

Kingdom



PALMER ON PUTTING

**NEW YORK
GAME**

**THE NFL'S
ROGER GOODELL**

**GOLF'S
MOVIE MOMENTS**

Leaves on the trees outside his bustling Latrobe office were turning tartan, and Arnold Palmer's thoughts were starting to turn toward wintering in Florida at his Bay Hill Club & Lodge. Along with his usual traveling gear, he'd be taking with him fresh, happy memories of another great summer in his native Western Pennsylvania, optimism about the future and recollections of what it was like to be in the company of the world's top supermodel, budding golfer Kate Upton. Needless to say, he was in an agreeable and cheerful mood when he fielded a host of questions from *Kingdom* correspondent *Chris Rodell*

Latrobe Liaison



Mr. Palmer in
his Latrobe
office

K: Latrobe recently. Is this the beginning of a beautiful friendship?

AP: *I hope so. She's a lovely young lady, a very articulate young lady. I think all the ingredients means she's going to be very successful. It was a pleasure meeting her.*

K: Also: Did Upton express any real interest in golf? Do you think she'd be a good golfer?

AP: *Yes, I think she's going to play some golf. Her personal manager is the daughter of a good friend of mine, John Benson, and he is a big golfer so I think the combination will keep her interests alive.*

K: Looking back to your first and last Masters victories (1958 and 1964), what are your strongest and fondest memories of each event?

AP: *Well, of course, the first one was just great because it was the first and that was always a big thrill. I was determined to win that last one walking up 18 without having to cringe or having to make a birdie [Palmer led the field by six strokes]. I played well enough that I was very comfortable and it was wonderful. I was playing with a great guy by the name of Dave Marr. Dave was playing well and it was great to be with him, so he made it extra special. We were such good friends I felt comfortable asking him on the 18th tee if there was anything I could do for him. He said, "Yeah, make a 12." Dave was great.*

K: Can you remember which dishes you served up at your four champions' dinners?

AP: *I think I stuck pretty much to the routine—strip steak, baked potatoes. Oh, and they do that very well at Augusta National. They always do.*

K: In addition to your seven major wins, you came in second 10 times. Can you put into words how you felt on these occasions?

AP: *I can think of all kinds of excuses and reasons. I think the thing that bugged me most was the fact I never won the PGA. I had wonderful opportunities to win a couple more Opens and let those slip. I sometimes wonder if I hadn't won the Open in '60 if I might have been more fortunate to win more down the road. I guess psychologically I felt that key victory had put me over the hump. I wanted to win, certainly, but maybe that little extra edge, the hunger, wasn't there after 1960.*

K: Why do you think it was you didn't win any further majors after 1964? After all, you won a further 19 times on the PGA Tour.

AP: *I can't answer that. Maybe the fact that I did win gave me a personal or mental satisfaction of which I wasn't aware.*

K: Do you wish you'd have had a good sports psychologist with you at the time?

AP: *Ha! Well, I never used one of them, but it might not have hurt!*



Palmer with his youngest grandson, Will Wears, in the 2012 PNC Father/Son

"I sometimes wonder if I hadn't won the Open in 1960 if I might have been more fortunate to win more down the road"

K: Your last PGA Tour win was at the then-named 1973 Bob Hope Desert Classic. In all you won six times down in the Coachella Valley. What do you think it is about desert golf that particularly suited you?

AP: *I really enjoyed it there. The golf courses were all manicured to perfection and the weather was always nice and comfortable, and I enjoyed the desert very much. It all made it very conducive to my playing well and I often did.*

K: Why do you think it is that the vast majority of the golf courses in Florida are in such immaculate condition, often all year round?

AP: *The weather, of course, is ideal. Rarely do you have frost or anything to interfere with your playing or course maintenance. So unless there's a hurricane coming along, the weather conditions are always great. I love Florida golf.*

K: We assume you are looking forward to the PNC Father/Son event this December. What do you particularly like about the tournament?

AP: *I think it's a good tournament and the guys on the Tour are always very eager to play. You get to play with a member of your family which makes it such a great experience.*



Henrik Stenson had the year of his professional life in 2013

K: Do you have any plans to tinker with the presentation of Bay Hill prior to next year's Arnold Palmer Invitational presented by MasterCard, or are you pretty happy with the way it's set up these past few years?

AP: *I think it's set right to our liking now, so I don't anticipate any changes.*

K: What do you make of Henrik Stenson's remarkable run of form during the latter part of this year? After a prolonged period in the doldrums, to perform the way he has over the past few months, given all the problems he's had fitness-wise and financially, must seem little short of remarkable.

AP: *He was very impressive through the year and I was very pleased to see him do as well as he did. He overcame some difficult challenges to come out on top and I was happy for him. He's inspirational.*

K: With Furyk shooting a 59 at the BMW championship there seems to have been a few 59s carded recently and indeed Mickelson nearly shot one in Phoenix this year, but his last putt of the day on the par-4 18th lipped out. You've come close as well, shooting a 60 at Latrobe with three eagles, a bogey on the par-5 6th and another bogey on 10. Was this milestone ever a goal of yours or is it just one of those "icing on the cake" types of things: if it happens, it happens?

AP: *I played very well and had a great day. I was looking forward to the finish and breaking 60, but it didn't turn out the way I'd hoped. Making two bogeys—one on a par-5—that was tough. Nothing I can do about it, but I still recall those two bogeys very well. It still bugs me.*

K: Tiger Woods was named PGA Tour player of the year for the 11th time despite not winning a major or the FedExCup. Do you agree with the system that produced this result or should more emphasis be placed on performances in the Majors?

