

Charles Schwab Challenge

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Fort Worth, Texas, USA

Colonial CC

Slugger White

Mark Russell

Press Conference



he put his ball back after he marked it off to the side, and he didn't, and we caught that. We caught him and thank goodness he made about a nine-footer to win by three and he still got a two-shot penalty and he ended up winning. That was pretty bizarre.

MARK RUSSELL: I'm glad he had a three-shot lead.

SLUGGER WHITE: He was, too.

MARK RUSSELL: Would have been much more bizarre if he hadn't.

Q. Did you watch it on TV at home?

SLUGGER WHITE: No, here.

Q. Did you two plan on doing this at the same time? Had you talked about it?

MARK RUSSELL: No, Slugger played into the late '70s, and I started in 1980. Slugger was still playing when I started, and then he came along a year or so after me, but I've known Slugger since mid '70s, we've been friends a long time.

Q. If you talk about each other, what are the characteristics as a rules official and a friend y'all appreciate about each other?

SLUGGER WHITE: I think basically when we were both tournament directors, our thought process was pretty much the same. There was very, very few things that we would differ on opinion-wise, which is kind of nice. If I would get stuck on something, I might call him on home. He might call me at home. But it's been a great relationship, it really is a really great relationship.

MARK RUSSELL: Slugger is right about that. We always were very much in the forefront of maintaining integrity of playing golf by the rules, and I think a very, very important thing as we leave, we always had a philosophy of surrounding ourselves with the very best people, and we've done that. Gary young and Steve Rintoul and Mark Dusbabek, can't name them all, but we've hired a lot of really good people and they will carry on the same tradition that golf's had for many, many years and they will do a great job.

JOHN BUSH: Slugger, big week for both of you guys, last week together on the TOUR, just talk a little about that, your friendship and also being here at Colonial?

SLUGGER WHITE: Doesn't get any better than this. Mark and I have been friends for 40 years plus, and that will continue and it is, it's kind of a bittersweet thing. But we understand that it's time to pass the baton and we'll be just fine. Everything will be good.

MARK RUSSELL: Same here. I've been coming to Colonial for 40 years and I've ran this golf tournament for probably 25 years now, and Slugger and I, we don't work together very often but he realized what an awesome event this is, and he would come here and work. We don't get together very often, but it's great that he's been here for so many years with me and certainly going to miss him. But we'll stay in touch. We'll hook up from time to time.

Q. You guys have worked this event for so long, is there any rules that stand out to you or things just from back in the day where you're like, oh, wow, that call or that rule is bizarre, weird, whatnot?

MARK RUSSELL: Well we used to have nightmares over this bridge to the right on 18 and back then you got relief from an obstruction and back then it was a hazard, now it's the penalty area, and that used to cause all kind of problems over there at the right side coming down the stretch. I remember we had a ruling over there with Fuzzy years ago that was kind of crazy, but the golf course is pretty much straightforward and there's not a whole lot of major, major rules problems out here.

SLUGGER WHITE: Only thing I can think about is the Zach Johnson thing on 18 green the year he won.

MARK RUSSELL: Slugger was watching television and caught that.

SLUGGER WHITE: I said, Mark, I'm not sure, I don't think



Q. What will you miss the most about doing this job?

MARK RUSSELL: I'll miss the people. I won't miss being out in the lightning and having a lot of weather problems, but I'll certainly miss the people.

SLUGGER WHITE: Me, as well, and I will not miss the 4:30 wake up Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday morning and maybe get to sleep in until about 6 o'clock at home. That will be nice.

Q. You won't miss being called Slugger anymore?

MARK RUSSELL: I get a lot of Sluggers. People think I'm Slugger, I don't know why, but they do. I ask him, "Anybody ever call you Mark Russell?"

He said, "Hell, no."

SLUGGER WHITE: And I said, "If they did I'd slap them."

Q. Why did you pick Colonial as your last event together?

SLUGGER WHITE: After 20-plus years, it doesn't get any better. I said I had a chance when we did retire at the end of last year to pick the events that I wanted to go to, and this was one of the first ones I picked.

Q. And Mark?

MARK RUSSELL: This is a very special event. It's an invitational. The tradition, the history here, and this is an event that is put on by the club, and they take a lot of pride in it, all the people, all the committee chairmen are club members, and it's a club with, like I said before, tremendous tradition. Ben Hogan's place. They do a great job and it's great coming here.

We've always worked together here, and it is kind of strange, realizing this is going to be the last time we work together but we are turning it over to some really good people that we've hired through the years, and they are going to uphold traditions of the great game and the etiquette of the great game and they will do a great job.

Q. Do you remember the first time each of you worked this event?

MARK RUSSELL: Mid to late '80s probably.

SLUGGER WHITE: I would think so. I couldn't even think when -- trying to think who might have won then.

MARK RUSSELL: I was about 15 --

SLUGGER WHITE: Sorry, when I was 12.

Q. What are the fondest memories that you've had together over the years?

MARK RUSSELL: We've always had a good time together and we've always been in a situation where both of us like to laugh and have senses of humor. No matter what was going on, we could always see the bright spot in things, and we've just always had a good time. We kind of think alike. We like to uphold traditions of the game and the PGA TOUR and the players. Slugger is just a great friend, always has been.

SLUGGER WHITE: And will continue to be. So it's a special relationship I think that not many people can say they have that. I'll cherish that.

Q. As your careers wind down now, how proud are you of the contribution that you've had to the game?

MARK RUSSELL: Well, I was out here when Arnold and Jack were playing. It's hard to believe and I hate to even say that, but I mean, I've seen all these players come through, Tom Watson, the Weiskopfs, up through Tiger Woods coming on the scene. I was at the first tournament that Tiger played in, Milwaukee.

You know, just seeing all the great golf and all the great people that have come up in the last 40 years, kind of the golden age of golf, I'm extremely blessed and fortunate to have been a part of that.

SLUGGER WHITE: Same on this end. I was able to play with some of those guys. I played with Arnold a couple times. Practice round with Jack. So I've seen a little different side of that, and then I came to this side of it, and it's just grown so much. I'm with Mark. I'm glad we put together a pretty dog-gone good team and they will carry forward, that's for sure.

MARK RUSSELL: When Slugger and I first came out here, we played for a 100,000, 200,000. I mean, that was the purse and no one was complaining about that. They were ecstatic about that. Now, that's 15th place.

But incredible how it's grown, and golf will continue to grow and prosper.

Q. In terms of what's next for both of you, what does retirement look like, perhaps different hobbies? Maybe playing golf?

SLUGGER WHITE: I might have to ask my wife in a couple months.

MARK RUSSELL: That's right. My wife is figuring out something for me to do, I can assure you of that.

SLUGGER WHITE: I'm going to try to do a little fishing, some volunteer work and I'm going to learn to play the piano. You know, just with my granddaughter.

MARK RUSSELL: He's a tremendous singer, I can tell you that.

Q. Did Mark ever give you a penalty when you were playing?

MARK RUSSELL: I had to come into the bar at Pleasant Valley and check his scorecard during qualifying back in 1980 probably.

SLUGGER WHITE: '79 or '80.

MARK RUSSELL: I said, you realize, you haven't -- you need to take care of this out here.

SLUGGER WHITE: I had it in my pocket. Forgot. Obviously I probably didn't get in.

MARK RUSSELL: Yeah, Monday qualifying. That's a thing of the past.

Q. What year did you two start?

MARK RUSSELL: I started in 1980.

SLUGGER WHITE: '82.

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