

# The Sentry

Sunday, January 7, 2024

Kapalua, Maui, Hawaii, USA

Plantation Course at Kapalua

## Sahith Theegala

### Quick Quotes



#### Q. How would you assess the day?

SAHITH THEEGALA: It was a great day. Great day. Got off to a really nice start. I just saw my replay on 2 because we were wondering how the ball got there. It looked like it lipped out top edge. Great start. Had a bonus putt on 3 and never really looked back from there. It was definitely a little bit of a -- you knew that guys were going to go low, you knew there was going to be a ton of looks today, it was just so calm. So, it was a little bit of just staying patient on the putts. Missed a few shortish putts on 6 and 7 that really could have gotten the round off to a super fast start. I knew there was going to be a ton more looks. Obviously 18 hurts a little bit, but, no, I think Kirk -- Chris hit an incredible shot on 17 there, and then if we were tied or if I was at 29, I think he would probably pull off a birdie there as well. Yeah, really wish I could have had that second shot on 18 back. It's not how it works.

#### Q. What did you see in the putt on 18?

SAHITH THEEGALA: It's a putt that we practiced a lot the last couple years. Just knowing that it's always funny the breaks are funny around that hole, there's a couple angles going into that pin that are very, very straight. The grain's going right, but there's kind of a little bit of hold slope on that left side of the green. We were at an angle that we were pretty positive that it did break right. But we both had it barely outside the edge and that was with a firmer pace, and I just, just -- I hit it right down my line, just hit it probably six to 10 inches too short, and then the grain just got it going right. Once it got low, with about two inches to go, I knew it was going to lip out, it was just a little too low. I hit a good putt and I hit a really nice chip, when you're chipping, landing it into the grain it can get a little sideways bounce. It kicked right on me and never fed down left.

The second shot was the bummer, for sure.

#### Q. How were you feeling in the middle of that back nine with all the birdies in a row?

SAHITH THEEGALA: I felt really calm because I knew

looking at the leaderboard it was almost futile. It was like, okay, whatever, 25-under I was. Like, I needed to get to 28 or 29, even though you look at the leaderboard and I'm tied for 1st or one back, you know. I knew I just needed to keep making birdies and there was a bunch of chances, especially with the wind laying down. But I felt really, really calm.

The drive on 12 was big for me because I hit probably one of the worst drives of my life on 10 and got away with it. Really lucky that it stayed in.

Hitting a good drive there on 12 really set me up for 13, 14, 15, which are a little tougher drives. Yeah, I felt really good. I had a nice number on 17, too. It's just that's a tough pin on the right side to try and get it close to. Chris hitting it to 2 feet, that's just kind of a hat's off moment.

#### Q. Is there some emotion in your voice or do you have a cold?

SAHITH THEEGALA: I'm like a little congested. Definitely thinking back on it, it's really hard to be sad or upset about having a nice Sunday round, but it's just -- parring the last hole leaves a little bit of a sour taste. Yeah, honestly, nothing but positives. I felt like I stayed in it until the very end, too. I never thought ahead or anything like that. Yeah, it's always tough when you come so close, because, again, you don't get a lot of chances. We all work our butts off to have as many chances as possible. So, yeah, it is a little emotional, but I've been here before, and I think having one in the bag is something that I'm going to look forward to and look back on as something really positive. I definitely did that today. I was so much calmer than I have been previously. It's going to take me a day or two to get over it.

#### Q. Driver on 14?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Driver on 14. It was kind of a nice wind for me, I just hit it, aimed it way out left and hit my lazy cut in there, and got a great bounce. Actually didn't see it go on the green, I thought maybe it was just in the right fringe or caught up in the rough there, but J-Day's got hawk eyes and he said it was on the green, so that was a



cool one. Even putts like that, it's so easy to be like, oh, I wish got it to the hole, that kind of thing -- I guess I do wish I got it to the hole. That was a nice drive. I hit 4-wood earlier in the week with the same wind and came up just short, so I was like, I need driver.

**Q. Shot Link had it like 23 feet for birdie putt on 15. Is that accurate?**

SAHITH THEEGALA: No. I had probably six feet, I don't know what the tape -- I would say around six feet. I hit a nice second shot, but I was just down in the rough on right, so I was pin high left. It's so easy to leave that short, just trickle it over and leave it short. I hit a really nice putt there. Then hit another nice like four, 5-footer on 16.

**Q. Does this result kind of send you into 2024 with some confidence?**

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, for sure. Just really happy with -- me and my coach had a few days to get some work in. Last year I was hurt during the off-season, didn't play any golf. This year I got a lot of work in, in the gym, a lot of work in with my coach, and felt so ready for this event. I was so pumped for this event, and obviously with the signature events and all that big deal, I knew it was important to get off to a fast start. Yeah, finishing second here is going to be a really nice boost for the rest of the West Coast Swing, and just to start off what I think is a pretty important year with a little bit of unknowns and everything that's been going on, it's nice to get started.

**Q. 28-under would have won this thing, this is the 26th time it's been on this course, this event, 28 would have won most of the others. Is there a little bit of frustration there, a tiny bit?**

SAHITH THEEGALA: Honestly, I think if you ask a lot of the guys that have played here a bunch, we had three relatively calm days. The first two days it really was only blowing maybe 15 miles per hour, which out here is pretty calm. It wasn't gusting more than 25, 30. Yesterday it was windy. I think that was kind of a normal scoring day out here and you still saw one or two guys shot, I think there was a 9-under. With three days being calm, you kind of, as a player, even watching it, I think you can see how the scores are so low. It's a great golf course. Sometimes the notion of par gets stuck in a little bit in everyone's heads. There's still a lot of tough golf shots. There might be a few holes where -- I think of hole 5 that they could make it par-4 and nobody would change anything. 14 even. I think 14's a great drivable par-4, but there's just, the par 73, and you see these 8-, 9-, 10-unders you say, Oh, it's a chip and putt and all that kind of stuff. I think it's a great track and I think most of the guys would agree that it's one of the best

tracks we play.

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