AP: *Winning a regular Tour event is just as difficult as winning a Major. It's a credit to anyone, particularly*

to Tiger, to win as much as he has. I can't emphasize enough that winning a regular Tour event is every bit as difficult as winning a Major.

K: When Wake Forest announced that it was erecting a statue of you at the golf facility (which is named for you and which you designed), you were quoted as saying, "It's nice that they are doing that; I'm not sure that it is really deserved." It's tough to imagine someone more deserving of a statue—and

in such an appropriate place! Why do you think accolades like this make you a little uncomfortable?

AP: *It's a great thing to be honored like that. I'm very humbled and appreciative they have done that. I just hope I am worthy. Does it make me uncomfortable? Let's just say I don't go out searching for that kind of accolade.*

K: Also: Did Wake Forest approach you early in the process or was the statue a surprise?

AP: *Russ Meyer is a great guy and a man with whom I enjoy a true personal friendship. He's the man who made it happen. So to have him spend the time he did to make this a reality is beyond belief. He spent a lot of time doing that and developing that statue. He's also a Wake Forest trustee and his dedication is another plus.*

K: Moving on to another university town... How did you get connected with Penn State for the new Palmer Park project? How does the concept differ from other developments you have been involved with?

AP: *It's for older people who want to continue being active in their lives as they get up in years. They understand they need to do things to get out in some fresh air and exercise and to do things that encourage activities like putting and walking around outside. It's very beneficial.*

K: You appeared as yourself with Bob Hope in the film *Call Me Bwana*. In the James Bond film *Goldfinger*, you were referenced when 007 thought Goldfinger was cheating, with the line: "If that's his original ball, I'm Arnold Palmer!" In what other films were you referenced (that you know of) and did you appear in any other movies or were you asked to appear in any others?

"I played very well and had a great day. I was looking forward to breaking 60, but it didn't turn out the way I'd hoped"



Arnold Palmer is still rooting heart and soul for his beloved Steelers

AP: *I have occasionally been asked to be in a film or show over the years—even including an episode of Curb Your Enthusiasm! I had to turn down most of those but I have been referenced quite a bit, such as that time in Goldfinger. It is always a bit of surprise.*

K: **Do you get a real charge out of that?**

AP: *That's always fun. I'm a big James Bond fan and I get a real kick out of being referenced in one of those films. I love the Bond movies, especially the old ones with Sean Connery.*

K: **Do you have any specific memories of visiting New York City and golfing in the surrounding area? What are your favorite courses near the city?**

AP: *I never played an excessive amount of golf there. I played in the Pepsi Open out in Long Island and I've won there. I played at Westchester and won there and I love Winged Foot. It's a great golf course. I enjoy National Golf Links and Upper Montclair, and Baltusrol—that's a very good course. Lots of great golf in the metro New York area.*

K: **Are there changes you'd like to see to current golf cart design? Better ways to hold the bags, maybe, or refrigerators for cold drinks?**

AP: *(smiles wryly) I'm not too much in favor of all the niceties they put on, but I do think anything they can do to help preserve the golf course is important. By that I mean tires and anything that will reduce the wear and tear on the course and I'd like to see them continue experimenting to find ways to make golf carts less intrusive on the golf courses.*

K: **Is there ever going to be a golf car big enough to carry all the golf clubs, several sets, that you carry on a practice round?**

AP: *(more wry smiles) Me? Who? Not me!*

K: **As a natural athlete, did you ever play football in high school or just for fun? If so, were you any good?**

AP: *I enjoyed it very much. I would have played football in high school, but my father was opposed. He didn't want to see me getting hurt. I enjoy team sports and played a lot of them, but golf is such a demanding individual sport that, to me, it ranks above them all.*

K: **The Steelers are off to a rough start this year, but Dick LeBeau is working hard with the defense. How closely do you follow their progress? And do you get a chance to speak with Dick at all? I believe you two are friends... Does he give you any inside information on the team?**

AP: *I follow the Steelers very closely and keep right up with them. I'm good friends with all the Rooneys [the owners of the Pittsburgh Steelers], too. Dick LeBeau's a good friend and a fine golfer, but he's never shared any behind-the-scenes information on the team.*

K: **Are there any lessons that the PGA TOUR could learn from the NFL in terms of managing or developing a sport? Any the NFL could learn from the PGA TOUR?**

AP: *I think the Tour, Tim Finchem, his fine henchman and their predecessors have done a really good job of putting the Tour together and promoting it. At one time I was a very outspoken advocate on behalf of the players and what they should earn, and I still voice my opinions on occasion, but I think professional golf is doing very well right now.*

K: **How about the reverse: What can the NFL learn from the PGA?**

AP: *They might learn to have their players be more cordial with the fans and appreciate the fans more than they seem to. The really good players seem to give due respect back to the fans, but it should be emphasized. That's very important.*

K: **A number of NFL players who golf have told us that golf is more difficult than football. What do you think of that? And can you understand why they say that?**

AP: *I think if you're raised to play professional football you're used to the bumps and the injuries and the lifelong aches of having played professional football. But the combination of playing football and golf is a great thing. And a lot of people have done them very well.*

K: **Thank you, Mr. Palmer, for another engaging interview for Kingdom readers.**

AP: *Thank you. It's always a pleasure.*