

NW Arkansas Championship

Friday, August 28, 2020

Rogers, Arkansas, USA

Pinnacle Country Club

Austin Ernst

Press Conference



Q. Austin Ernst, 6-under 65 in the first round of the Walmart NW Arkansas Championship. What was the strength of your game out there today?

AUSTIN ERNST: I hit a lot of really quality iron shots today. I hit a ton of greens and had a lot of really good looks at birdie.

Q. Yeah. How does this golf course suit your game?

AUSTIN ERNST: I love it. I've typically played well here so I think I had good memories sure too. But I like the look of the tee shots. I know that the greens are soft, that I can attack a lot of pins, and that I can go make a lot birdies.

And then the greens roll so well I know I'm going to be able to hole some putts.

Q. You're coming off a great finish last week, solo fifth place, I believe, at the AIG Women's Open.

AUSTIN ERNST: Yep.

Q. How much confidence did you get over there at Royal Troon and you come here and it's completely different?

AUSTIN ERNST: A ton. Over there I was -- even with all the wind I was hitting it pin high a lot. My ball striking of definitely the best it's been all year. And then just being able to carry that into this week, obviously knowing it's going to be a little bit easier week, just not -- condition-wise, especially.

So, yeah, that's what I had. I had good vibes coming into this week and I had two good practice days Tuesday and Thursday. Really kind of knew that you could attack it and go really low.

Q. Yeah. How does your strategy change knowing this is a 54-hole event where typically we see a lot of low scores here at Pinnacle?

AUSTIN ERNST: You just know you need to make a lot of birdies. I par'd the first four holes today and that's not a good start. That's kind of where you almost feel like you're a little behind, and then obviously I played really well those last 14, and still felt like I hit some squirrely shots and made a few dumb mistakes.

But I still a made a lot of birdies. I knew after I made these bogeys I could come back and make birdie right away. You just know that you can attack it, but you also know that you need to attack it and you need to go low.

Q. Knowing that, when you do start off with four straight pars, what do you tell yourself to get it going?

AUSTIN ERNST: Well, I hit four really good shots. It was really just, Okay, make some putts. I think my longest birdie putt was 15 feet, so I knew that if I could just keep doing that, eventually one is going to fall, and the next hole on 14 I made a birdie, and that jump started the round.

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