

**23 October 2014**



An interview with

## **MICHAEL SIM**

OLIVIA MCMILLAN: Michael, welcome to the media center. Fantastic round out there today. Nice little birthday present for you as well.

MICHAEL SIM: Thank you. Yeah, it was a great round obviously. Obviously 31 on the back side, which had a run of three birdies, 11, 12, 13. Picked another one up on 15.

Had a great two on 17, so, yeah, it was nice way to finish a round of golf.

OLIVIA MCMILLAN: Questions.

**Q. How familiar are you with the course, and how much did that play a role today?**

MICHAEL SIM: Well, obviously played last year. I played two rounds, but I've played a lot of golf here. Just obviously going up (indiscernible) just a few minutes up the road. Managed to play at least ten rounds here on the new layout, so I'm pretty familiar with the golf course.

**Q. What did you see as the key over the next three days?**

MICHAEL SIM: Well, keep the ball in play off the tee. Obviously the fairways are quite wide. With some of the pin placements, you really have to be on a certain side of the fairway to attack those.

I played yesterday in the Pro-Am and I thought the greens were much firmer than they were this morning. Obviously rained overnight, so there was definitely some pins that you could go at and the ball would hold.

So that was probably an advantage playing this morning compared to maybe the guys this afternoon. Not predicting anymore rain overnight, so the greens are going to be much firmer tomorrow and harder to hold.

So just about really placing the ball on the greens over the next three days. Like I said, they're going to firm up. Just don't make too many mistakes.

**Q. What have you got planned for the rest of the day? Do you have to put up with any birthday celebrations?**

MICHAEL SIM: My mom went and picked up my dad and girlfriend from the airport. She was out walking with my sister, so she took off. We'll probably good out for dinner somewhere. Maybe down to Hillary's or something, have a drink or two, maybe a steak, and call it a night.

**Q. You've had a terrible run with injuries over the last three or four years. Tell us how your body is at the moment and what your most recent problems have been.**

MICHAEL SIM: Yeah, obviously had a stress fracture on my spine. Kept me out of Augusta back in 2010. Yeah, it was a bit of a bumpy ride through that period. Obviously played some great golf through '09 and '10. Yeah, my body is good. Mind is in a good place.

Obviously living out in Gold Coast now with my girlfriend since January. I'm feeling good about my game. Obviously in China a couple weeks ago I finished 6th; same with Fiji about a month ago. So definitely been playing a lot better.

Yeah, I'm happy with where my game is.

**Q. You were one of the young golf prodigies in Australia. (No microphone.)**

MICHAEL SIM: Yeah, I mean, just kind of, yeah, stop playing golf for a while. Obviously lost status on the U.S. Tour. A lost my status on the Web.com Tour because I didn't enter Q-school and I lost my (indiscernible) which I wasn't aware of.

So no status over there now. Just going to play the Australian summer here and just take each day as it comes and just try to shoot scores like I did today and get confidence that way.

**Q. How bad is your back injury? Take us through what you did to heal it.**

MICHAEL SIM: Had a stress fracture at L5. That happened in 2006. I actually, if I remember, I was playing a Web.com event on the third hole in Wichita and it popped.

I had a scan in America and nothing

showed up, so came back here to do some rehab for a month. I went back over and won my second start, and then any back just went again.

Stress fracture obviously opened up a little bit. Saw Dr. James at (indiscernible) medical group in Melbourne. I just had to rest. No surgery or anything. Just rest and let it heal. That was probably a six or seven month period.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

MICHAEL SIM: 2006 going into 2007, so I started the PGA Tour at New Orleans was my first official event. If I had that time again I probably would've taken that whole year off, because I was only - I was going to play 15, maybe 16 events that year just because I got shuffled so far down the Web.com Q-School category that I just couldn't get in any events mid-year and later in the year.

So then they only gave me 21 starts, which isn't many. So, yeah, that kind of left me in limbo for 2008. Yeah, kind of wish -- yeah, I wouldn't have played that 2007.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

MICHAEL SIM: Yeah, obviously I didn't play much in '11, in '12, or last year. Yeah, it's definitely a challenge to get back to the top, but that's my goal. I'm looking to get back to the U.S. in 2016.

We'll play the next three tournaments here and play a pretty similar schedule to what I did this year. Hopefully perhaps get in Volvo China and maybe the Dunhill Links.

