

U.S. Senior Open Championship

Friday, July 9, 2021
Omaha, Nebraska, USA
Omaha Country Club

Jim Furyk

Quick Quotes

THE MODERATOR: My pleasure to welcome Jim Furyk here into the interview room. Jim, a great round today, 6-under 64, now 4-under, 136 through 36 holes. Could you take me through your round today, bogey-free, six birdies.

JIM FURYK: Yeah, this day is going to be kind of a tale of -- it's almost like two separate days from morning to afternoon. This morning it was actually cool, blustery. The wind was probably 12, 13 miles an hour, kicking up with some gusts.

For my last couple holes, all of a sudden, the sun popped out, the wind started to lay down, and it's hot. It's really, really steamy out there. We'll see how that affects -- how the blue sky and maybe the breeze and dryness, we'll see how that affects the golf course, but it was nice to get out there and, I guess, get off to a pretty good start.

I had an opportunity, I missed a birdie putt at 2, but I made a great 30-footer for par on 3, and that was a very uplifting key moment in the day.

I shoot a couple over yesterday, kind of played from behind the 8-ball most of that back nine, and then to go out there and have that putt go in was a little bit of a sigh of relief, and then ripped off a bunch of birdies. I birdied three of the next four and then got it back to under par for the tournament.

Then you're kind of playing with house money, you can relax a little bit and just think fairways and greens.

Still through that back nine, 10, 11, 12, it was still pretty windy. It started to lay down a little bit those last four or five holes. There's a couple of really tough pin placements on the way in on the back nine.

THE MODERATOR: Take us through the birdie on 18. Always nice to finish with a birdie, but especially where you are today.



JIM FURYK: Hung the drive just a touch right, kind of into and maybe a touch right to left, and that wind probably helped me enough that it landed in the right edge, maybe in the short cut or the ridge of the fairway, kicked and stayed in, and from there I had a three-quarter 8-iron in. Nice to put the ball a little short left of the pin where I wanted to, left me uphill and a chance to be aggressive, and nice to see a putt go in. Missed the putts at 15 and 16, where I had some good opportunities. 15 was coming downhill and very defensive and still knocked it about three feet by. Then 16, had it straight up the hill and just didn't do a good job with the read.

Nice to finish that way on a good note, but either way it was a good solid round.

THE MODERATOR: Seems like in these U.S. Opens, you're not going to play four great rounds, and today you obviously played very well. Yesterday you bogeyed 16, 17, 18, as you were making the turn. How important was it for you to level the ship and kind of grind to make sure you stay in the tournament?

JIM FURYK: The hard part was staying patient. I feel like for the first six holes, I left some out there. I had some birdie opportunities and felt like I maybe could have been a shot or two under par. Made a bad swing at 16 and 18 off the tee. Made a bad swing from the fairway at 17 and three straight birdies. I made a pretty good little four-foot comebacker for par at 1, and just kind of plodding along on the front nine. Messed up 8 a little bit on the way in.

Felt like I had a chance to get it going on the front, just couldn't see a putt go in, couldn't grab any momentum. Today to get out there and kind of see that happen, made a nice putt at 4, good solid birdie at 6, and then made a pretty good putt at 7. To see some putts roll in and get some of that momentum, it felt good.

Q. Nobody else really seemed to do what you did this morning. I think the next best score for the day is 1-under, and they're still on the course. What got you changed, or why aren't there other low scores out there?

JIM FURYK: It's just really windy. I was able to see some putts go in, and I hit a lot of fairways, a lot of greens today, kept the ball in good places. When I missed it, I missed it



in the right spots for the most part, outside of No. 3, and there I made a 30-footer. Just really kind of got on a roll and got some momentum.

But I thought the golf course, usually what you feel is you come out in the morning, and that's your time to score. Usually the wind's laid down a little bit, the greens are fresh, you have a little bit more moisture on the golf course, and you can be a little bit more in attack mode, and then in the afternoon things dry up, firm up, and the golf course starts to play a little bit tougher.

