

The Presidents Cup

Tuesday, September 24, 2024

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Royal Montreal Golf Club

Sahith Theegala

Quick Quotes

Q. If I say "Canada" to you, give me two or three things you think about.

SAHITH THEEGALA: Just how nice people are; the word "sorry"; snow; and really loud hockey fans that are awesome. Honestly, the fans are incredible -- loud, so loud. Those are probably very stereotypical kind of things.

But I play with a couple of Canadians in Houston. They're like the nicest people ever.

Q. (Indiscernible)?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, I was going to say it. I'm not saying it. I thought twice about it. She was happy I didn't say it. But I think it's just awesome being a first-timer. Everyone's kind of taking me under their wing.

I'm a pretty curious guy so I'm not afraid to ask questions or how things are done or like what's the vibe going to be like.

Guys have been great about not BS'ing anything with me or lying. But I feel like I'm usually a pretty quiet guy and nice to everyone and everyone's really nice to me but I don't really say much.

They've gotten a lot out of me this week. I think they really appreciate that I'm definitely trying to give an effort to be a little more out there and positive. I've had so much fun just the last three days.

So I mean I just feel like I'm here to try and make everyone else's week as fun as possible. Try and put as many teams on the board -- or as many points on the board as I can for the team and just keep things a little lighter.

Q. The fun guy?

SAHITH THEEGALA: No, I'm not the fun guy, but I'm just around for the good vibes. But it's been so much fun.

And I probably bring a different style of game. A lot of



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these guys are just, I mean, robots, for lack of a better word. They hit it so good. And point A to point B pretty much every time.

And I feel like I bring a different flare for match play. I tend to hit it everywhere at times. I'm not going to compare myself to Spieth, not even close.

But try Spieth-like at times with just trying to get creative and escapes. Nobody is going to be able to match that guy. But just a little more creative ways to the green. I'm a scrambler. I'm kind of a scorer.

A little different flare for the team. Those guys are so good that I'm just trying to find a way to hit the ball in the hole as fast as possible. Just try to keep it light but also do my job I suppose.

Q. (Question off microphone).

SAHITH THEEGALA: I think just to not get overwhelmed. It's really easy to start looking around and doing other things. We got here early and it's really easy to overwork. It's really easy to not prioritize the things you do in a normal week.

I think they've done a good job of leading up to it. Jim talked to me about that. And the guys are, like, dude, you've just got to do your own thing. You can't let your mind wander too much. Can't get sucked into all the things. I think the captains have done a great job of streamlining all we have to do because it was very intimidating.

I got the text of the list of stuff we have to do and the dinners and the gala. And I'm, like, oh, my God, when will I get time to just chill?

They've been great about getting us from point A to point B and just giving us time to relax like we would on a normal week and giving me time with my coach and my trainer and just trying to make it as normal as possible even though we know it's not a normal week.

This is such an elevated week. The energy's different. It's



a Tuesday and it feels like the energy of a Thursday. But I'm so excited and the guys have been great.

I will say they've let loose a little more this week than other weeks, for sure. I've seen sides of guys I've never seen. Just awesome to get to really know the guys.

But from a golf perspective, everyone has reiterated the same thing -- you just need to do your thing. I know it's a team thing, I know you have your stats guys. And you have all these different stuff going on. And you've just got to keep doing your thing and playing your game. That's been really nice to hear.

Q. (Indiscernible)?

SAHITH THEEGALA: The first tee, yes. I'm going to be very -- I'm nervous just thinking about it. I think about it, I get nervous, which is a good thing.

But, like, Jim has been awesome. And he basically said, dude, there's a hundred other guys that would love to be in your position. It's you just channel that positive energy and you channel the excitedness and the nervousness and everything and use it as a good thing because, like you said, there's a bunch of others guys that would kill to be in this position.

It's kind of a take advantage of the position you're in. It's an awesome opportunity to be able to put points up for your home country.

So I'm going to be really nervous but I feel like I play some of my best golf when I'm really nervous. So I'm just looking forward to it. I'm going to fully embrace it.

But it's not often that you really, really think about a first tee shot. And I definitely have been really, really thinking about it. Kind of just want to get it over with. But I think that's a good feeling.

Q. Your parents came to this country. They worked really hard for you to play golf. (Indiscernible) to wear the red, white and blue and (indiscernible) sit back and (indiscernible)?

SAHITH THEEGALA: For sure. It's pretty wild. I don't think this is what my dad had envisioned when he came over to the U.S. from India. But it means the world that -- I know my dad is super thankful for the country and the opportunity it's given him. At the same time, he also took that opportunity. That's the greatness of this country.

