

U.S. Open Championship 2020

Saturday, September 19, 2020

Mamaroneck, New York, USA

Winged Foot Golf Club

Alex Noren

Flash Interview



Q. Alex Noren, 3-under 67. Alex, heck of a round. Talk a little bit about the conditions and what you were able to execute.

ALEX NOREN: The first five holes, it was so windy, first six, seven holes. My goal was to kind of try to get up to the pins, but otherwise leave it short of the hole, and I was able to make birdies on those and then make two good birdies on 6, 7, and then on the back, my putter was the best it's ever been.

So I saved myself a lot of times, and then a couple of birdies as well.

Q. You have a pretty new relationship with your caddie, Austin. What was it like working with him on that kind of round?

ALEX NOREN: Yeah, it's good. He doesn't read my putts. I can't give him any credit for that, but, no, he's good. We get along well. He's giving me the stuff I need. He was good. He wanted me to maybe play a few other shots than I tried to. It would have been good to listen to him there.

Overall, yeah, it worked well today.

Q. How does 67 compare -- the 67 today, among the best rounds you've played? I suspect that will be the lowest round of the day, maybe by multiple shots.

ALEX NOREN: Yeah, so starting out, it felt like it was going to be the toughest day ever on a golf course, with pretty strong winds on the first like six, seven holes. Then it got a little bit easier, but the pins are still tricked up. I putted my life out.

And you hit some shots out here, you think it's like a decent shot, and then you just make it into the rough, and all of a sudden, the hole feels impossible. Normally, you hit decent drives or decent shots off the tee or into the greens and you get away with them. Here you don't get away with anything.

Yesterday I was very like angry man on the golf course, and my goal today was to putt better and be more -- be in a little happier place. I just tried to be that way.

Q. How important is patience out here with the way the setup is and knowing how few the birdie opportunities are going to be?

ALEX NOREN: Yeah, that's maybe the key to the whole thing. Just view it as a normal tournament because, when you look at the putts, you look at the shots, and you stand on the tee boxes, there's a lot more pressure on yourself. If you don't hit the fairway, you're going to struggle, and if you don't hit the greens, you're going to struggle.

Normally, there is still opportunities to do well even from the rough or from a bunker, but here it's just like try to just do your routine and hit the shot, and whatever happens, you've got to keep the energy because you'll need it down the round. Yesterday I was furious over that I didn't hit the shots that I wanted, and then it kind of affects your game.

Q. How close do you think you'll be in the lead at the end of the day?

ALEX NOREN: If the weather stays like it is now, you're going to see better rounds in the afternoon maybe but maybe -- we'll see. It's hard to predict.

Q. Despite your score, there were some higher scores today. Talk about the course setup, and was it the hardest course setup of the week is the question.

ALEX NOREN: Yeah, probably yesterday and today was maybe similar. Yeah, the hardest course I've ever played. Three days -- and yesterday was some wind and this morning was some wind, but without the wind, it's still so demanding. It's a good test.

Q. One follow-up to the question earlier. How did you and Austin meet, and when did you start working with him?

ALEX NOREN: So we started right before Corona hit us at Arnold Palmer, and we met through Erik van Rooyen's caddie, that's Austin's brother, Alex, and we met through

him.

Q. Did you have anything in mind when you teed off today?

ALEX NOREN: These tournaments, all you try to do when you tee off is just to hit a good shot off the 1st and then take it from there. The older I get, the more so is how everybody does it, kind of. You don't really think about winning until you have the chance to win. I'm just trying to hit good shots and trying to warm up and do everything I can to just be in the best possible shape I can be golf-wise, yeah.

Q. It's been a tough couple of years since the Ryder Cup. What's changed now, and what's led to that difficult period?

ALEX NOREN: I had -- I was better, I think, in the fall last year, played a little bit better, but had so much -- put a lot of pressure on myself because I used to, in the three years prior, had a lot of good finishes, a few wins here and there.

You accept the bad rounds easier because you've got the confidence, you have the results in the back, and when you don't get in for a while, you start pressing. All of a sudden, you start focusing on is my technique wrong, is this wrong, is that wrong, instead of, if that would have happened, that bad play for a couple weeks when you're having those good weeks, you don't think about them.

So I think maybe it's a mix of not playing and technique is not up to point, but mostly kind of the pressure and stress you put on yourself. I changed kind of the last two, three months, I changed how I practice. I practiced on the golf course a little bit at home, trying to not be on the driving range, trying to work on maybe situations more than a specific look of the swing. So a lot more on the course.

Then is kind of frees up my game. I don't look at my swing on a video camera, don't analyze. Just if the shots are good enough, I'm happy. If they're not, I go out and work on them, you know.

Q. You never look at your swing in the mirror anymore?

ALEX NOREN: Not much. I try to ask my coach if he can -- if it's good enough, and if he says good enough, or if he says you'd better get it a little more this way or that way and we work on it, but I try not to look at it.

Q. Are you still doing the --

ALEX NOREN: I do whatever makes me better, and if it's

that way or any other -- I do whatever I can do to get a good feel over the ball.

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