

Sports

SECTION C

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NADAL COMEBACK WILL TAKE TIME

After seven months away treating a left knee injury, Rafael Nadal left many questions unanswered in his comeback tournament in Chile. Nadal did reach two finals. **C6**



Larry Bohannon

Computer, golf fans not always in synch

It's not that Brandt Snedeker played poorly at the Humana Challenge in partnership with the Clinton Foundation last month. In fact, he shot rounds of 67, 68, 67 and 67 to finish at 19-under par for the week in the desert.

But that was good for only a tie for 23rd at the Humana, six shots out of a playoff that was eventually won by Brian Gay. That's notable, because that 23rd-place finish is Snedeker's worst performance in a tour event this year. In his other four 2013 starts, he finished third, second, second and now first with his victory Sunday at the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am.

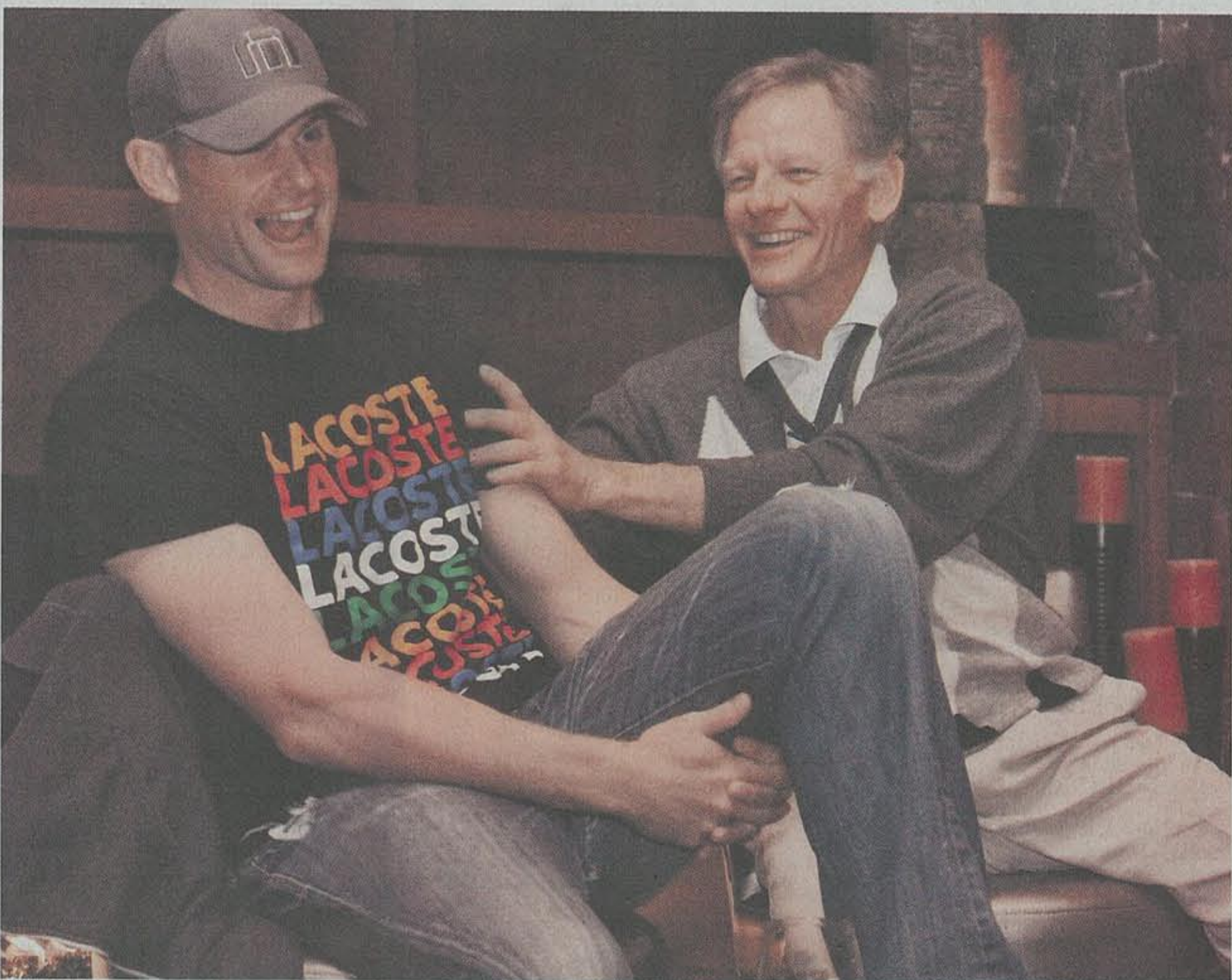
Toss in a win, a second and a sixth in his last four starts of the 2012 season, and it's easy to understand how Snedeker, a talented player limited at times by self-doubts and injuries, is suddenly the No. 4 player in the world golf rankings. Did you ever think the top seeds in the Accenture Match Play Championship would be Rory McIlroy, Tiger Woods, Luke Donald and Snedeker?