That opportunity has led to my opportunity. And just to be able to give back to the country -- I don't necessarily see it

as giving back to the country, but just to play for your country and wear your colors and represent means the world.

It fires me up a lot to see other guys on the team who want it so bad and be so meaningful to them. I know it's well documented, but Scottie at the Olympics, winning it for the U.S., it's such a big deal. There's no bigger events than when you play for your country.

It is a little bit full circle. It's very humbling and gratifying at the same time. But it's awesome. I can't wait for my parents to be here. And they're going to soak up the whole experience just as much as I am.

Q. (Indiscernible)?

SAHITH THEEGALA: For me, it's the first hole. The tee shot is the most nervous. The second shot, depending on where I am -- if I'm in the trees or in the rough, I feel fine. I'm like, this is fine. But if I'm in the fairway, I'm like -- I don't know why, it feels like a little extra pressure to hit a good shot from the fairway.

Usually once I'm on the green I'm almost back to normal; I wouldn't say normal. But by the time I get to the second tee box, it feels like I'm back to normal. I'd say the whole first hole generally I get pretty nervous.

Q. How do you want to approach this first day? Everyone is giving you (indiscernible). Do you feel like you're (indiscernible) saying, okay on the first day (indiscernible)?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, yeah. I think there's been a narrative that the Internationals are the ones that are the underdogs, hunting us. Sure, that's a great perspective for them.

But we feel the exact same way. There's 12 incredible players on the other side. Like, we're the ones hunting still.

I think that perspective has been really helpful at the start of this week for the kind of mindset that we need. You can never take it for granted in golf.

Sure, we might be the odds favorites or the favorites to win. But we're going to play super competitive and don't look at it any differently than I guess -- we're not even really looking at that kind of, oh, are we favorites.

Obviously we've had an incredible record. But the second you give a little bit of a mental edge to the opponent, that's when they pounce and they'll take it. So we're not giving any mental edge. We're going to stay locked in and stick

to our process and just hammer down on that process.

I believe in the guys that we have on the team that if they play how I know they can play, if I play how I know I can play, I think take care of business at the end of the week.

But like I said, just gotta keep the pedal down and feel like we're the predators. And I know they're going to feel the same way, but I think that mindset is really important.

Q. This is a presidential year, Presidents Cup got me thinking about role models. Do you have a role model?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, the easy answer for that and my true honest answer is my father. I wouldn't say -- in a weird way I wouldn't say it's because of what he did for me but more how he treats other people.

He makes everyone feel like -- and this is not fake at all -- he makes everyone feel like your best friend. And it's not fake at all. He feels like he just wants to spread joy to the world.

We're not naive to the world. He's not naive to the world. Life is hard. Life is hard. And what we're doing out here kind of feels like a dream sometimes. I'm not saying what we do isn't hard. I'm just saying that we're very lucky to be in the position.

He does such a great job reminding me what life is all about, it's all about people. And just gotta be nice to people -- no matter what the situation is you never know what someone is going through.

It's my dad, for his mentality and how to go about life. It's a team effort. My mom, too. My mom has instilled so many values. She's a little harder on me than my dad, which I'm very thankful for. It's a great duo. But one role model, I'd say my father.

Q. Do you consider yourself to be a role model?

SAHITH THEEGALA: You know what? I don't feel it as an obligation. I just look at it as I have a really cool platform and it doesn't take too much effort to spread kindness. And I do try to -- I go out of my way sometimes to -- sometimes could be a detriment, but say hey to the fans or sign or whatever it might be.

But I think I'm just lucky that my parents instilled in me at a young age you shake hands. You ask how people are doing. And I do have to remind myself -- the big thing for me is, funny enough, the volunteers. There's so many volunteers out there. These tournaments are impossible

without these volunteers. So just the "thank you's" as I'm heading to the tee box or walking off a green or they're putting a flag down because I'm in the rough a lot. Just a simple thank you.

And I know how a very small gesture can go a long way. And it's cool that people can think of me as a role model. I think thinking of yourself as a role model is maybe not the best way to go about it, but you know that people are watching you and you know that kids are watching you and you want to put your best self forward. I feel like my best self forward is just me being me because of how my parents raised me.

Q. (Indiscernible)?

SAHITH THEEGALA: The funniest guy on the team, I mean, it's probably Max. The reason I say that is you see all the social media stuff he does. You see all the -- whatever, you see that side of Max. That's generally how he is.

He's such a fun guy to be around. He's a work-hard, play-hard kind of guy. He grinds his butt off. He grinds his butt off.

