

ANA Inspiration

Thursday, April 1, 2021

Rancho Mirage, California, USA

Mission Hills Country Club



Patty Tavatanakit

Quick Quotes

Q. Patty, 6-under, solo lead at the ANA Inspiration in the clubhouse. Take us through the day.

PATTY TAVATANAKIT: It was a pretty calm and relaxing day today. I just stuck to my game plan and didn't get too greedy out there. I know it's a major, it's tough, the course is really tough.

I was just being really patient and I was waiting for putts to drop, and they did on the back nine. So, yeah.

Q. A lot of talk this week about 18. No grandstand, how the course plays as a true island green. You made it look pretty easy knocking it on in two pretty simply. Take us through what you hit, the approach shot, and just the overall kind of strategy you played that hole with.

PATTY TAVATANAKIT: Well, first off, you have to hit a good drive there, which I did. I picked a really good line. Missed it left a little bit here and there. Probably like proximity to where I was going was I would say 15 yards, which is really good for a driver to go that left of a target.

And I had a 6-iron in, so it's pretty much a long par-4, 178 to the flag. I just wanted to hit the green. I don't care about anything else. It's a pretty wide green and a 6-iron, so it's always nice to have a higher ball flight into that green, and I was able to stop it just pin high.

Q. Seems like we're talking to you a lot early in the weeks. You're having some really fast starts. What are you learning and how do you translate that into fast finishes?

PATTY TAVATANAKIT: You know it takes a lot out here to play well week after week, day after day. It's a really tough job, tough sport. Not every day is gonna go your way.

Today, even though it's a 6-under, it was not a perfect golf. It was, I mean, a lot out there, but I would take that any day. Golf is not a perfect sport.

I feel like just growth into being in contention and just keep learning, keep being in it. Eventually like I'll be able to finish it out. It doesn't have to be this week. I have a long career ahead of me, and I'm just going to keep playing the way I'm playing.

The thought process is really good and I think that's really important to finishing strong in the future as well.

Q. People look at your game physically and you hit it high, you hit it far. Really good putting stroke. They say, Wow, she looks like she ought to win ten times. Where are we in this process and is it a mental thing?

PATTY TAVATANAKIT: It's just basically still my rookie year, so there is a lot to learn. Everyone is good out here, so you have to show a lot of respect to the players, too.

It's not like -- yeah, I dominate the course, but I still have to execute. I still have to hit good shots. I still have to play smart. Can never get ahead of myself out there, because literally anyone could shoot low numbers and sneak up there really quickly.

Q. More specifically towards this course, what do you have to learn as a player who comes in here at a younger age and be able to play this golf course?

PATTY TAVATANAKIT: Well, this is my fourth time here. It helped playing the course at a really young age, seeing it differently. I feel like I'm hitting it the furthest I'm hitting. I can never reach the green on 9 for the three times I played here and I was able to do it today. I was telling my caddie, Man, I've got a little bit of a different game here. I'm hitting it a little further, and if anything a little straighter.

My course strategy was better just because I know the course a little better, too. This is my fourth time, yeah.

Q. What did you hit in on 9?

PATTY TAVATANAKIT: I had a 3-wood. It was like 227 front and so I just tried to hit 3-wood like around 230, 220, and I chunked it. It was a pretty good one, run it up pin high.

Q. So you can hit par-5s with 3-woods or 6-irons?



PATTY TAVATANAKIT: Yeah.

Q. Chunked 3-woods.

PATTY TAVATANAKIT: Chunk and run 3-wood.

Q. Did you reach 2?

PATTY TAVATANAKIT: Yeah.

Q. Okay.

PATTY TAVATANAKIT: I had a -- I think I had a 4-iron in on 2.

Q. What about 11?

PATTY TAVATANAKIT: Sorry?

Q. What about 11?

PATTY TAVATANAKIT: 11 I had a 5-iron in.

Q. And did you reach it?

PATTY TAVATANAKIT: Yeah.

Q. So you reached all --

PATTY TAVATANAKIT: Yeah, I didn't get a good up and down there. I misjudged the pace a little bit, but I hit a nice chip and really good putting stroke. Didn't drop, but it's fine.

Q. But you are on in two on all the par-5s?

PATTY TAVATANAKIT: Basically. Today, yeah.

Q. Great round today.

PATTY TAVATANAKIT: Thank you.

Q. How would you describe today's rounds in terms of what are the keys for you to play basically blemish-free golf?

PATTY TAVATANAKIT: I feel like the thing out there today, I was pacing myself really well. Wasn't getting too fast on the course. Not getting greedy. Respect the pins that are tucked and go to the water side, which I did that the whole day today, and eventually the putt would drop just because you're always on the green. I think I missed one green today, which is pretty good.

Q. Yeah.

PATTY TAVATANAKIT: And you need a really good course management to do that.

Q. So your mental preparation would be your biggest strength is what I gather?

PATTY TAVATANAKIT: Yes, actually Grant and I have been working a lot on that, and Pia and Lynn, too, Vision 54. Just thought process throughout every shot was clear and light and easy, nothing too complicated.

But mainly I feel like what I improved as a player compared to last year was course management. Grant and I have been just really, really strict on that when we go play or practice together during the off-season.

Q. You mentioned that, and last season was a little bit of a challenge for you at times. This year you have come back, with the exception of last week, bolting out of the gate pretty strongly and playing well. What were you working on in the off-season to get you into this frame of mind and position today? Just the mental preparation and course management aspects, or were there some other changes you were working on?

PATTY TAVATANAKIT: Yes, I did. Little bit of swing changes, some mechanic stuff. It was not easy during off-season or just remember not feeling it at all just because I couldn't figure it out.

And I just kept doing the same thing that I believe it's going to get me to where I want to be. Let's say I was working on my hand path a lot. I was coming like across and then shallow down, which is not good. A lot of deviation there.

Grant just kind of straightened out my path, just up and down a little better, which makes -- my ball doesn't curve that much. It's always nice to hit just a straight kind of baby draw, baby fade shots.

Other than that, starting line and just -- you know, golf is a wholesome sport. It's not just mental. It's part of the mechanics, too but you have to even it out pretty good, which I think I did a good job of that.

Q. So you got an afternoon tee time tomorrow. What do you do between now and then?

PATTY TAVATANAKIT: Get a good practice in, a really quality practice. I'm not trying to tire myself out. Just I learned the hard way last year not to -- to let it go and be really, really -- like feel confident about your game and not to just over practice.

Because U.S. Open last year I played really good in the first day and that's just -- it took a lot out of me, and then obviously second day I crashed, wasn't thinking straight, was just making a lot of horrible mistakes and bad decisions.

So that tournament I learned a lot just to conserve my energy, and I think that's really important. So I'm going to go have some light practice and go rest and not think about golf.

Q. When you were on the Symetra Tour in 2019 I think with your talent level out there especially, the one hurdle was getting that win. When you finally stepped into the winner's circle you took off. What's the one hurdle out here that you need to pass?

PATTY TAVATANAKIT: Yeah, I told Grant this year, you know, beginning of the year, I really want to win out here. I feel like my game is there, but just a little bit here and there that's missing. Even though I didn't have a good year last year, but I felt like a little bit here and there could save me a couple shots.

Like having made a cut or, you know, being just a little bit here and there mental mostly. And then obviously I wasn't hitting it well, so that was a big difference.

I really -- like I said, I really want to win, but I can't force the win. It's going to come out naturally when I play my best golf. Just got to be patient. I have a long season ahead, but just got to keep doing what I'm doing I guess and be patient with it.

Q. You're an UCLA Bruin. We area the ANA Inspiration. How much inspiration have you drawn from the Bruins Final Four run?

PATTY TAVATANAKIT: Very inspiring. I watched the game with Alabama and they just kept fighting and fighting, and overtime, it's intense. I remember I was just watching and, man, this is way more intense than golf.

So I guess like, you know, if they can do it, I can do it.

Q. Love that.

PATTY TAVATANAKIT: Yeah.

Q. One more. You're a thoughtful and a quite smart person. Is that an asset or detriment in golf?

PATTY TAVATANAKIT: I would say it's an asset. You know, you got to have that. I mean, it's not like a perfect way of me having that. It's just being well-rounded around

the course. I think that helped me in just having a good thought process and a good heart and just be positive.

That's really important out here, because the slight negativity that comes into your system is just going to, like that. (Snapping fingers.) I had that last year because I struggled with some off-course stuff and obviously COVID and I was just out here alone. It was really lonely. Yeah.

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