

Valspar Championship

Sunday, March 20, 2022

Palm Harbor, Florida, USA

Innisbrook Resort (Copperhead)

Davis Riley

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome our runner-up here at the Valspar, Davis Riley. I know it wasn't the perfect outcome you had hoped for but what an incredible week it was overall. A lot of great takeaways, the 62 yesterday, and the bouncing back from the triple today and almost getting it done in the playoff. Just a few general thoughts about the week overall.

DAVIS RILEY: Yeah, very solid week. A lot to build on. No, I can't hang my head about anything. I played a lot of good golf and unfortunately I didn't have my best stuff today and I stumbled on hole 5 today and that kind of cost me.

But at the end of the day it's a great week to build on and I'm looking forward to the next start.

THE MODERATOR: Been a lot of learning experiences for you this year out on the PGA TOUR, the good and the bad, and you kind of make it all work as you make your way down. You feel confident with what you have learned, feel like you've gotten in place as you're kind of establishing your regular presence out here?

DAVIS RILEY: Yeah. I've had a couple good experiences just playing with some bigger names, Jon Rahm, Adam Scott, then of course Justin. Just getting used to that. It's a little bit different because obviously on the Korn Ferry you don't have crowds and roars and stuff like that.

So, no, those past experiences have been a really big help and I was able to draw back on a lot of those memories yesterday and today.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take some questions.

Q. The two drives on 16, which is not an easy driving hole. Talk about that.

DAVIS RILEY: I didn't know what Sam was doing on the green. I just heard a volunteer say, oh, he's got this long putt for bogey and then he made it. And then I figured he made bogey and I knew I needed to make a birdie to at



least be tied going into the last hole. I just told myself I need to hit a good shot and, yeah, I made a really good swing on it. Hit it right on the button, and then to cap it off with the putt was nice.

Then, yeah, I saw him miss his putt. I think he had a fairly similar one to as I did behind the hole on 18. I saw him miss that. I figured it was for birdie.

Then he made par. I knew sitting in the fairway on 18 I need to hit a good one and a birdie would do it.

Q. What did you see on that putt?

DAVIS RILEY: Yeah, it was, we went back and forth on it. I thought it was fairly straight and then it was going to try to leak a little right there at the end. It just went a little bit more right earlier than I thought, so it kind of got started right and then kind of hung out the whole way.

But halfway there I thought it had a chance of, it was perfect speed, but unfortunately just misread it a little bit there at the beginning.

Q. When is your earliest recollection of playing with Sam?

DAVIS RILEY: Oh, boy, it's got to be, I don't know, AJGA days, so it's got to be 11, 12 years old, just back in those tournaments. I can't name a specific tournament.

But yeah, just we had to have been 11 or 12 years old just duking it out on the AJGA TOUR.

Q. Anyone stick out that the two of you went at it, kind of like being in a playoff today?

DAVIS RILEY: Yeah. No, there's definitely a level of comfort there when we stepped up on the playoff hole and just any time we see each other because we've been friends for so long.

I respect his game and he's been a good player for awhile. Just to compete with him at every level is also fun too, see the guys that kind of progress and go down the line



through the ranks.

Q. Can you take us through the debacle at 5?

DAVIS RILEY: Yeah, I just hit a bad tee shot and then from there it was just kind of a cluster. It was just, I didn't really have any room to go right unless I went out sideways and left myself 290 yards to the green.

So I, honestly, just tried to go up left and tried to hit it on one of the tee boxes, but I had kind of a weird, above my stance sitting down in the rough lie, and it just came out a little left and hot.

Then, yeah, honestly, I think where it went wrong was after I dropped, got the relief from the tee box, the tee marker, yeah, it was just sandy, kind of weird grass over there, and maybe I just tried to hit too much of a perfect shot instead of making sure I blast it over the green and give myself just an up and in at par.

Then I just kind of, I don't know, it was just a tough shot. It's just so Sandy over there and it's thin. You really have to make perfect contact to even get the ball that far.

But if I had to do it over again maybe just make sure I get it long instead of trying to get it on the green, almost just take long and try to get up-and-down.

Q. (No Microphone.)

DAVIS RILEY: It was weird, just because where I took the drop I couldn't take a direct line at the pin. Like, the tree was kind of behind me and to the right, so I almost had to take it inside and hit like a draw. I couldn't take a normal back swing back. I almost had to take it inside and try to sweep it a little bit.

