

Sanderson Farms Championship

Thursday, October 3, 2024

Jackson, Mississippi, USA

Country Club of Jackson

Ben Griffin

Quick Quotes

Q. Really solid first round. How would you assess your game and your round today?

BEN GRIFFIN: Yeah, game started to feel really good kind of end of my practice yesterday after the pro-am, got in a good range session and kind of went into today with a better idea of where I wanted my swing.

Honestly, the last couple weeks leading up to this event I didn't feel the best about my ball-striking, but I feel like my game, I kind of piece it together last minute kind of often, and even going back to RBC Canadian last year where I didn't necessarily feel the best about certain parts of my game, and then it all kind of clicks, and then you get in a rhythm.

It was nice early today getting into a rhythm with a couple of long made putts and holing out a bunker shot, and once you kind of get the competitive juices back flowing, it helps a lot.

Yeah, great start. Very excited to be back in the mix here. Three more rounds, but going to keep the pedal down and try to get some redemption.

Q. You mentioned your hole-out. Can you walk me through your 5th hole?

BEN GRIFFIN: Yeah, so hit a good tee shot. You kind of want to keep it a little bit up the right, especially with it being downwind today to have an angle going in in two and keeping it in the fairway, but I was just in the rough. Had a good enough lie to chase something up there. Got it in that front right greenside bunker, which left me -- I heard a 40-foot bunker shot. It was one of those you're just trying to splash up and hopefully have a close tap-in, but saw it kind of kick right with the grain and went right in the middle. It was really nice to see that. I hadn't seen a ball go in from a chip shot in a long time I feel like with it being off-season.



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Q. You mentioned a couple minutes ago that this is your first tournament back in a couple months. When you have a hole-out on the 5th hole like you did today and you get the ball rolling a little early, what does that do for you for the rest of your round and the rest of your tournament?

BEN GRIFFIN: Well, it reminds me I'm good enough to be on the PGA TOUR, whereas the last two months I'm hitting on the range, and I'm like, wow, I really deserve to be on this public range right now.

No, it's nice, and it's a big momentum thing more than anything. You see guys go low on TOUR and normally there's one or two shots where you're maybe out of position and you pull it off, and felt like I had that a couple times today and was able to get up-and-down make some long putts, and that's the exact thing you want on TOUR, to get in the mix early in the week.

Q. What do you like about this golf course and coming to Jackson?

BEN GRIFFIN: Yeah, I mentioned it a lot, but just the Bermudagrass. Really going back to childhood I wasn't that good on Bermuda, but I feel like in college and coming out into the professional game, I felt like we played a lot of Bermuda, so I felt like I needed to get good at it, and I credit a lot of that to Sea Island Golf Club where I belong, practicing there on Bermuda. I've gotten a lot better on that type of surface, and I feel like on TOUR every time there's Bermudagrass I play really well.

Now I need to figure out the poa annua and some of the other stuff on the west coast, but yeah, this course in particular has some tough lies around the greens, grainy shots, tough lies in the rough, and I'm really good at judging balls from the rough. There's no real stat on that, but I feel like I'm really good at judging lies, and that's kind of an underrated thing that a lot of instructors maybe don't teach out there. We're pretty good but we're going to get ourselves out of position, and understanding how lies react and stuff is important. I feel like the more and more rounds you play, you kind of learn, and I feel like I'm really good at that, keeping it in play and giving myself looks. I get them

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on the greens here and I feel pretty confident in my putting.

Q. A lot of guys have mentioned this week that Sanderson Farms is an event that they look forward to; they love playing the Country Club of Jackson. What are some of the things that you think make the Country Club of Jackson a destination that guys really enjoy?

BEN GRIFFIN: Yeah, it's got more of that old-style golf feel that I think a lot of guys on TOUR kind of praise. We play a lot of events these days that are more modern, longer courses, and it's nice and refreshing to kind of come back to places with a little bit of history and places that are more tree-lined, not necessarily the longest but still demanding and there's not as many drivers necessarily on certain holes, but you've got to put it in the right position and you're playing a lot of angle golf.

I grew up playing a course, Chapel Hill Country Club, which was more like that, 6,700 yards from all the way back, and it was doglegs, tree-lined, so I see some similarities there to kind of where I was playing growing up.

Q. David Skinnis with the round of the day, obviously, a 60. He took definitely an unconventional pathway to the PGA TOUR. Your pathway to the PGA TOUR also a little bit unconventional with the time you took off from the game of golf. Seeing another guy who had to take that long extra tough pathway to success on the TOUR, seeing him do something like that today, does that almost make it more gratifying for you to see that, having also had a bit of an unconventional pathway to success?

BEN GRIFFIN: Absolutely. I think first and foremost, teeing off on No. 1 twelve shots back in the first round is never fun. We were joking in our group walking off the tee, man, I don't think I can remember the last time I was 12 back teeing off on the first hole.

It's pretty cool to see his story. I think there's a lot of incredible stories on TOUR. It's one of the cool things about golf and having big enough fields where you kind of have these storylines. You have a guy who I think is 71 or 72 years old who is a section pro who's playing this week, awesome story. It brings some excitement to the tournament. It changes things up. We're used to seeing kind of the top guys playing a lot, and it's refreshing to kind of see some of these stories.

It kind of -- I like to call it almost like March Madness every week. You see like an underdog or see someone who's had a tough journey and they break through and play some good rounds, and it's really fun to watch. We saw Luke Clanton this summer do a lot of that, and it just brings

excitement to the game, and I think it's good, and I think it's important for the TOUR as an entire organization to remember that there's a lot of really good stories each and every week and it brings a lot of entertainment, and hopefully we continue to keep that -- I know there's been a lot of talks about shortening the fields and everything, but I want to keep all these stories coming because I'm very grateful for the path I've had, and it's given me an opportunity, and I want to make sure the next generation has that same opportunity that I've had.

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