

RBC Heritage

Friday, April 14, 2023

Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, USA

Harbour Town Golf Links

Jimmy Walker

Quick Quotes

Q. Jimmy, just in with a couple of 65s at 12-under, a few shots ahead. What's the first couple of days been like for you because it's been a while since you've been in this position.

JIMMY WALKER: Yeah, it's been great. It's tough -- when you're playing bad, it's still really tough, and you put a lot of pressure on yourself. Even today -- even at Valero a couple weeks ago I was getting up there. When you haven't been playing well, it's even more pressure to keep playing well when you're playing well and take advantage of what's happening because it hasn't been happening very often.

Yeah, like yesterday, it was -- got it going, and I was like, okay, wow. Now we need to pedal down, keep it going, and the same today. It was take advantage, keep your head in the game, keep stroking it good, just keep doing all the things that I felt like I've been kind of working on, some old feels, old thoughts, and just stay on them and be really diligent about it because it's so easy to just check out. It has been for me, especially after being sick.

It's hard for me to get into a shot sometimes. I step away a lot just because sometimes it's super easy and sometimes it's really hard. So it's a grind. Playing good or bad right now, it feels like a grind. But it's nice to be where we're at for sure.

Q. Taking that top 50 money exemption to get in, was that a tough decision with the way you were playing at the time.

JIMMY WALKER: It was a pretty easy decision honestly. I was 50, and if I didn't play, I'd never get it again. I just wouldn't. So when it happened, it was kind of like, wow, this is incredible.

I immediately shifted gears and talked to my family and said, this is it. This is what we're going to do. They were totally all about it. All my friends were all about it.

I remember going into the first tournament, should I go



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practice? Should I just go out and start winging it? We winged it, and I played pretty damn good that first week. I think I led the field in birdies. It's like where has this been?

Then I kind of got back into form how I'd been playing. Yeah, it's cool to be back. Maybe I have a chance to really do something special.

Q. Even when you were playing better, you did not come to Harbour Town very often, and it was kind of a mixed bag when you were here. What's kind of been right about what you've seen on this course the last couple of days.

JIMMY WALKER: Historically, I've been not the straightest driver of the golf ball. So this golf course looks very tight to me. So I've just been not trying to do too much off the tee, just trying to get it where it needs to be and hit some quality iron shots.

I've always felt like playing this place was all about ball striking because, if you're ball striking it well, if you hit the green, you're going to have a birdie putt, it seems like, because the greens are so tiny.

So that's what I've concentrated on is just getting it on the green and seeing some putts go. That's basically been it.

Q. You talked earlier about keeping your head down and trying to take advantage of when things are going right. When did you have -- did you have a feeling today that, hey, I'm still on this roll and things are still going right?

JIMMY WALKER: I didn't know. I haven't put two really good rounds together back to back out here. I played well at Torrey, which is a tough golf course, and I had it all feeling pretty good there, but it comes and goes.

Since getting sick, mentally and physically feel different damn near every day, and that's been the hardest part. The things that I work on one day, I can't feel it the next day. Some days I'll get two days out of it. So that's been the hardest part.

That's what drove me away is I can't get the same feels

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day in and day out, and that's what you need out here to play well is to have a feeling of it's the same and I can rely on that today, and I haven't had that.

Q. Given all that, what do you do the rest of today? Do you just kind of recuperate, rest, and get ready for tomorrow afternoon?

JIMMY WALKER: I'm going to go have some lunch, and I'm going to get a massage, and that's probably about it. And maybe go get some food tonight. I mean, take it super chill.

Q. I want to just touch real quickly on the health thing. Mentally, I'm wondering if it maybe gives you a bit of freedom out here. As you said, your first tournament, you just kind of came back and played. I wonder if it opens you up a little bit to just have the experience?

JIMMY WALKER: You'd love it to be that way, and I can tell myself that all I want. That's something you really have to believe. I've just got so much -- I've had so much belief in myself that I can't really let go and do that very well. I wish I could.

I mean, I really want it. I'm out here, and I really want it, and I want it bad. I have been really tough on myself. I've had so many people say give yourself a break, but it's been tough, and it's hard to do. Easy to say, hard to do for sure.

Q. Jimmy, when you took those few months break and you weren't playing much and you were at home doing general things, did you miss it at all? How much did you miss it if you did?

JIMMY WALKER: I didn't watch a shot. I didn't look at golf scores. I didn't know what anybody was doing honestly.

I don't know what it was. It was like a five-month break or something. And I was still going out and playing golf at home with my friends. I always treated every time I played golf, even at home or work, I treated it like it was work and I was always working.

All of a sudden, it was, well, maybe I'll have a beer or something. So I shifted gears. I was going out there to let loose and have fun as opposed to just a grind. I would show up and play, and I was still playing pretty good at home. Courses you know, and they're not as hard as out here and that kind of thing.

So it wasn't like I wasn't playing golf. I was still playing but zero practice. I wasn't doing any of that.

Q. Just following up on that, how much of that attitude

will you be able to retain given the situation you were in coming into this weekend? You mentioned to me you were pretty nervous today. That's not -- it's not unusual to feel that. You've won tournaments. You've been in contention a lot, but when you haven't done it for so long, that's a normal feeling.

How do you think you'll manage the weekend?

JIMMY WALKER: I don't know. I've always felt like embracing playing well. If you can't get into playing well and letting it go on the weekend, that's what you're out here for. It's more rare when you've got it all together. Then it's time to step on the gas and try to win.

I've never felt like I've ever been afraid to go win a golf tournament. I've won golf tournaments in all sorts of fashions, big events. Played in the biggest stages. So nothing -- there's nothing I haven't done. Nothing this weekend is any different than anything I've ever done honestly. Just go do it again because it's fun if you win.

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