But he also parties his butt off I feel like. He's not like a big drinker or anything like that -- yeah, but just the well-timed remarks are pretty good.

But a lot of these guys on the team are unintentionally pretty funny. Russ is a hilarious dude.

He'll never give you anything in the media but he's so funny. He's not even trying to be funny. But he's just naturally funny. I don't know if he believes that. But he's naturally funny.

Harms is another guy. Every time I look at him I laugh. Every time this week every time I look at him he's smiling what are you smiling at Harms.

But we have a great team. And I think I might be the least funny guy on the team. I'm just going through the whole team. Tony, Sam, these guys are all hilarious.

Scottie and Collin are probably the least funny because they think they're funny. And they are kind of funny but nobody lets them know they're actually really funny.

Q. They have enough?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, they have enough. They've already got nice things. Let some other guys take over that.

Q. What is your favorite thing about America?

SAHITH THEEGALA: My favorite thing about America. That's an interesting question.

Q. You can go any direction with this.

SAHITH THEEGALA: I don't know. Milkshakes.

Q. Is that what Scottie said?

SAHITH THEEGALA: I think he said smoothies. Milkshakes. I don't know. I'm thankful for a lot of things in America. But I don't know why milkshakes stuck out. I love milkshakes. Freedom.

Q. (Indiscernible)?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Getting the card. But this is off tangent, but people ask me what my most nervous moment ever was. It was that Korn Ferry finals, the second event. I had a 4-footer to come T-second and I thought I had to make it. And I missed from 4 feet.

It's the most nervous I've ever been. Couldn't stop my hands from shaking. It's funny, when I got my card that day from Alex, I thought about that moment and how much better this moment feels than that one.

But honestly, the moment that sticks out to me most is I was playing with Justin Lower that final round, and just how many people came up onto the green and he immediately started crying. And Janise was there and she was crying.

And that's the first thing I remember honestly when I think about that moment is being so happy for Lower. I've never been so nervous for someone, another golfer, I don't think, in my life.

Obviously I know his whole backstory about his family and I know his backstory about missing out on a few years ago on the same hole. I don't know if it was an up-and-down, maybe an 8-footer he had to make it. But I was so nervous, and then he pulled it in the long stuff, and I'm, like, oh no.

But one of the best 50-yard pitches I've ever seen in my life. Hit it to almost tap-in, 3 feet. I am sure the 3-footer felt like a 10-footer. I remember how happy people were.

It's a grind. And to know that you fulfilled your dream of a PGA TOUR card, words can't put into how much it means to a lot of the guys.

And I always think of Lower. He'll have a very nice long career out here. He's a very solid player. I think of that moment a lot.

Q. (Indiscernible)?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Russ Henley. I'm jealous of everyone's swing on this team. They all swing it incredible. But I think everyone would agree the most, this guy doesn't curve the golf ball.

Collin is an incredible ball striker. Scottie is incredible. But they curve the ball. Some of their misses actually curve off line. Russ' don't curve off line. If he hits it off line, it's like 10-foot off line. And it's because he pushed it not because he cut it 10 yards. Probably Russ'. It's so simple.

Q. (Indiscernible)?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Probably me. I'm pretty bad with timing. I always think I'm way ahead on timing and then I'm a very forgetful person. I forget about bunch of stuff that I'm supposed to do or bring. All of a sudden -- I'm not usually late. I'm on time to the tee. Like 8:00, I'm there at eight. Won't be there too much earlier.

But other than that probably Sam. I feel like Sam's just -- I don't know. He's from the South. He's so laid back and chill. But probably Sam.

Q. (Indiscernible)?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Pass the aux, probably Brian Harman. I said that quickly. I'm stereotyping him as someone that listens to some Deep South country. Probably Harms. A little bit of an age gap too. He's basically an old guy at this point.

And I like Howe's (phonetic) stuff. I think he would get a headache after about a minute of my music and vice versa.

Q. (Indiscernible)?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Not many. It's just my parents and my uncle. So three of them. Then my cousin -- one of my first cousins might come up. There might be a couple of buddies. They're going to text me if they want to come up for a day or two, but nothing big. It's so hard to get here.

Q. What do you think of the golf course?

SAHITH THEEGALA: The course is great. I saw a different side of the course today. It was playing a lot tougher. Front nine was playing long. Just kind of a heavy wind. Hit a lot of, like, 5 and 7 irons into the greens and a

4 iron as well. It's playing long.

