

# THE PLAYERS Championship

Saturday, March 16, 2024

Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, USA

TPC Sawgrass

## Sahith Theegala

### Quick Quotes

#### Q. Can you walk us through the second shot on 16?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah. I don't think I hit an iron shot in the vicinity of the hole the whole day, and then the iron shot on 16 was probably the best swing I put on a shot all day, and still, I hit a couple cuts today that just went through everything, and I airtailed a few greens and had 200 front and 216 hole, I think. It's kind of a perfect 5-iron, because I figured if I flighted it -- I hit my 5-iron anywhere between 215 and 220, figured I'd flight it, 10 of hurt, and I striped it. You could just see the wind just this ball. I knew it was going to land just short of the green, I was just hoping it didn't land on the knob, and I think it just flew the knob, got a nice kick up there and honestly probably had the easiest putt possible to that pin.

A little bit of good luck and good timing. It was probably the best swing of the day.

#### Q. Has this tournament changed a little bit? Wyndham hasn't run away with it. Do you feel like you're in a much different position than maybe at the start of the day?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, these guys ahead of me are playing really, really well, and they're some of the best players in the world. With the conditions how they are, I'm sure it's going to get a little firmer again tomorrow, but the greens are still really soft today and guys are throwing darts and making a ton of birdies. Brian shot one of the easiest 8-unders I've ever seen in my life, with a really bizarre 6 on 9. He got unlucky there.

Obviously there's low scores out there, but I'm not going to pay too much attention to it, just going to keep doing my thing, and if I'm somewhat close come the back nine tomorrow, I'd be very happy. If not, I'm just going to keep doing my thing and hopefully put up another good number.

#### Q. When Brian is playing the way he's playing, does that make it harder to stay patient for you? I know you want to make as many birdies as possible.



SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, in a way it almost helped because I was really playing poorly today to start, and seeing Harm start off the way he did, it was kind of like a rally cry for me. I'm just so competitive. I'm like, I can't lose by 10 to this guy. Granted, he's one of the best players in the world, and every single time I play with him he's one of the most impressive golfers I've ever seen in my life. I was like, just don't get too drummed.

I think just my competitiveness kept me close. Well, close, I'd say I was probably seven or eight back most of the day. Yeah, I kind of fed off of him making putts. It's a good visual as a golfer, I think, no matter -- I think most people would agree they would rather have their playing partner play really well, and I definitely picked off some of those vibes at the end.

#### Q. What do you admire about his game?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Just everything. He's kind of like Xander. He just has no holes in his game. He hits it sneaky long. He's right up there with me on a lot of drives. Feels like he never starts the ball off line. Like, every iron shot he hits start at the flag and either cuts a little or draws a little. I wouldn't even say he plots his way around because I would say he's a pretty aggressive player, he just stripes, he's just a striper. I've probably played with him five or six times now, and he's always been a great putter. When he matches everything up, it's pretty fun to watch.

I played with him the week before he won the Open at the Genesis, and he didn't make a thing, and he was like 9-under the first two rounds. It's been really impressive to watch what Harms does out there. It's really cool for me to see up close, too, because obviously he's a major champion and has a long career, which I think kind of is underrated. I don't know exactly how long, but I'd guess 11 to 13 seasons, something like that, maybe even more. Yeah, it's really impressive.

#### Q. How would you describe your relationship with this place from the start, and has that changed this week?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, it's just awesome to see how much my game has progressed, and I think I use this course as a good basis, because no matter how easy the



conditions are out here, this is a hard golf course, and it's not long or there's nothing particularly nasty about it. The water is there a lot. But you just have to put your ball in the right places, and you just have to hit good shots. You can't fake it around here.

I think this is one of the courses that every type of player has won at, and I think inherently that makes it a great golf course design. You get punished when you hit a bad shot, and you get rewarded when you hit a good shot.

The first year I played -- I was like, this course is so hard. I don't know how I'm going to compete unless I hit it better off the tee, hit better iron shots, everything. And I put up like a -- I was probably 10- or 11-over, missed the cut. Last year, honestly felt like I played well the first two days, and I think I made the cut on the number and shot like 9-over on the weekend, too. I don't have a good track record after two events, but it does seem like a place where it could get a little volatile, and if you're playing well, you're going to play well. If you're not, then you're completely out of the fray, which I think a lot of other guys' results kind of shows that, too. So that's why I didn't beat myself up, like, Oh, THE PLAYERS Championship, our biggest event, and my best finish is 75th.

But it's cool to see the progression I've made since the first year and even since last year. It's really cool to look back on.

**Q. What's been the biggest key to driving it better?**

SAHITH THEEGALA: A lot of it is confidence. Me and my coach have been trying to fix it for a long time, and we learned there's just no fixing it. It's just, I have a certain athleticism where I can hit good drives. I just have to channel that confidence more and more and work harder in the gym or work harder on the range, whatever it is, get my setup as good as I can, and let my swing take over. Because I know it's unique and mechanically might not be perfect, but it can still produce good ball flight and a good drive.

Just sticking to it, and it was really cool to see that last year. I know the stats didn't really know it, but I really felt like I made a stride in my driving last year, and strokes gained off the tee was probably around 100, which for me is a win. It's cool to see the stats, and I've picked up a little speed just from no speed training but just getting better in the gym. All of that stuff really helped.

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