

American Century Championship

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Lake Tahoe, Nevada, USA

Edgewood Tahoe

Mark Mulder

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Our second round leader, Mark Mulder, great round today. Nice work. 25 points, a total of 45. You have a 3-putt lead over Mardy Fish going into tomorrow. You've never played with Mardy in a final round before. Tell us what was going on out there today.

MARK MULDER: Today was just kind of consistent. I had a few birdies, bogey or so here and there. Kind of untimely, but the eagle on 16 was huge. It was kind of disappointing to par 18 after hitting it on the front edge of the green.

But overall I was pleased with it. I didn't hit it all that good. I putted pretty well, which helped. But overall it was like yesterday. Didn't hit it great but made some putts when I needed to. Other than the birdie putt on 18, the only other one was 8. Hit it to about ten feet on eight and missed that one. The other ones, I made the ones I should have. And so -- I 2-putted when I needed to when I hit it to 20, 30 feet. I was pleased with it.

Q. Long putt on 18. You were on the front and it was in the back?

MARK MULDER: It was, but all in all, it wasn't that hard to get it into some four-foot circle. I hit it to about eight, ten feet. Left it a little short. That was disappointing. Overall pleased with the day. I also rolled in a 30-footer on 16 that maybe I shouldn't have made.

Q. You were past the hole, that downhill breaking the other way?

MARK MULDER: Would have gone 10, 12 feet by had it not gone in the center. Gotta give and take right there.

Q. Overall, as far as the crowd was concerned, what did you think? Looks like we're getting big numbers of people out there.

MARK MULDER: One of the post-round interviews I just



did, I told you guys yesterday, I haven't -- I didn't love it the last couple of years. I feed off of this stuff. I love the energy. I love the fans being out there and having them back.

I think for me, personally, has played a huge part of my focus and the energy that's out there, because it's been lacking the last couple of years. For obvious reasons. So to have them back, it's felt really good and I've really enjoyed it.

Q. Are the greens tougher this year? Seems like everybody is commenting. I don't know if they're quicker or tougher pin placements, or what are you seeing?

MARK MULDER: I wouldn't necessarily say they're tougher. What I will say is last year, because of that heat, we had mid-90s, I believe, almost every day last year. So they were very dried out. So they were kind of crusty. And when I hit a good putt last year, it didn't go in.

This year, I feel like when I hit the putt I'm supposed to, it is going in. And when I putted it on the line that I read, when I read it correctly, it's a good putt. And last year, I almost felt like the ball kind of floated on top of the grass because it was so hot. And they almost had a little crust to them, dried out, almost. Just because of the mid-90, low 90s we had last year. So last year I didn't make anything.

I made no putts last year outside of probably eight to ten feet. And this year I am. So that's to me has been the biggest difference.

Q. Okay. A couple of years out of the hunt, but you won this thing three years in a row, obviously. What are you thinking the night before you're going into it? You've been there.

MARK MULDER: You just gotta go play your game. Obviously I know how good Mardy is. I know how the first time I let myself look at the leaderboard was on 18. I wasn't surprised at all to see Mardy's name right there. Even though he didn't play that great yesterday.



And I don't know exactly who is in third, but it might be D Lowe or somebody. So if it is the three of us, it's not going to be the first time we've played together, and we're going to have a lot of fun.

Q. I think Adam Thielen might be in there depending on the pairings, because they're tied going into it. Thoughts? You know Fish really well and D Lowe pretty well, you've all won. So you guys know how this is. Adam is the only guy who hasn't, not yet anyway. So any nerves? You don't look too nervous.

MARK MULDER: No, I'm not nervous. I mean, I don't know, I have been here before. The first year, yes, I couldn't even think straight walking down 18. The first year I won it. I know what I need to do. I know how I need to hit the golf ball. I can't go out there and think oh, pars are going to win. That's not how it's going to work. Somebody's going to put up 20, 25 points tomorrow, and I need to be right there, if I feel like I want to win this thing.

Q. Mardy had 27 today. You had, I think, 25. The guys that have been there are starting to score.

MARK MULDER: It's out there. It is out there. Like I said, I mean, the two holes, I mean, okay, I could have been, what, technically four points better. But I also made an incredible bogey on 14 to save my round. Otherwise that's minus two. Otherwise I'd be pretty much tied with Mardy.

So there's those ups and downs in a round. We're amateurs for a reason. We make mistakes and hit some terrible shots from time to time. So try to limit those tomorrow.

Q. What did you have, four birdies, four pars, an eagle today; is that right?

MARK MULDER: I don't even know. It's kind of a blur once I'm out there. I'm just focusing from shot to shot, to be honest.

Q. Mardy also said he didn't look at the scoreboard all day. And you're saying you didn't look at it until 18, do you normally? Don't you normally?

MARK MULDER: Not really. What good does it do? I always used to joke, I say this to my kids who play sports, too: When I gave up a three-run homer in the second inning, what good does it do? What am I supposed to do, throw my glove down on the ground in anger? You're down 3-0 and go put up some zeros let your team come back.

Yesterday I had, what, five or six points through ten holes

yesterday. I wasn't angry. I wasn't mad. I just put my head down and focused on the next shot and made a lot of birdies down the stretch. So sports are -- that's the way sports go. There's a lot of ups and downs. If you can't handle it mentally, you're not going to be there on the last day on 18.