So there is obviously opportunities moving forward. That's really the goal, is finish as high up as I can, which will give me Q-School entry for 2016.

**Q. A day or round at a time, that's pretty much your approach?**

MICHAEL SIM: Yeah, I'm happy with today's round obviously. Put some good tournaments in the last four events on the board, so feel like I'm swinging it out there as good as I probably have back when I was playing well in 2009 and 2010.

And my putting today was -- I holed everything that I needed to make. Yeah, it was an enjoyable round.

**Q. Just back in 2012, '13, was that the shoulder?**

MICHAEL SIM: To be honest, I -- once I lost my card on the U.S. tour, I think I had like 8

events on the Web.com and I didn't play well enough, so I lost my status.

I didn't have anywhere else to play pretty much the second half of 2012. Last year I played a handful of events in Australia, but just pretty much had a bit of a break from the game. My form was not that good falling off the main tour. Yeah, just took a step back from the game.

You know, was trying to see three or four different coaches. I'm now back with David Milne. I'm back to where I started and back living in Australia, which I love living Australia compared to the U.S. I was there by myself.

I think it was a big thing, the lifestyle over there. Coach and family is over here. When you're living by yourself it can get pretty lonely at times. Yeah, just took a step back from the game and put a few goals in place and I'm playing a lot better.

**Q. What does Dave offer you that the perhaps your other coaches didn't?**

MICHAEL SIM: I don't think I was in the right mental space with other coaches either. I started working (indiscernible) who coaches Jason for probably seven months. Just messed around with a few others in Phoenix.

Obviously David, you know, been with him since I was probably I would guess and say ten years old. He knows my swing and my habits probably better than myself.

So it was nice for me to go back to him and play golf well again. It's progressive, so I'm happy where I'm at.

**Q. Apart from stepping away from golf during that period, what else did you get up to?**

MICHAEL SIM: Not a whole lot really. Just kind of hung out in Perth a while and then went on a holiday to America. Obviously had a friend's wedding in California, so went over there for probably about a month. Hiked the Grand Canyon for three days, which was fun.

Yeah, didn't get up to much. Didn't work. Just took a step back and enjoyed life a bit. Just did what I wanted to do.

**Q. Since you've been back have you modified your swing action?**

MICHAEL SIM: No. We addressed that, my swing faults, probably back in 2007 when I had my fracture. So I was just probably falling a bit

onto my left side, which was putting too much pressure through the lower back.

Right now, no, I don't think about my back. I haven't changed my swing in the last four or five years to take pressure off that area.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

MICHAEL SIM: Absolutely, you look at Jin Jeong last year, I'm not sure what his status was, but might have been similar to mine. He's played a full European tour this year.

It's great to have co-sanctioned events in Australia, obviously have some Web.com events as well. So to get me onto that tour I should go through Q-School.

So to have the European Tour down here is magnificent. It's great for Australian golf, it's great for fans, great for the players.

Obviously Jin embraced that.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

MICHAEL SIM: I don't think so. I mean, like I said, it's taking a round at a time. Everyone is out here to do the best they can. It was a goal of mine this week to just try and get a top 10.

Obviously a win would be great, but obviously put myself in position this morning to set myself up for the week. Yeah, I would like to win, like everyone in the field does.

I set a realistic goal. If I finish top 10 I'll be extremely happy.

Yeah.

**Q. Has there ever been a point where you considered stepping away?**

MICHAEL SIM: Yeah, I did probably, yeah, last year. I think probably a lot of the players have thought about that at some point.

I definitely did. Just got to the point where golf is such a big part of my life that I still felt like I had a lot more to achieve in this sport.

I was up to top 50 in the world, and I know what it takes to get there. I feel like my game right now is not that far away from where it should be, from where I was in that era.

**Q. When you were top 50 in the world did you assume it was all going to be uphill from there in a way? It was a very young age.**

MICHAEL SIM: Yeah, I did. Five years ago now, so, yeah, playing great golf at the time. You know, until you win on the main PGA Tour you're really not safe. Golf is a game you have to

prove yourself each year. It's not like you can get a three-year contract in AFL or anything like that.

If you don't get in a golf tournament, you got to prove yourself year after year and finish inside that 125. Obviously I didn't do that in 2011.

But, yeah, once that happened, then all of a sudden I got no status on the Web.com Tour. You know, until you win, you can get off the Tour quick.

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