And that's why I think the contact was why it was because I was having to come from the inside and it was just shallow. And on that sandy kind of turf it had to be perfect contact or it was going to come out super soft like it did.

Q. Does Sam's play on 18 show people how tough this league is, not a great drive, not a great second shot, holes the putt.

DAVIS RILEY: On 18?

Q. I'm sorry, pardon me. Second playoff hole. Misspoke.

DAVIS RILEY: Yeah. Yeah. No, on the second playoff hole. Yeah, I mean, if he's, Sam's a hell of a player. And, yeah, I mean, any time you give someone like that who is

playing well within 30 feet you always think there's a chance, so I kind of went into there thinking he was going to give it a really good run.

But, yeah, it doesn't surprise me. He's been a very good putter for a long time, and yeah, that was a very good putt.

Q. Wondering if at any point today, last night, you allowed yourself to think about getting in the Masters with a win.

DAVIS RILEY: Not really. I didn't think about it at all. I just kind of didn't really, I have never really thought about it, to be honest with you. Obviously maybe back in my head somewhere I knew, but I knew I was a long ways from getting that. There was a lot that had to be done from last night until the end of the day.

So I did a really good job of staying in my process and then kind of got punched in the mouth early and I just knew if I just kept with it that I would have a chance to win.

But that being the forefront of my thinking, I wasn't thinking about the Masters. I wasn't living and dying -- I was trying to win a golf tournament, the stuff comes with it, you know. But I was just trying to take care of the task at hand and that stuff follows.

Q. Two part question. Curious what did you this morning, how you kept emotions or excitement or nerves at bay and just kind of what your process was leading up to this afternoon.

DAVIS RILEY: Yeah, well, actually, this shirt I'm wearing I had to wash it this morning. I did laundry this morning. That's about the most interesting thing I did this morning.

No, I did a little bit of laundry. I watched some TV and that's pretty much about it. And I had to, felt like I was kind of pacing around my hotel room a little bit.

But, no, it was a pretty boring morning, laundry and just sitting around.

Q. What was the emotional reset and thought process like going into 6 and after everything you went through on 5, but just being able to kind of get yourself centered again and continue on the course without thinking too much about what had just happened?

DAVIS RILEY: Yeah, walking off the green, I told Lance, There's a lot of golf left. Like, I'm playing good. And fortunately I had a little bit of cushion up until that mistake, so I was still in it. It was not like I really shot myself out of it.

I knew if I played solid golf that I could play this course 3-, 4-, 5-under coming in and I knew that would probably be enough to win.

But I just had to hit the reset button and just go shot by shot and I felt like I did a really good job of that today.

Q. Is it any consolation that you didn't lose the playoff, but he had to make that long putt with a birdie?

DAVIS RILEY: Yeah. I mean, yeah, you have to, he won it, so you would much rather see that than me miss a 5-footer, him miss a 5-footer or something. He made a big putt in a big moment and, yeah, it was really impressive and, yeah, he did what he needed to do.

Q. Talking to Lance outside there's a lot of positives that you can pull from today. What do you think will be the biggest?

DAVIS RILEY: I knew I could do this. I knew I could win golf tournaments at the highest level. But yeah, I just, I think just the way, just how I handled adversity and knowing that I don't have to have my best stuff to have a chance to win a golf tournament, that proved a lot to me.

A little bit into yesterday, late yesterday, I was hitting some off shots and today on the front nine I wasn't hitting it great, kind of spotty on some holes. But just knowing that I don't have to be perfect to win a golf tournament was one of the biggest takeaways I'm taking away from this week.

I've just got to be me, and me is good enough to compete at the highest level.

Q. (No Microphone.)

DAVIS RILEY: The first playoff hole in the rough? Yeah, so I was going back and forth because the lie was kind of sitting down. And, yeah, I couldn't tell, me and Lance were talking about it, I couldn't tell if it was going to jump out of there, it's just kind of a guess. It's sitting down. The wind's into you and it's just judging the jump with the wind.

And so I actually went club down from pitching wedge to 50 degree and I thought it would jump and still get through that wind, but it kind of came out a little bit more spinny than I thought it would, and then the wind just kind of hit it so it just kind of floated short.

But thankfully, I mean, it was a perfect lie, kind of nestled right up there on the up slope of the bunker, so I was able to put a really good move on it and hit that bunker shot pretty close.