

Travelers Championship

Thursday, June 20, 2024

TPC River Highlands

Cromwell, Connecticut, USA

Akshay Bhatia

Quick Quotes

Q. Really solid day at least statistically on the greens. Obviously make the long one, positive strokes gained this season with the putter. Where are you at with that club? I know last year that was a bit of a bugaboo for you.

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah, it's been a nice change switching to the broom stick. One of my goals was this year was to be top 20 in putting at the end of the year. So, just kind of to see where I was last year and this year is a pretty big difference. I remember going into Detroit just trying to figure out what I want to do, it didn't work out, and now I feel like I'm doing a lot better job just -- my technique's great, it's always been great throughout my career -- and now it's just kind of fine tuning reads and speed. So it's been a nice change and I look forward to the rest of the year with it.

Q. How long did it take you to get used to that broom stick? Obviously you have quite a different stance and how you're holding it and just everything.

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah, I mean, it takes a little bit of time. I remember going into Sentry kind of being like, if I finish last this week it's fine, I just wanted to give myself a chance with this putter. Another goal is to just have it in the bag for at least six months. But it's funny, when you put something like this in your hands you don't know what you're doing, but it's kind of a freeing feeling, so you have 60, 70 feet you don't know how you're going to do it, you just kind of do it and it kind of works out all the time. It's kind of been a work in progress, but most weeks now I'm not really worried about technique, it's just green reading.

Q. Feel like that's helped you be more of a complete player just based on the strokes gained stats and just seems like more consistent, less missed cuts put yourself in contention more often?

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah, I still have had bad putting weeks which frustrates me. But all in all it's been kind of the key to holding good rounds together, momentum, I mean, it's so big in this game. Especially for me, I'm such



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a big momentum player that if I can make 15-, 20-footer for par, whatever it is, it keeps me going to just keep good rounds going. So all in all it's been nice.

Q. Was there one particular tournament or one particular putt where you had sort that have moment where you're like, yeah, this is how I'm going to do this from this point forward, like I'm now fully committed on this?

AKSHAY BHATIA: I think Sentry, having low expectations and then being in the final group, that's kind of the point where I was like, okay, this actually was really great. Then for a stretch on there I was making the cuts on the number and then kind of squeezing in top 15s. So it's just been really good. I've made a lot more putts, I feel pretty comfortable and confident with it and I just kind of like how it is.

Q. You said you're working on some things to refine and improve your technique. At the same time we're coming up on some points where you need to get some good results, everybody's trying to improve their standing in the FedExCup. How do you balance trying to improve technique things and then assuming turnoff your brain or shift your thinking to go, okay, now we need to go out and score. Those things don't usually go hand in hand?

AKSHAY BHATIA: I know when I'm swinging it well that I can be comfortable hitting the shots that I like to hit. I'm more creative than I would say most guys, just because I love hitting a lot more club and cutting it. I just do so many different things. For me, when my technique gets off, I know when I don't hit it solid it's because of my technique generally. So, I need to do a better job of kind of maintaining what I want to, what I want my golf swing to look like and I work on the same thing for the last four, five years, so it's not too much different, it's not like I'm changing something drastically.

Q. When you come to an event where scoring has been at a premium, guys go low, Keegan won at 22- or 23- or whatever it was last year, do you sort of feel pressure going out especially early when scoring

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hasn't been established sort of knowing like, okay, we kind of need to get going right from the start here?

AKSHAY BHATIA: No, I mean, I'm just, today was just trying to play good enough to shoot a good score and good enough to me means not too bad, but not amazing. Today was good enough to make a couple birdies.

Q. We talk a lot about kind of the young guys in the sport, whether it's Ludvig or Nick or Michael Thorbjornsen making his debut this week. You would be right there in age, you took a different path. Do you feel like you get lumped in with the younger guys or do you feel because of how long you've been around you're almost in a different category?

AKSHAY BHATIA: I don't know if I'm in a different category. I definitely don't feel like I am in that group, necessarily. I mean, I've been doing this for five years and it's definitely different. Ludvig's had an amazing career and he's going to have an amazing career for the rest of his life. Same with Nick. I mean, winning as an amateur is pretty impressive. For me, I took a different path, not many people know what I went through, I mean everyone knows me now because I'm out here and I've had a couple wins, but I wouldn't say I'm in a different category I'm just probably not looked as like one of the young guys anymore.

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