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An Interview With:

WILL MacKENZIE

TODD BUDNICK: We thank Will MacKenzie for stopping in after a 3-under 70 in round two of the 2007 Mercedes-Benz Championship. Will, cruising along, only mistake No. 17 today. Talk a little about that.

WILL MacKENZIE: I hit a real bad drive out in the right, almost into the trees, but of course you can hit it so far right it doesn't matter there. I hit a decent shot there, but I had a long, long put. As I was approaching the green, Brad, the rules official just said that I had a bad time on the other hole, and two bad times and you get penalised. And that got me rattled.

So I ran up to the green, you know, just had a 50-footer, 60-footer, 45-footer, whatever. I don't want a penalty, so I just hit my putt a little quick. I just didn't do what I thought it was going to do. I thought it was going to be fast, and there was still a little rain out there. I'm lucky I haven't made a lot of bogeys. I've made some very important saves out there this week.

TODD BUDNICK: Outside of that, talk about your day today.

WILL MacKENZIE: It was just rock-solid, I think, pretty much. I kept the ball in play off the tee. Hit a lot of greens. Hit a lot of great little iron shots into the wind today, controlled my ball pretty well. It's really tough to get it close, I think, especially when you're hitting 4-iron from 180. You have to hit weird little feel shots. This is a great little shot-makers -- it's a shot-maker's paradise out there right now. You know, I didn't do anything real special, but I didn't do anything bad.

Q. Did anyone stop by your hotel room and say hi last night?

WILL MacKENZIE: Yeah, I made the rookie mistake of the century by giving my room number away on the Golf Channel. (Laughter).

You know what, I want to thank everyone that called me, though, from wherever. I really appreciate that. But I don't need to really start doing that, giving out my room number. I got a lot of calls and a lot of support, but I had to turn my phone off because I didn't want to get woken up late at night.

Q. How many calls?

WILL MacKENZIE: I had quite a few calls. Very inspiring calls. A lot of people that had seen me here or seen me there, plenty of people called me that -- right when I got back to my hotel, my mailbox was full.

Q. As a first-time winner how important is that kind of support to you?

WILL MacKENZIE: It's fabulous. I got a lot of coverage yesterday, and I guess people were -- people sort of liked my story, some people did. You know, those people called.

You know what, that's what it's all about. That's why we're playing for all that, you know, nice perks, because of fan support. That's what it's all about. We want people to come out and watch and, you know, there's nothing better. I used to be right there. I still am. I sit there and watch Vijay Singh hit balls and be as happy as a little whatever, watching Tiger Woods. I'm a fan of watching these guys play.

Now that I get a little fanfare is nice.

Q. You specified "some": Were there others that maybe didn't like your story?

WILL MacKENZIE: Oh, well, you know, no, most people like it. I'm sure there's some people that think I took the wrong direction. Maybe I should have gone to college and done all that.

Q. Did the guy keeping track of the jacuzzi at All Goods call?

WILL MacKENZIE: I think they know I'm playing golf now. There's actually a mass golfing frenzy happening at Big Sky, Montana now. There's guys that are snowboarders and skateboarders that are playing golf in the summer

now because they heard that Willie-Mac is playing golf now.

That's great. I need to send them a huge care package, some TaylorMade drivers and some golf shoes.

Q. What was the occasion of you giving out your room number on the Golf Channel? What inspired you to do that?

WILL MacKENZIE: Just -- Rich just asked me a question, you know, are you staying in the van or in the Ritz tonight, and I said, I'm in whatever room number I'm in. (Laughter) I just said the room number. I didn't mean it by any -- I was just getting -- letting them know exactly where I was staying. I was at the Ritz. I should have said I'm in room 4000 at the Ritz.

Q. You should have given them Vijay's number.

WILL MacKENZIE: That would have been really smart, but I'm not that smart. No, Vijay would have pounded me at breakfast this morning. He already did, he ribbed me for my hole-out on 9, said I was giving a funky little smile out there. He's a sweetheart.

