

Barracuda Championship

Saturday, July 22, 2023

Truckee, California, USA

Tahoe Mountain Club

Akshay Bhatia

Quick Quotes

THE MODERATOR: Great round. 5-under through 6. 8-under through 12 holes. 17 points today. All that said, just kind of talk to us a little bit about how the day went for you.

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah, it was good. I wouldn't say this golf course or the altitude really suits my game. I mean, we've hit some great shots and then we've hit some shots that have been super confusing on the numbers and everything. I curve the ball so much, so it kind of limits me to a few things.

I moved my ball position back a little bit yesterday with the driver, the 3-wood, everything pretty much. Started hitting it really good off the tee. I hit a lot of really good putts the last couple weeks. They just haven't fallen. I made a few today, which is great. I mean, birdie and eagles are big and making no bogeys especially is all that's really good in this format.

THE MODERATOR: I know you've played here once before, but how much of a learning curve is there with the altitude change as your ball, you have to dial it back a good bit.

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah, the ball goes far here. But for me, like I change flights, ball flights so easily. So when I'm -- I don't ever hit high shots or stock shots, so it's been a little tricky trying to gauge that. But I feel like today we had a lot better numbers to where I could hit fuller shots. I played a little bit more aggressive on a couple tee shots, which led to a couple birdies.

THE MODERATOR: Format. Do you like the Stableford format? Obviously you probably wouldn't want to be doing it every week, but is this a unique kind of a nice little change of pace?

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah, for sure. I think the golf course, the area, it's perfect for this format. You're playing in altitude, you got drivable par-4s, you got short par-5s. So it's a great format to make a ton of birdies. Yeah, I enjoy it. I like it because I feel like if I make a ton of birdies then it



goes my way.

THE MODERATOR: Then finally, coming off top 10 last week at Barbasol, just how are you feeling with your game overall right now?

AKSHAY BHATIA: I know I'm close to winning. It's a good feeling. I mean, Rocket Mortgage was weird. I mean, mentality-wise I just wasn't there. John Deere, I felt like I was going to win that week. I played some really good golf. Last week was weird, because I played good the final round, but I never felt like it was a great week. Obviously finishing top 10 and gaining points and everything is important out here. But it's just amazing the perspective you have when you just kind of wish you did certain things a little different and I would have been pretty close to hosting that trophy last week.

Q. I wanted to ask you about this journey over the last couple years. Seems like you had some really high highs and maybe some lows as well. Feels like maybe you're finding a bit of consistency here. Do you feel that?

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah, I mean, it's never going to be consistent in this game. Especially with the best players in the world. I played really good on the opposite field events and I haven't played as well as I would like in the bigger events that I've had the opportunity to play. I think, me and my caddie, we just started a couple weeks ago and he's been a huge attribute to me. Because he's so experienced, he knows how to win. I think just his aura around me has certainly helped me feel more confident. Because he knows how good I am, he's seen it all and just kind of feeds the fire. So it's been a lot of ups and downs. I never expected to play a pretty much a full schedule out here this year. So it's, I just got to be thankful more than take it the other way.

Q. How big is it to have somebody that can remind you of the highs and how good you can be?

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah, it's huge because he's seen it. He's won out here, he's played in major championships. For me, I'm just learning everything and I just have a lot of trust in him and we built a pretty good foundation. Our prep and everything. I can just relax and let him tell me where to hit it and hopefully I can do that.



