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Day One at the Telus World Skins Game

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Bob Weeks brings you the latest news and insights from around the world of golf everyday.
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Day One of the Telus World Skins Game at Bear Mountain was a good one with some fun and some fine play.

Retief Goosen was the big winner with five skins after shooting 30 on the front nine. It should be pointed out that they weren't exactly playing a US Open style course – the tees were up on a number of holes and there were some pretty accessible pins. That, of course is to allow the players to make birdies and eagles.

I thought one of the best shots of the day was when Ian Poulter hit his shot on the fourth, a par 3, a bit short and the ball hit a rock outcropping and bounced back perfectly into the walkway. As soon as it left his club he was talking to it, "Oh hit the rock, hit the rock." And it did.

And Camilo Villegas' line had one of the best lines of the day, talking to Fred Couples: "Even though you're old, I still want to hit it by you."

He did manage to sneak it past him on that day but I can tell you that for most of the other holes, Freddy was the long hitter, sometimes by a significant margin.

Now there weren't any of the old Lee Trevino-John Daly antics or side-splitters, but the microphones on the players did pick up some interesting chatter, much of it about the U.S. Open. There was also talk about changes to the Old Course and more.

This event is the only live golf we do in Canada at TSN. It used to be a good run with both the men's and women's Opens and this event, but CBC has the women's Open and the men's is done by CBS and Golf Channel.

Live golf is easily the most difficult sport to cover from a television standpoint. This event is a bit of an exception because all five players are in one group. But when there's a regular tournament, you have action all over the course. Every other sport, there's only one ball in play at a time.

My job as a course reporter is to simply be ready at all times for a comment. So after a tee shot, you run ahead into the fairway, check out the lie, get the yardage and then scoot up the hole so you can talk without disturbing the player. Sometimes – most of the time in fact – you don't get called on but you have to be ready if you do.

Let me tell you at this course you have to be part mountain goat to get around too. I don't think anyone actually walks this place – it's carts only -- so being in shape helps.

By the way, there is no Skins Game in the U.S. and as of now, Telus has not renewed and this is the last year of its contract meaning it could be the end of an era. I think Telus likely will renew (that's just a guess) but if it chooses not to it will leave a pretty good legacy -- \$10 million in charity and taking this event to places that have never seen golf at this level. That's one of the keys to me (and why the U.S. event which never left Palm Spring failed) is that it's held in communities where they don't get the RBC Canadian Open. Tickets sell out in an hour or so, it being so popular.

So off to Day 2 to see who will grab the big money.

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