you're playing one-on-one, but (inaudible) you played on any course?

PAULA CREAMER: Well, I won the Sybase but it was actually at Wykagyl, before it moved here. So obviously (inaudible) being part of SAP which is one of my sponsors. I feel good to be here and know that I'm excited to play. I love match play, and the fact that the golf course is playing much different than what we played before, used to be -- when I played it last, it was I think more in the summer, so it was playing hard and firm and there was holes where we were hitting wedge into and now we're hitting 5-irons and 7-woods, so it's a completely different golf course. It's playing -- with the heavy air and the rain, it's just playing long and, you know, hopefully we don't get too much today. I think we've been lucky so far because it differently needs to dry out.

Q. How does it change the way you play the game, though, as far as having to deal with the soggy conditions, just heavier air, that kind of stuff?

PAULA CREAMER: It just -- you've got to add more club. Unfortunately, you have to pull some more head covers off than what the golf course is made to. Hopefully they move up some of the tees because of the setup. There's some holes where it just is not meant to be played that way, but it is match play so it's a different concept of the way you think and the way you set it up because now it doesn't really matter, it's just what you're playing against your opponent.

Q. You said you love match play. Can you just talk about what you love about it and what makes it what you enjoy?

PAULA CREAMER: I've always loved match play. I think it's great because also we don't get to play it very often. We play Solheim Cup every other year and we play this event once a year. It's just a lot of fun. I love playing one-on-one. You know, you have to go out and make birdies, you have to -- sometimes par wins. It's just any given person's day. When we play golf normally, you're playing for four days. Well, right now I'm just playing for that one match and you can't get too far ahead of yourself and you have to be thinking about that match at that time and I like that. I like being able to, you know, play against someone. I think it's a lot of fun. It's a great way to play the game.

Q. Obviously your sport in general is always fighting for its attention, portion of attention, and especially when you come around here. Do you think matches might compel fans a little bit more? Personally speaking, what do you think would help women's golf grow in popularity?

PAULA CREAMER: Just new things, new exciting things, different ways to make the game creative. It will always be a gentleman's game, you never want to take that away from it, but match play is a fun way to play golf. It gets the fans involved. It just -- who knows what's going to happen. You could have -- look on paper and it should be a definite win, but it doesn't necessarily come out that way. Sometimes underdogs will win and I think that's a neat thing for sports in general.

For golf, I do think that we're kind of being more creative, ways that we portray ourselves and go out there with tournaments, and right now I think that's a necessary thing to do, but as long as we don't get too far out of the box, I think that will -- starting to draw more attention to the game.

Q. Does a day go by yet where you're not asked about finally winning a major? And looking back on having won that, was not winning one to that point kind of like an albatross, you get the proverbial monkey off your back?

PAULA CREAMER: Oh, without a doubt. Now it's not -- now that you've won your first major, it's when are you going to win your next one? I was like, man, I thought it was over after you won the first one. I always looked at a person's career by how many majors they've won and I definitely don't want to just have one, I want to have multiple. But to have two, you've got to have one, so for me, that was huge.

It was an unbelievable week, just with everything that I had to overcome. I was in a lot of pain, but at the same time it was what I had to do. And having it, you know, my first win be a Women's Open, being an American, being very patriotic, it was pretty neat. I've come so close in the past, maybe it was just meant to be in a sense, to be at Oakmont with the tradition, the history, all the top players there, I couldn't have been happier to be grouped with them.

Q. (Inaudible) heart of the LPGA schedule, tournaments in America, lot of majors coming up. Could you tell me a little bit, is it strange, this seven or eight week stretch (inaudible) is hot right now or emerge as the player of the year right now, just talk a little bit about playing well this time of year.

PAULA CREAMER: For me, it's been a pretty hard year, just being able to try to figure out how to prepare for one tournament in a week and then you get three weeks off. I'm a person that likes to play a lot, so I'm really looking forward to this next seven, eight week stretch where I can actually get out there and start playing and find my momentum.

A lot of players, you know, they base their schedule by the majors or how they're going to play. I'm a person that likes to play so I'm kind of glad that it's all going to be grouped in. Now we're getting back to what I'm used to, of playing a lot of

tournaments, so I'm looking forward to that. It's tough that, yeah, eight weeks right now, we're going to have to play the best golf that you can because that's where the heart of the tournaments are. But it's the way it is and we're just going to have to go out there. I've been working really hard. I've been trying to get back on track with things and I feel like my game is definitely coming to where I want it to be.

Q. Obviously you want to play well in every event you enter, but the way the schedule's set up, is each event even heightened in performance because you only have so many chances to sort of make your mark?

PAULA CREAMER: Without a doubt, you do have to go into every tournament like it's a major in a sense because we don't have as many. You have to play well. You can't get too far behind in the race to Number 1 or any of that because we don't have that many. Not something that I looked at. And unfortunately I haven't quite had the start that I wanted, but we still have a lot of tournaments left and hopefully I can get back into the mix of that.

Q. When you won at Wykagyl in rain, much was made of your ability to play in the rain. Is it still the case, that you're a mudder?

PAULA CREAMER: I am definitely a mudder. I like grinding it out. I like playing when it's cold. I like playing when it's rainy. I think it's fun. I think the tough competitors prevail from that. I think that they -- you know, you have that, you have to have the heart to play in the nasty conditions out there, and unfortunately golf's not the best sport to be playing in the mud. I would rather be playing football or something, but it is what it is.