Q. You're 11 points better than your second-day score last year. You don't like playing in the heat?

MARK MULDER: No. I don't mind the heat. I live in Arizona. That's why I enjoy being here. Last year was just incredibly tough. I remember being in the tent last year and all of us were sitting around saying we can't -- we're all kind of complaining, talking about how nobody can make a putt. And Vinny walks in. He's like, I made everything I looked at.

So, I mean, that's how it goes. This course does not play long. It's a lot of little chip wedges and a lot of these par-4s. So it becomes a putting contest because we can all hit fairways, a lot of us can hit greens. Who is going to make the putt?

And for me that's what's been better this year over the last few years, is that I've putted better. So that's the difference maker, that's all it really is. And that was the difference maker with Vinny last year.

Q. We usually have -- whether this is the correct phrase or not, the usual suspects come into the press room for the postgame press conference, is yourself, Mardy. This year, a lot of guys are showing up in the top, and we got two people tied for third. Two tied for fifth. Two tied for seventh. And among them, Joe Pavelski, Mike Modano and Kevin Lowe hasn't been here in -- not Kevin. Derek. And Adam Thielen. Any surprise that these younger guys, new faces?

MARK MULDER: They're all good players. Obviously Thielen is still playing. Playing with Oshie today. These are guys that are still current players. So they have a season. They have a time where they're not playing a lot of golf. Joe Pavelski, I played with him in the final group before.

So some of these guys, once their careers are finished, and you see them here, you might see them more at the top of the leaderboard come the end. So I know for me I probably improved by three, four strokes from the day my career ended within the next few years, because you're starting to play year-round as opposed to very sparingly during the baseball season.

Q. 30-footer on 16?

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MARK MULDER: Give or take, yeah.

Q. And how is your confidence level going into tomorrow?

MARK MULDER: Well, I feel great. I'm putting the ball good. In past years, I mean -- it all kind of depends on putting. I'm not going to lie. If you're rolling the ball good, you should feel confident. And when you're not rolling the ball well, you're probably not going to feel great about your game.

So putting is kind of the difference maker. Knock on wood, I haven't missed anything that I should have made. Those two to four-footers, five-footers. The ones that you need to make I've put good strokes on those balls.

So those have been huge for me. Most of them par putts, obviously. So it's just about accumulating points. And that's the big part of this.

Q. So you're hoping the kids will run onto the green again?

MARK MULDER: Yes, if I can do what I did today. Tomorrow I'll be fine.

Q. You're talking about the putting. Does your caddie read your putts or do you read them?

MARK MULDER: We kind of have an agreement, unless I ask him, he doesn't say anything. So it's just more of a feel for me. I think it was I had what the eagle putt on 16. I said, Just walk away. He goes, What? Like, No, walk away. It just felt right to me.

And to be fair, even if I missed it, if I believe in it, it might be a bad putt, but I'd rather trust it than let him possibly second-guess what I'm thinking at the moment.

So it kind of comes and goes a little bit. I don't ask him every hole at all. It's only it just depends on how I feel on the putt.

Q. From your years of experience here, have you noticed that with other players as well, or are they depending on the caddies?

MARK MULDER: I think everybody's different, to be honest. There's some guys who depend on their caddie for every single putt. Some guys who don't ask him. But a lot of the TOUR guys I'm friends with, it's a very personal thing. They're all very different. Some of them don't rely on their caddies at all.

And if you watch PGA TOUR broadcast, you hear the same thing. Sometimes you'll hear them talk about how they depend on their caddies for every sing line. And I'm not that way. Sometimes it's just a feeling.

And that's the same way with a certain club into a green. We got to 13. No, 14. And my caddie -- or 13. Sorry. And I was going to hit -- I'm like, no, I'm hitting driver.

And it just felt right. So sometimes you just gotta go with what you feel.

Q. What happened?

MARK MULDER: It didn't turn out great. It turned out good on 9 when I did it, too. All in all we were even, 1 and 1.

Q. Talk again about the energy out there with the fans.

MARK MULDER: Well, everybody's different. But for me, I feed off of it. 17 and 18, I hit wedge on both shots. And I'll go home, and I'll never hit a wedge from 190 yards again. That's how much adrenaline I have on 17 and 18. And the ball just goes.

I mean, it's true. It's always been that way for me. And these last couple of years, I think that's why it's been very difficult for me to kind of mentally lock into this tournament because there wasn't the same energy. There wasn't the same crowd. So I almost -- I was almost distracted out there. I would hit a bad shot and it was like, oh, let's go find it hit it again, and that was my demeanor.

To where I got on 18 today and you can see the fans lining the left side and the right side of 18. And it just kind of locks you in. Because you just don't want to hit it over into the fans on the right. And for me playing a cut, when there's not a lot of fans, it's very easy to hit it to the right.

Q. Reading the greens, from what I understand, there's eight local caddies that are out here with 87 players. And we've heard a lot of guys talking about how hard it is to hit the greens, and you mentioned it yourself?

MARK MULDER: These are very tough. My buddy, Kenny, he's caddied for me every year we've been here, there's been a few times where he's changed my mind and the ball has gone in, and there's been some times where it hasn't.

Q. So was Xander mad at you because he's not packing this week?



MARK MULDER: Yes. Incredibly. My son will be out here caddying for me someday, but we'll see.

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