Great track, though. The front nine I would say, I wouldn't call it forgettable but a little more in front of you and almost boring. But it's boring in a good way. It requires good shots. You have to place your ball. You have to hit the shots. So it's rewarding for good golf and punishing for bad golf.

But the back nine is so -- I love the back nine. The greens are all dissected by these ridges and you can tuck pins there's water on almost on every hole. It feels like a match-playback nine. I hope they move 14 up. But it's a sweet track.

Q. (Indiscernible)?

SAHITH THEEGALA: No, you know right where the ball's going the minute it's off the face. You know where to miss, where not to miss. I'll say a couple of greens on the back nine you might get funky bounces if you land it on the back side of some tiers. So the spin may be off because we're anticipating rain the next couple of days.

There's no funny business out here, which is -- the best players in the world, that's awesome.

Q. This week I feel like the pageantry --

SAHITH THEEGALA: He loves it. I think Jim and his team and all the PGA TOUR staff have done such a good job, including the caddies. It's kind of, I wouldn't say surprising that it hasn't been done before but unfortunate I guess because they're such a big part of the team.

You never know when one little extra comfort that a caddie has could save your guy a shot or two on the golf course.

He's loving it. I'd say he's an extrovert and feeds off other guys' energies. He's already, I would say, very close with a lot of the guys on the team, maybe closer than I was with any of the players on the team, to be honest.

But we're both getting to experience a different side of it and getting to form some real relationships off the course. And he loves it. He's always smiling. I know his fiancée is coming in tomorrow. It's awesome that it's so inclusive and our lockers are together. I feel like a real person, not just a caddie.

Q. (Indiscernible) locker room?

SAHITH THEEGALA: They're next to each other. It's awesome. The locker room is sweet. The BMW Championship also does a good job treating the caddies

well. But they're all walking the course right now. They're 12 strong, just every inch of the golf course they're going to have mapped because the thing I love, even when I've just caddied from a buddy, it feels like a chess match. You want to be overprepared. And I think these guys take a lot of pride in that, which is awesome.

So every inch of this course is going to be scattered by them.

Q. All 12 of them are walking it?

SAHITH THEEGALA: At least 10 of them, I would say. I think all of them did yesterday. I think a couple guys are practicing more today. But a lot of them did.

Q. Are you taking the opportunity to pick other players' brains or other caddies' brains?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Definitely a little bit without trying to ruin anybody's cadence of how they practice or play. I don't want to bother anyone. But they've come up to me and been, like, dude, if you have any questions, I don't care what it's about, please ask. Rather have you ask than keep it inside.

There's nothing specific I can remember off the top of my head. But I just know the communication has been great this week. It's a weird feeling just rooting so hard for your peers.

I always root for my peers but not to this extent. It's awesome wanting everyone to just be at their best for this week.

Q. (Indiscernible) the one that came up to you and was like oh --

SAHITH THEEGALA: Honestly, all of them. Like, guys, like Harms, you don't get much out of Harms that often. But he's been awesome. And Tony and even guys like Scottie. It's only his -- "only," it's probably his fourth team event and he's number one in the world. He doesn't have to do anything. He can just do his own thing.

But they've been very open about, hey, if you have any questions.

Honestly the assistant captains and Jim have been awesome, too. These guys have played -- I think most, all of the assistants have played 400-plus TOUR events and 100 top-10s and 20 wins, whatever it is. They've done it for so long and know kind of the way things run and the way things are this week. They've been awesome.

I know Kis is kind of a jokester and a clown outside, but when it comes time for business, he's business. He's very dedicated to this team. And shout-out to Jim, I guess, for picking great assistants. But, yeah, those guys have been awesome too.

Q. You feel like sometimes you say you don't think you're a top-ranked player in the world. What do you think of the competition (indiscernible) fires in different ways?

SAHITH THEEGALA: I think so. I say some things like that. The internal belief is there, but I also don't like to kid myself. I think we all self-hedge in a way, kind of under-promise, over-deliver kind of thing. I guess that's human nature.

But a lot of times when I say something like that it's truly what I believe. And I feel like I have a lot to prove and a lot to do.

I feel like in the large scope of things, when comparing to the greats of the game, I've done nothing. So I just feel like I have a lot more to prove. I just want to keep sticking to what has led me to play really good golf. And the more I play with the best players in the world, the more I see where I need to get.

Not necessarily to copy any of the things they're doing. Just maybe on a consistency basis or a scoring basis or whatever it might be, because I feel like I've played really well to get here and there's still so much room for improvement.

I guess that's my mental way of just saying, dude, you can get a lot better. Like, I give myself credit, but you can play a lot better.

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