Q. Do you think the weather conditions yesterday helped you today?

WILL MacKENZIE: Yeah, we knew the conditions. I didn't know it was going to dump rain all night and be rainy all day and sort of misty. Yeah, we know the conditions; we know it's going to blow really hard here. That's what it does. We're out in the middle of the ocean, and the tradewinds blow, and, you know, you just come prepared for that. So if, you know, if you're going to whine about the wind out here, you're adios. But I still do.

Q. What was the most interesting call that you actually answered last night? And did you end up talking to a stranger for five minutes?

WILL MacKENZIE: Yeah, I talked to a couple people. A lot of people were really cool about it. They called and said, "Hey, Will, this is Jeff from Madison, Wisconsin. I saw your story on the Golf Channel, man, that was sweet. Keep it up." And I would just hang up with them.

Others -- I had one guy, it was a police officer in Wilmington, North Carolina that got in a

near fatal car accident that said I inspired him a little bit to come back to his profession or something, which was phenomenal.

I had some guy that said his name was John MacKenzie, with an Australian accent, and said we might be cousins, but he's from Australia. So, I don't know we're probably cousins, Bud. (Winking). I think he's more like David McKenzie's cousin.

Q. Can you imagine getting some ribbing from Vijay Singh? You haven't been out here that long to get ribbing from a guy like that; it seems like you get along with the guys well; is that true?

WILL MacKENZIE: Man, I am tight with everybody on Tour. I'm competing good against them but I like them a lot. I have respect for them. I don't think there's one guy out here that I don't really like.

I like it if -- if Vijay gives me any, you know, grief, that means he likes me. I think Vijay likes me a little bit. And I like every guy. I'm just so overwhelmed that I get to play golf next to Vijay or Tiger or any of these guys. I mean, I'm so blessed to be out here, I can't even tell you.

So, you know, I like to walk into the locker room in the morning and people start heckling me. I like it.

Q. Seemed like you and K.J. were cheering for each other a little bit out there today, too, on the 5th hole.

WILL MacKENZIE: Yeah, I'm not out here to try to beat anybody's brain out. I'm trying to beat the golf course up.

You know, when it comes down to the last hole, on the last day, yeah, you're trying to -- you're like, you're playing someone individually maybe. But, I mean, it doesn't matter if K.J. goes out there and shoots 8- or 9-under, it's not going to make anything -- it's not going to matter.

There's 72 holes to play. I like people to play well. I'm rooting for them. I like the guys to play well. It's good for me.

I don't know if everybody is like that, but that's just the way I am.

Q. Give me three things you have in common with Vijay other than playing on the same Tour.

WILL MacKENZIE: We both like golf, we both like pasta, marinara, because I ate his second helping this morning -- or for lunch. He hooked me up. I was like, "Where did you get that?" I think he especially ordered it. I'm like, "Let me get that."

He's like, "Go ahead." And we both like to practise. Shoot, I don't know Vijay very well. I haven't spent my time with him. I mean, other than just out here hitting golf balls. I haven't been over to his house and hung out and shot basketball with him or anything.

Q. What's he call you?

WILL MacKENZIE: I don't even think he knows my name. He just calls me "Bro." "Hey, Bro." I don't think he's on the Willie-Mac kick. I was so bummed because I looked up there on the board, and I knew I was going to play with him if I had made that putt at the end. Been wanting to play with that guy forever, him and Tiger and Phil Mickelson. You always want to play with the best guys out there, a time or two, at least. But not this time. Maybe I'll play great tomorrow and can get in the mix.

Q. Now that you've got two rounds under your belt, do you have a favourite or least favourite hole on the course?

WILL MacKENZIE: I had a tough time driving -- what's that little hole, Murph, that I have a tough time driving? No. 4. That's a little funky off the tee for me. Although, let me see, yeah, I mean, I think 11 is dicey to figure out.