My dad and I when I was younger always practiced in the rain, but he made it a lot of fun for me. Coming out here, I remember hitting out of puddles and things like that, so I still have a lot of happy memories of playing in the rain. Winning at Wykagyl, you know, we had to pop open the umbrellas it was raining so much. So I do like that, I like playing in the tougher conditions.

Q. Do you root for rain?

PAULA CREAMER: Sure, unless there's lightening. Other than that, I do, I like it when it's hard. I like it when it's a little more difficult than the average 80-degree sunny weather. Golf's hard enough, so let's make it harder.

Q. Any head games when you play match play?

PAULA CREAMER: Definitely, there's always those little things that you can do out there. You know, you have little things about who's going to putt, that kind of stuff, you know.

Q. Do you?

PAULA CREAMER: Do I? Not necessarily. No, I just go out and try to make as many birdies as I can. The biggest thing about match play, you can't give anybody any extra, you know, free shots out there. You have to definitely make your pars, make somebody make birdie on every hole. You've got to take advantage of holes when they come up. Par 5s are going to be big out here this week because the par 4s are so long, so the short game's going to have to play a factor. Head games, some people play them, some people don't. You just have to know your opponent.

Q. Continuing on with the head game theme, what do you -- I don't know what word to use, nasty and say make that 2-footer?

PAULA CREAMER: It depends, it all depends on the way the match is going. You know, when you play certain people, I guess, you know their strengths and their weaknesses, but there's not like a moment where you say, oh, this (inaudible), I'm going to make you putt out a 3-footer, that type of thing. You just have to feel your way through the match.

Q. On Tour this year, I think this is the fifth or sixth event, only the third or fourth in the U.S. What can the Tour do to get more events so that it's a full season?

PAULA CREAMER: That's a question I think we're all asking ourselves, but I think our commissioner, he's doing a really good job with getting prospects of new sponsors and trying to figure it out. It's been tough for everybody. Unfortunately, our Tour has taken the brunt of that and the sponsors and whatnot, but there's a lot of people that are renewing, which is a good thing. We have to look at the positives. It's easy to look at the negatives all the time, and we do need to kind of fight through it and just grind it out and hopefully, by the next year, the year after that, we do have our 30-odd tournaments out here. Hopefully we get some more tournaments in the States, and I think that's what all the girls want, even the international girls. We want to play here. This is our home. Everybody has houses here, this is where we want to be, and I think that kind of gets overlooked in the fact but we do want to play here. But I'm a global player and I don't mind going overseas and traveling, but I do want to play here as well.

Q. Share your impressions having won the U.S. Open (inaudible.)

PAULA CREAMER: I have not been to the museum. I was going to try to make my way out there this week. We don't get very often to come up into the New Jersey area, especially when we are this close, but hopefully this week I'll have some time between rounds or whatnot to get out there and visit it.

Q. With the schedule, did you change your physical approach at all? Is it more like you try to simulate tournaments or how does that work in your off time?

PAULA CREAMER: I've taken my off weeks a little bit differently than looking back on it now I probably should have changed a little bit of ways. I should have played more tournaments in the off weeks, whether it's Sun Coast Series or whatnot. But I've done a lot with my sponsors, I've done a lot with them, I went to the Masters, things like that again. I've tried to make my time -- you know, do things as much as I could.

But at the same time I've really been trying to rebuild my golf swing, so I've been working really hard on my technique and my swing plane and things like that, so I've definitely had to go backwards a bit. You know, changing your swing is something that you don't really want to do, but it's something that I need to do to get to where I want and it's kind of showed on the golf course. But, you know, it is what it is and you do have to play -- you have to be competitive, tough. I think that's why Maria Hjorth has played so well; she's played a lot of events even in her off weeks and I think that was a really smart move.

Q. I was just curious of just hitting out of puddles, how else could you possibly make practicing in the rain fun?

PAULA CREAMER: Honestly, we would do -- we would do anything. We would just go out on the range, hit a lot of shots out of the water. We would have matches, him and I, short game kind of stuff and it's -- you don't --

Q. Is this in California?

PAULA CREAMER: Yeah, in California.

Q. Did you get much rain?

PAULA CREAMER: Yeah, northern California, it rained all the time. But it wasn't necessarily spending five hours out in the rain. An hour, 45 minutes and that's it. That's all you need to do. You don't need to kill yourself out there. But those are the things, we would just play a lot of games and that kind of thing out there.

Q. Just maybe -- the question I was asking is with your swing change, is that a result of the injury last year you had to change it, or did you just want to change it?

PAULA CREAMER: A little of both, both. With my injury before, or before I had surgery, you could see a lot I'd get really flat with my golf swing, and now after surgery it's the complete opposite because my hand, I have no motion in my thumb anymore. It's like concrete in there, so now I'm trying to rebuild about that.

But most importantly, I need to have a stronger golf swing that I can duplicate every single time and repeat. I've done well with what I have, but I know I need to do a little bit -- get a little bit tighter so that I don't have as much pressure put on my hands and my thumbs. The bigger muscles in my body can take over. And that's something also, being 24, when I first came out here I was 18, the life out here, you tend to go backwards with your golf swing just because of the pressure and I wanted to do it to fix that.

MODERATOR: All right, Paula. Thanks so much.