But while it is difficult to argue with the idea that the last 14 months have shown Snedeker belongs in that top group of players (three PGA Tour wins and the FedEx Cup championship), it might be difficult to convince the average golf fan that Snedeker is in that group. The computer might say one thing, the hearts and heads of the golf fan might say something else.

Snedeker moves to 4th

And that is where the disconnect between the fans and computer shines through. As much as the computer tries to quantify a golfer's play, the fans still use emotion to determine who they like and who they think is great. For in-

TENNIS STAR MAKES DESERT VISIT



Andy Roddick laughs while being given a hard time by coach Larry Stefanki as the two conduct a fireside chat Monday night during a fundraiser at a Bighorn residence in Palm Desert to benefit the Childhelp Merv Griffin Village. **CRYSTAL CHATHAM/THE DESERT SUN**

RETIRED BUT STILL VOCAL

American Andy Roddick touches on many issues during valley chat

By **Leighton Ginn**
The Desert Sun

PALM DESERT — Recently retired tennis star Andy Roddick admitted to the crowd at a \$1,000-per-person charity event Monday night that he might not be the most savvy person when it comes to business.

But when a question came up about Roddick's thoughts on the men's ATP Tour turning down an \$800,000 increase in prize money at the BNP Paribas Open, even he could figure out it was a bad move.

"I do understand that when someone gives you a (expletive) load of money, you take that money," Roddick said at his "fireside chat" which benefits the Childhelp Merv Griffin Village, a center for abused children in Beaumont.

Among the approximately 65 people inside the home at Bighorn Golf Club were current BNP Paribas Open CEO Raymond Moore and former CEO Charlie Pasarell. The prize increase would bring the total tournament purse to \$6 million.

Yet, in November, the board couldn't approve the raise as the three tournament representatives voted against the move. The three player representatives voted for the raise and the tour's CEO abstained.

Roddick pointed out that California lost the Los Angeles tournament and will lose the San Jose event this year, making BNP Paribas Open the state's only men's pro tennis event. And with the ATP's decision to turn down a potential raise and possibly angering the tournament's owner, Oracle founder and CEO Larry Ellison, Roddick

wonders how it could hurt the sport.

"Someone like Larry Ellison wants to invest into his event and make it the biggest possible, and he gets stopped by the ATP. If you're a start up, what would make you want to navigate through that and to go through that firing line?" Roddick said. "How can you step into tennis with any confidence?"

"It's the stupidest thing I've ever heard of."

Roddick then turned to Moore in the audience and pointed out something he read about him and the issue.

"You said something like, 'OK, you're not going to improve the prize money? We're going to take it back to 2011,'" Rod-

Please see **RODDICK, C6**

Roddick

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dick said. "I thought it was a brilliant negotiation ploy."

Roddick, the 2003 U.S. Open champion, has long been a proponent for change. He believes the nearly 11-month schedule is much too long and can jeopardize a player's health. However, the player's demands can fall on empty ears, and Roddick thinks the top players need to take matters in their own hands.

Roddick thinks if the players orchestrated a protest at a major, then their voices would be heard.

"The obvious one is the U.S. Open," Roddick said. "Until the players take their leverage into their own hands, they can't complain about what they have or don't have."

Roddick spoke on a variety of topics during the nearly two-hour chat. Another topic of interest focused on the state of drug testing in the sport.

Although Roddick officially retired after the U.S. Open in September, he has not turned in his retirement papers. As a result, Roddick had to give the testing agency his address while in Palm Desert in case they wanted to test him between 6-7 a.m. today.

Roddick also points out the testing has detected players using Sudafed, Rogaine "which is why players wear caps," and even an elevated level of caffeine.

As good as the testing might be, Roddick also supports tougher testing, including a biological blood passport, where doping violations can be detected by noting variance from an athlete's established levels outside permissible limits.

"Tennis is the cleanest it can be without knowing the unknowns," he said.