



June 13, 2016



## Still Neutral on Golf....But...

*"The true test of character isn't how you act on your best days...but how you act on your worst days"*

*Anonymous*

The first time I met Mike Weir was in July 2007, when our annual Children's Hospital Golf Classic partnered up with the Mike Weir Foundation to raise money for our local Children's Hospital. Mike was just a couple of years off a historic Master's Championship in 2003, and was riding high as the all-time Canadian Golf Icon.

Mike was a "local" boy having grown up in Bright's Grove near Sarnia, and had played quite a bit of golf in London as a youngster on his journey to the top. His resume is impressive:

- 8 PGA Tour Wins
- 2003 Master's Champion
- 2000 World Golf Championship
- Spent over 110 weeks in Top 10 Official World Golf Ranking
- Tour earnings over \$28 million

But for me, growing up in Niagara, golf was not my “cup of tea” as they say. No, I preferred baseball, football, hockey, soccer: team sports where one could inflict some pain on another human being. I never picked up a golf club until my mid 20s, and yes, it shows. So meeting and spending time with Mike in 2007, it wasn’t the golf part that impressed me, but rather how he conducted himself.

Having met and known many celebrities over the years from the entertainment, music and the sports world, you never know what to expect. But Mike came all the way from Utah to join us in little London, Ontario to help us raise money for a local Children’s hospital. Watching him over a couple of days, touring the hospital visiting sick kids, running a clinic and simply being gracious 100% of the time, complete strangers telling you stories that have NO relevance to your life, patiently signing autographs, posing for photos....he was the epitome of class.

But like I said, he was still riding high off a Master’s win, so it was easy right? I still wasn’t a big golf fan, but I became a big Mike Weir fan.

*“Personality is who we are and what we do when everyone is watching.  
Character is who we are and what we do when nobody is watching”*

*Anonymous*

The second time I met Mike was at the Masters in 2008. Mike had generously invited a couple of us to join them at “the house” which is a Masters tradition. The house was filled with friends and family who Mike always remained close with. You could see how tight they remained with the banter and stories. Mike came home after attending the famed Masters Green Jacket dinner where he has sat between golfing legends Jack Nicklaus and Gary Player, and the youthful exuberance was evident, he was like a kid in a candy store. In his element, I saw Mike in his less public arena with people he knew and trusted. He was the same guy. Calm demeanor, that cool smile and yes...class all the way.

But again, I supposed it would have been easy, because...well...he was riding high. I still was neutral on golf, but became an even bigger Mike Weir fan.

The third time I met Mike was last week, at our 27<sup>th</sup> annual event, and the anniversary of the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Mike Weir Miracle Golf Drive for kids. I wasn’t at the hospital tour he did this time, but all reports were he was simply outstanding with the kids. I saw him interact with kids who waited hours for him because his flight had been delayed. I watched him conduct a golf clinic for a large group of adults, and media interviews. Those same strangers telling the same irrelevant stories, patiently signing autographs and posing for hundreds of photos. And knowing he was probably exhausted at that point because he had also played 18 holes of golf with donors and sponsors. I saw how he was sincerely touched when presented by a photo one of the Miracle children had specifically made for him for the occasion.

And through it all, he was patient, smiling, gracious, and even went out of his way to bid on auction items and come up with items which added to the success of the

event. His character shone through and calling him "class" would be an understatement.

You see, as an inquisitive guy who loves to observe, what impressed me the most, was the difference between the first two times I met Mike and last week, as Mike has had his challenges, having gone through a divorce in 2014, and his struggles professionally have been well documented. But I would simply say that the Mike who was no longer perhaps "riding high", was just as classy and humble, if NOT MORE so than the Mike Weir who was on top.

Like the opening quote said, the true measure of character is measured not on your best day, but how you conduct yourself on your worst. My dad always said the measure of a man doesn't come from the size of his wallet, but by the size of his character.

Mike's efforts with the Mike Weir Foundation are nearing the objective they set 10 years ago, and approaching the \$10 million mark raised for Children's Hospital's across Canada. That alone is impressive and an incredible feat and should be applauded.

While I remain luke warm on the game of golf, Mike is working hard on his golf game and I truly hope it works out. I am cheering for him as a golfer big time. But as a classy human being who I've been fortunate enough to cross paths with several times, I am cheering the loudest.

May the wind be behind you Mike,

Stay tuned,

Vito Finucci, B.COMM, CIM, FCSI  
Vice President and Director, Investment Advisor  
Associate Portfolio Manager

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