

# Barracuda Championship

Wednesday, July 29, 2020

Truckee, California, USA

Tahoe Mountain Club

## Sahith Theegala

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: I'd like to welcome in Sahith Theegala to the Barracuda Championship here, and he's making his sixth career PGA TOUR start and playing on a sponsor exemption this week. Sahith, if we can just get your comments about your Barracuda Championship debut.

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, I'm very excited. I just want to thank Mr. Chris Hoff for giving me a chance to play this week. Super excited. It's nice to be playing in my home state of California. I just drove up about eight hours from LA, so definitely excited to come out here and play. I've always loved the Tahoe, Reno, Truckee area, so it's just an added benefit.

THE MODERATOR: The Barracuda Championship found a new home this season at Old Greenwood. What are your initial thoughts of the course?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, I really enjoy the golf course. Super pure, obviously. I'm a cutter of the ball, so this course really sets up well for me because I can hit 12, 13 cuts off the tee, which is awesome. Definitely the elevation. Yesterday I got a good idea of what that distance difference is. Today I'm going to try and get it dialed in a little bit. But that's probably going to be the biggest thing this week, just making sure the approach shots -- last thing you want to do is stripe a perfect iron shot and have it air mail the green or come up 20 yards short.

But the greens are great. Scores are definitely going to be pretty low. I think it's great for Stableford format. Pretty much every par-5 is reachable and a couple drivable par-4s, so definitely exciting for the format.

THE MODERATOR: Talk a little bit more about the format here. Obviously different than a stroke play format and regular PGA TOUR events. Does that change your strategy playing this week?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, a little bit. Obviously you're still trying to shoot the best score possible, but definitely it



rewards -- obviously going bogey-birdie or birdie-bogey is better than going par-par. So definitely try and make as many birdies as possible, and it's definitely doable out here, but overall I don't think it's changing that much. A lot of guys are still trying to hit good shots and trying to hit smart shots. You're not just firing at every pin because you're still going to get penalized out here for doing that. Not a whole lot, but definitely a little bit. Definitely a little bit.

THE MODERATOR: It would be an understatement to say you had a stellar career at Pepperdine, winning the Fred Haskins Award along with the Ben Hogan Award the Jack Nicklaus Award. How has the transition been from collegiate golf to professional golf here out on the PGA TOUR?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, it's been great. I've had a blast doing it. I haven't put out my best stuff yet for sure, but it's definitely a learning curve. All these guys are so good out here. You're essentially just competing against a bunch of the one, two, three guys from college in the previous years. So it's definitely obviously the competition is tougher, but these guys have been really nice to me, and I think I'm transitioning pretty well. I feel like my game is coming along pretty well, and I'm starting to get really comfortable being out here, and that was a big thing.

The first couple weeks I was a little too excited maybe. Not really -- a little bit nervous but really excited and didn't really play my game. That was probably the biggest transition, but now I definitely feel like I'm kind of finding my groove a little bit.

THE MODERATOR: Has there been a moment that really stands out wow playing with some of the best guys in the world?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, I mean, just the first couple weeks, seeing guys like Rory, DJ, Brooks, seeing them in person, it's like, wow, I grew up watching these guys and they've been dominating. All of a sudden I'm competing against them. So it was definitely a little tough to be like, hey, I've got to come out and beat these guys, not just I'm coming out here to watch.

The star-struck part of it definitely took a little bit to get over, but I wouldn't say there's a specific moment, but just



gradually getting used to it a little bit, seeing these guys. I think last week at the 3M it was good to kind of get more of that out of the way. So yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Focusing on this week, realistically what is a goal for you and how would you like to finish?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, I've always been a competitor, and I wouldn't play a tournament if I didn't want to win. Obviously the end goal is to -- coming down the stretch on Sunday to give myself a shot at the championship for sure. Again, I feel like the course really fits me well, so I'm excited. But I'm trying to keep as low an expectations as possible. If I just come out here and have a good time and play my game, things will fall into place. But I'm excited. I'm just looking forward to getting things started.

THE MODERATOR: And how about goals long-term? What are your ultimate goals for your golf career?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, obviously I think a lot of people coming straight out of college want to follow the path that Wolff, Hovland and Morikawa have. I want to get to the PGA TOUR, be a member as quickly as I possibly can. Just trying to take advantage of the starts I get and hopefully I'll get a few coming up in this next season, as well. But yeah, just to get out there as quick as I can and play in as many tournaments as I can.

THE MODERATOR: Mentioning those young players, Collin Morikawa obviously had a very successful year here last year, helped him earn his PGA TOUR card. How does that motivate you as you play here this week?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, it motivates me big-time, especially I've played with those guys my whole life, and I was obviously super happy for them when Wolff won last week and obviously Collin won here last year, so that's definitely motivating to me, saying like hey, I can compete with these guys, and obviously those guys have had great careers and are already making such a big splash on TOUR. Just trying to follow their lead.

**Q. Obviously we're in a beautiful city here in Truckee, California. Have you gotten to see anything outside of the course yet this week?**

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, so I actually haven't yet this week. I've been up here a couple times. First time I was up here in 2013 for the Junior Amateur, which was at Martis, which is right next door pretty much, and I got to see a lot of like the Truckee area and Lake Tahoe and stuff. But definitely, probably after tomorrow because I have a morning tee time tomorrow, after tomorrow I think

me and my caddie Blaine are going to head down to Lake Tahoe there because he's never been here. So definitely going to go check out some of the scenery and stuff because it's so beautiful. Like me and my parents have always been -- loved places like Yosemite and Yellowstone and this place kind of reminds me of that kind of stuff, so definitely going to go check out some of the sights.

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