But I like them all. I like the drivable holes. I think they are cool. We haven't been able to quite drive them on the green yet, maybe Vijay and J.B. Holmes and Wetterich, long hitters, those guys. But if it dries out in the next day or two, maybe I'll be able to hit it on the green on those. I like the golf course. It really sets up cool. There's not a bad hole out there, I don't think.

Q. How are you enjoying your experience overall at Kapalua?

WILL MacKENZIE: It's fantastic. Fortunately, it can be as relaxing as you want it to be, and I've been a little sick the last couple of days. So I've been able to just cruise back to my room, you know, maybe eat a little something with my mom and my aunt and my friends and my brother and my little niece and just chill. There's no pressure.

I guess I need to go to the gala party tonight, so I have to spend a little time at the gala party tonight, but I've been getting to bed early. Just the overall hospitality of the Ritz and all these people at the golf course. I mean, it is unbelievable how good these people treat you. I mean, they are like, "What's up Will MacKenzie? Can we get you anything." I'm like, "Thanks, geez, you don't have to do this." They just go out of their way. I can't say enough for the facility, Gary Planos and everyone, Nancy, that are running this tournament.

Q. Did you end up eating Vijay's leftover pasta at lunch?

WILL MacKENZIE: It was great.

Q. So you haven't been into Lahaina or checked out the local area yet?

WILL MacKENZIE: Yeah, I've driven through there, but just to go to the little surf break, s-turns, I think it was Kahana. I went through that area. I don't think I've been through Lahaina.

I do like to go and see the local flavour, and I should, but then I was busy surfing every day. I surfed four straight afternoons, so that was golf course, surfing, and now because I'm trying to get my body in shape for surfing -- and now I got a little sick. Next thing you know, my Maui experience is just going to be Ritz, golf course. But it's been fantastic. Hopefully I'll get into town sooner or later.

Q. There are not a whole lot of other guys on TOUR saying they are trying to get their body in shape for surfing. Most of them are trying to get their body in shape for golfing.

WILL MacKENZIE: (Laughing).

Q. Not that surfing is more important than golfing, but is there priority there?

WILL MacKENZIE: I haven't surfed for seven years, really, since I was in Costa Rica and I was in fabulous surfing shape. Now I'm in real bad surfing shape. You have to be in surfing shape to surf. Just like rock climbing, this part of your body needs to be really strong (indicating forearms).

I'm in Hawaii, I'm here to play golf, but I'm also here to catch a wave or two. I don't want to be out there chopping. Like that first day when they shot video. I want to be able to paddle and have some strength out there.

The last few days, I feel stronger in the water, like I can say out there for an hour, hour and a half, paddle around and actually catch waves and drop into the right spot of the wave. Yeah, I guess I'm trying to get in surfing shape, because next week's a big week for surfing, North Shore. I won't be surfing there but I'll be surfing Diamond Head. Around Diamond Head, I'll be surfing there a lot. North Shore is about an hour and a half away. I said I won't be surfing North shore. I'll probably end up paddling out to the North Shore somewhere that's not crazy, like pipelines, but it's all about golf. It's all good golf.

TODD BUDNICK: If you can run through your birdies.

WILL MacKENZIE: First birdie, I made birdie on 5. I don't remember what transpired there -- oh, I hit a weak drive and had 249 to the hole, whipped it out to the right, almost hit it in the bunker, chipped it up there good and made a nice little putt. That's why K.J., you know, almost holed out.

9 where I holed it out yesterday for eagle. I hit like a -- that golf ball, you had to hit two fantastic shots into the wind to get yourself into position. I hit a decent little 60-degree wedge up there to about six feet and made it.

The next, I went for a long streak of not doing anything, and on 15, the par 5, up the hill, I hit a bad drive, but I hit a great little second shot in there and hit a nice little 60-degree wedge up there about six feet right of the hole and made it.

Then 16 I made a fantastic little putt from probably eight or nine feet, just a little tricky putt.

TODD BUDNICK: Thanks and good luck this weekend, Will.