



Thursday June 17, 2010

Joakim Bäckström

First round 68 (-3)

Q. How well did you play today?

A. Well my score was very good, and I played some pretty solid golf out there. I made three birdies and didn't make any bogeys, mainly because I got up and down really well a few times. So yeah, I was very happy with my round. I kept the ball in play and didn't get myself into any trouble, which is the key to playing this course well.

Q. I suppose it helps that conditions out there were a little more benign than usual?

A. Yeah, it was nice to play in good conditions this morning. The putts were running very true, and the greens were also quite receptive too. So we had a good draw, but you still had to be careful out there, because if you get too greedy on this course, it can bite you very hard.

Q. How's your fitness these days, because it's been a while since we've seen you?

A. I'm pretty good. I'm injury-free at the moment, after taking most of last year off. I worked really hard in the gym and out on the range, and it now seems to be paying off. My back, hip and wrist were causing me the most problems, so it took me about seven months to get back to being able to hit balls without feeling pain the next day. So it's required a lot of patience, but we're slowly getting there now.

Q. It must've required an awful lot of discipline...

A. Yeah, it was very hard. I couldn't wait to get out here again, so it feels great to be back. I've been playing a little bit in Scandinavia this year, but this is my first event back on The European Tour. Now all I need is some more tournaments to build up my sharpness. I'm just trying to maintain my physique so I don't get into any trouble again.

Q. Do you set any targets, in terms of number of events or results?

A. Coming back here was always one of the goals of this season – I was always going to come back and play here. So this was one goal, and the other big aim is Q School. But with the problems I've had, I can't get too far ahead of myself. Hopefully I can keep playing well, and the rest will take care of itself. I feel like I'm in a better place now than I have been for a while. I'm enjoying my golf again, mainly because I'm pain-free.

Q. Was there a time when you wondered whether you would ever make it back?

A. My injuries never got so bad that I thought I wouldn't play again, but you do get to the point where you feel you can't practise enough, so you don't feel comfortable when you get out on the course. But I'm starting to feel more at home now, especially out here. When I was walking up the 18th, it made me happy because I have so many good memories. I just love coming back here.