I'm interested to see what happens today. We woke up this morning and looked at the weather report, and the breeze was 12, 13 miles an hour with gusts early, and now it's supposed to lay down and be 7, 8 miles an hour this afternoon. We kind of got possibly the -- some of those guys are going to say they got the wrong end of the draw, but we'll see. You never know. If the golf course then firms up and it gets a little firmer and faster and the greens aren't receptive, the scoring might not be good this afternoon as well. I'm kind of interested to see how it all plays out.

Q. Want to ask you about your lie on 14. With the divot behind the ball, is that a case if you had moved the divot, the ball would have moved?

JIM FURYK: It was a good chance of it. It was on kind of an uphill right-to-left lie, and the divot was on the bottom left. I'm assuming that ball rolled up and rolled right up against it. It really looked like, if we moved it, it would change the ball. The good news, the divot was kind of on the inside behind and inside left of the ball. I felt like I had a pretty good avenue to the ball, especially coming from maybe a little outside, like trying to hit a cut, had some left-to-right wind. So even though it was a little bit of a hook lie, I felt like I could get across it, maybe catch the ball first, and use the breeze to cut it back.

I got pretty lucky. I don't think it really affected the shot at all.

Q. Do you see that happen very often?

JIM FURYK: That's the first time I can remember that happened to me in at least ten years. I'm not saying it would be that unusual, but I haven't had that happen. You end up in divots a lot but not against a divot. Usually those go back in the hole, you know.

Q. Talk about being able to play in front of galleries. Is this the best one the Tour's had this year, the largest?

JIM FURYK: I don't know if it's the largest. It probably ranks up there. We're kind of ramping up. Early in the year, they were kind of smaller, and they're growing each and every week. We've got some communities that support us really well.

The Champions Tour tends to play, we're not playing in L.A., Chicago, New York. We're playing in some mid-sized and smaller communities where the golf tournament is really important. I know last week we would have had massive crowds, but they were limited to 5,000 people a day. I'm not sure what's allowed out here, but it is a nice crowd, and I'm sure it will ramp up Friday afternoon into the weekend.

Q. What's it like to kind of feed off of them?

JIM FURYK: Yeah, we missed it. I played a lot on the PGA TOUR last year when we came back in July or June, whenever it was, and I played the entire year without really seeing a fan. You kind of miss that. I guess you miss the excitement. You miss the buzz. You hear a roar over here, you wonder if that's a hole in one.

It's fun. I think -- you know, I'm not sure it really -- there's theories out there it affects the way certain people play. I don't know. I feel like I have a job to do and I'm excited to play and nervous either way when I'm competing in an event. But it sure is nice to have the fans back out cheering for us and rooting for us.

Q. You're sitting in a good position heading into the weekend. What are your thoughts going into the final two rounds?

JIM FURYK: I guess trying to build on what I did today, as far as not necessarily the score, but I felt like I made a couple loose swings yesterday. I was real happy with being patient. I didn't go out there and kind of chase the shots that I lost on 16, 17, and 18. I kind of bided my time and shot even par on that second side and kind of was patient. Today things kind of happened for me, but I had kind of an idea what I wanted to kind of do with my golf swing today and the shots I thought were necessary for this course, and it worked out.

I hit a lot of fairways today. I hit a lot of greens today. I did not put myself in a lot of bad spots. So just kind of building on that, not necessarily building on the score, but building on the game plan I have. I think, if I read the forecast right, I think the breeze is supposed to flip backwards. Tomorrow is going to be a little cooler, maybe some rain, but instead of the wind coming from, I guess the south or southeast, the wind may be coming from the north for the next couple days. So that will change the way the golf

course plays and which holes play long, short.

I'm sure I'm expecting some tee boxes to move. We played the tee up at 18 both days. We played the tee up at 12 both days. I'm expecting we'll probably see some possible, some back tees, especially with the wind turning around and 18 not playing as long. Then again, if it turns into our face at 12, maybe we won't see the back tee. We'll play the front tee downwind, so who knows?

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