

# Arnold Palmer Invitational

Sunday, March 10, 2024

Bay Hill, Florida, USA

Bay Hill Club and Lodge

## Will Zalatoris

### Quick Quotes

**Q. Characterize the golf course today. It played over 73, I think. Scottie shoots 66, but no one else is doing that.**

WILL ZALATORIS: Yeah, I thought the TOUR did a great job of setting it up. In years past, it's gotten super dicey where the lead might be 6 after the first round and 4 wins. So they did a really good job, so hat's off to them with making sure that it didn't really get out of hand.

It was weird having almost like some scar tissue on some shots and putts that I've had that I've just had no chance of stopping, and they were very fair today. So 66, I mean, that's going out and getting it. That's shooting -- I mean, so it's 7 off the regular or 7 off of the average today. I mean, that's 62, 63 on a Sunday, basically. So that's damn good playing.

**Q. You played with Scottie a lot growing up, back-to-back U.S. juniors for you guys in 2013, 2014. What he did out here this week and especially today and leading the field in stoke strokes gained putting today. Can you put into perspective how impressive this guy's been?**

WILL ZALATORIS: He's the No. 1 player in the world for a reason. The kid's been a world beater his entire career, junior golf, amateur golf, college golf, and now on the professional level. Yeah, I don't ever want to say that you expect it and throw those expectations on someone, but I would say I'm definitely not surprised with -- it stinks because he's such a good guy too, so when you're shooting those scores, sometimes you want to get in his pocket, but he's a great dude and he and Meredith are awesome people. That's stellar playing and the kid deserves it.

**Q. Another great week this week at a signature event. Going up to Sawgrass, what are you expecting next week?**

WILL ZALATORIS: It's a place I love. It's one of my favorite golf courses all year. It's one of the purest golf



courses we play on top of that, so looking forward to the challenge.

**Q. How much does it mean for you to book your place at the Open Championship so soon after an injury?**

WILL ZALATORIS: Yeah, it was a little unexpected, not really knowing kind of how the year was going to go, now being able to lock it up. Basically my first four or five events of the year, to be in all four majors is pretty special, and I'm looking forward to getting some vengeance in the Open Championship.

**Q. What is it about playing at a major that brings the best out in you?**

WILL ZALATORIS: Yeah, there's just, they're just hard. You just can't fake your way around it. You can't have a hole in your game that week and win. I think I give myself the most chances just with my ball striking and when the putter gets hot the weeks I contend and, you know, when you play on really tough greens, it only favors me. So I always love hard, I embrace hard, hard golf courses, so I'm hoping for some rich Scottish weather when we get over there.

**Q. Ready for some challenging links golf?**

WILL ZALATORIS: I love it. It's so different, too, especially in a week like this where you're trying to throw balls as high as you can in the air and stop 'em fast, you got to get creative. So I love the challenge. I love going over to the Scottish. You get a little prep before. And then obviously for The Open Championship, it's just special, no matter where it is.

**Q. After things being so tightly bunched all week, what goes through your mind when you are going through your round and you look up and you see Scottie's up by four, he's up about by five?**

WILL ZALATORIS: Yeah, he was even through 7, I had a couple, it got out -- I got out of position a few times, had to save par, didn't really have that many good looks. I knew I needed to be at least 2-, 3-under going through the first 6



to make a charge. But he shoots 66 today, what are you going to do? So, that's stellar playing. Again, no surprise out of a guy like that, but it's special playing.

**Q. Bay Hill can get you in many ways, but, for you, what was the toughest part of the course today?**

WILL ZALATORIS: I'm just so used to this place getting so baked out and so fast, that I having some more receptive shots into the greens is almost bizarre. I gave a lot of putts a lot of respect today that normally -- or I guess normally I would give them a lot of respect, and I did today and really I over-respected some of the putts. I was downhill a lot. It's hard to make putts when you're 18, 22 feet above the hole and trying to make a run. So, but that's just Bay Hill. You get, just like yesterday, I get it going and I hit two bad golf shots the next thing I turn a 5-under round into 1-under. So, it's a special place, means a lot to me, obviously, being on the Arnold Palmer Scholarship and I look forward to coming back next year.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports