

Sony Open in Hawaii

Saturday, January 16, 2021

Honolulu, Hawaii, USA

Waialae Country Club

Brendan Steele

Quick Quotes

Q. 22 birdies so far, nine coming today, not a bogey on your card. From our perspective it looked like you had your complete game going. What was it like from your perspective?

BRENDAN STEELE: Definitely that's how I've been feeling all week and feel like I'm swinging really well and my course management is very good. The putts are really feeling good even if they don't go in. I'm very happy all the way around.

Q. Last year you had the lead most of the final round but lost in a playoff to Cameron Smith; are you playing inspired?

BRENDAN STEELE: I don't know if I am but definitely the first practice round we played was on the back nine and I was remembering some shots, some good and some bad, kind of kicking myself a little bit. But I usually play well coming off of a break, and I had a nice break. I was able to spend some time with my family and get excited to play golf again, and sometimes I lose that in the middle of the year when I'm away from home and just kind of beating my head against the wall.

I get here and I'm very excited to play and good about my game, so it's a good combo.

Q. From a strategy perspective, from a commitment perspective heading into the final round, will you do anything different from last year?

BRENDAN STEELE: I was really happy I played last year all the way through the final round. I would have liked to hit a better shot into 18, but Cameron had a really tough up-and-down and made a great putt, and then hit a great shot in the playoff and forced my hand on the second shot there. I was very happy with everything I did and I don't feel like I did anything differently last year than the times that I've won. I would like to do the exact same thing tomorrow and hopefully it's good enough.

Q. Great round of golf, and aside from maybe the 4th



hole, you looked pretty comfortable out there and didn't seem to be a whole lot of stress.

BRENDAN STEELE: Yeah, not too much stress today. Beautiful day. Hit a lot of good shots. Fourth hole, I can't even remember, I didn't hit a very good iron shot there but still hit the green and 2-putted, so wasn't too much stress. It was nice. Days like this don't come along that often and you have to enjoy them when they do.

Q. Your strategy down the stretch, was it keeping the ball below the hole?

BRENDAN STEELE: Greens were a little quicker than they were last year, and if you get above the hole on some of these spots it can be tough to make them and you can end up running them by. I was laying back a little off the tee, and I'm pretty strong from, say, 140 to 180. So I feel really comfortable leaving myself those kind of numbers and leaving the ball still on the green where I want it.

Q. Do you still have the mindset that it's unfinished business?

BRENDAN STEELE: Yeah, you hope that you come back and you play well and erase whatever negative memories there are, but all the memories are pretty positive. Playing great here last year was good, and I'm excited for the challenge tomorrow. I know it's going to be really tough. Guys are coming after me. But I'll just do my best and hopefully it will be enough.

Q. What was working well, seemed like you got everything?

BRENDAN STEELE: Just about everything through the bag. I have been feeling really good about my swing and holing a bunch of putts. Had not really seen anything lip out until 13 and 14, kind of went out back-to-back. But if that's my biggest problem, I'm in pretty good shape.

Q. Curious, of the tournaments you've had chances to win over the years, where would last year rate in terms of one you felt really slipped out of your hands?



BRENDAN STEELE: Yeah, so that's interesting, definitely I would say probably the most that slipped away. But at the same time, I also felt like I played very well last year. Like I don't feel like I played any worse than when I when I won. It's a totally different discussion if Cam doesn't get up-and-down on the last hole.

So sometimes it just comes down to what the other guy does, as well. You can't always pull off what you want to. I would have liked to make birdie on 18 last year. But unfortunately made a par and Cam had a nice up-and-down, and didn't do so well in the playoff. But that's definitely on the top of the list for sure.

Q. Do you feel there's a little left from last year you're trying to finish off this year?

BRENDAN STEELE: All it shows you is that you can do it around this course; you feel comfortable here with the shots and everything. Totally different conditions this year. It's been so nice all week versus last year; it was like you just had to really battle on every shot. You're hitting 5-irons from 160 yards and things like that last year.

Been a totally different kind of week. But I love the course and I love the shots and what it demands of you. It's always nice for me coming off a break because I'm excited to break and sometimes I lose that through the middle of the year.

Q. How does that change your mindset for tomorrow compared to a year ago?

BRENDAN STEELE: I think we are going to get some wind tomorrow. It's not going to be quite as bad as last year but I like the wind. The wind is my favorite condition. I don't love rain but I like the wind. I'm fine with it if it blows; if it doesn't blow, I've enjoyed it like this, too. Either way is okay with me.

Q. You didn't come to this tournament for so long because you didn't have success. What changed in your mindset?

BRENDAN STEELE: It was my first-ever TOUR event I came and missed the cut and thought it wasn't my style of golf course. But my game has changed a ton since then, and I took ten years off. Keegan finally forced me to come back, and thank God he did because it's turning into my favorite place to come.

I think my game is just a little bit better and I think when I'm sharp, it doesn't really matter where I go; I feel like I can contend.

Q. What's the biggest difference for you as a player?

BRENDAN STEELE: When I first got on TOUR, all I could do is hit big hooks, and now I can shape the ball both ways and I can flight it up and down. On this course, you have to work it both ways. You have to be able to hit some shots off the tee, and especially with running out the way that they are, you have to play to your numbers and things like that. I just wasn't as good as that when I was 27 as I am now. That's the biggest difference.

Q. What mindset will you bring to the golf course tomorrow?

BRENDAN STEELE: I know I'm going to have to go shoot a great round. I know it's going to be really hard. I know guys are going to be coming after me. There should be a lot of birdies out there even with the wind picking up a little bit. I know I'm going to have to shoot one of the best rounds I've ever shot to go win it. So that's what I'm going to go try to do.

Q. 18 today, did you lay up?

BRENDAN STEELE: I hit it in the right bunker. Didn't get it hooking around the corner. Laid up to a good number and hit a good shot.

Q. What happened on 17?

BRENDAN STEELE: That was nice, kind of a bonus, didn't expect to make that from 35 feet. My coach is on the bag this week and we are working on the mindset that every putt has a chance to go in, doesn't mean you're trying to ram it in but you're playing it as if you're trying it make it not just get it close and that's worked out really nicely. We did that there and it paid off.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports