

Sony Open in Hawaii

Thursday, January 13, 2022

Honolulu, Hawaii, USA

Waialae Country Club

Kevin Chappell

Press Conference



Q. Kevin Chappell, great first round, take us through it.

KEVIN CHAPPELL: Yeah, it was just pretty solid golf. Got off to a weird start, I'll be honest, was a little nervous coming into today for some reason. It's been a little while since I felt like I was myself on the golf course.

1, made a bogey but settled in nicely in our group. Played really consistent, steady golf and that always helps stay in the flow of things and when you're seeing good shots, it's easier to hit good shots. I felt like that was a nice key for me today.

Q. How many tournaments you have?

KEVIN CHAPPELL: On my medical exemption? Five left.

Q. Do you feel any pressure?

KEVIN CHAPPELL: What's meant to be, will be. If I'm not meant to play this game any longer, that's fine with me. I'm going to put my head down and play the best I can the next five events.

Q. Not meant to play; you sound like retirement.

KEVIN CHAPPELL: When you don't get tee times anymore, what are you going to do.

Q. Did you get a degree from UCLA?

KEVIN CHAPPELL: I did not.

Q. You're screwed. This still remnants of the back surgery?

KEVIN CHAPPELL: I definitely had some lingering stuff going last year coming from my back throughout the year last year, and kind of end of the year I decided, I wasn't good physically, I wasn't good mentally and I needed to take some time.

And so I did; the TOUR has been phenomenal with that supporting me and I did that. Really dove into the mental side and believe it or not, the better I got mentally, the better my back got.

It's been a lot of hard work but it's been great.

Q. How did you delve into the mental side? What does that mean?

KEVIN CHAPPELL: I'd rather not say.

Q. Okay.

KEVIN CHAPPELL: Psychologists and going down that route. But doing it a little unorthodox, and it's been great.

Q. It's been a long time since you've played here. How does it compare to what you remember?

KEVIN CHAPPELL: Every tee shot is still uncomfortable for me, but it's such a wonderful place to be and it just made sense with where I'm at on this medical exemption to play and play a lot early, and I kind of figured out the math of how I needed to hop in, this was the best option to come play. Once you get packed and travel, it's a phenomenal trip and wonderful place to be.

Q. Do you feel good about it knowing what you've been going through and stuff?

KEVIN CHAPPELL: Yeah, I've been working my ass off, excuse my language. Like I said, I didn't expect it but I'm not surprised. I've been seeing some good stuff at home and really proud of the work I've done.

Q. A couple guys were saying the balls were barely falling in the rough and you couldn't find it which is different here. What did you make of the rough?

KEVIN CHAPPELL: Keep it in the fairways bunkers and fairways you and don't have to deal with the fairways.

Yeah, the rough is nasty and I certainly don't remember that, and then there's some bounce out there now, which



you know, I played the practice round -- last time I was on the golf course was Tuesday morning, so it's bouncing a lot more than it was then.

There's a few shots that I hit that I was surprised by and probably got away with hitting a little too much club off the tee and the ball got into a narrow fairway but you're going to have to adjust your game plan and guys that play here regularly, they understand that and I'll have to learn quickly.

Q. How many total starts did you have? Did you lose them late last year?

KEVIN CHAPPELL: Yeah, I had 20 starts total. I guess 23. I played three here, got injured, COVID hit, I decided to restart, played a few that year, I guess, what was that, 2020? We had a baby, so I didn't play again until the fall. Then I was hurt on West Coast last year, came back and played a handful of events all year and played three times in the fall.

Q. Not full strength, things not going well?

KEVIN CHAPPELL: Yeah.

Q. How many in the fall?

KEVIN CHAPPELL: Three in the fall.

Q. What is it about some of these tee shots that make it uncomfortable for you?

KEVIN CHAPPELL: You're getting doglegs going one direction and the wind blowing the other direction, especially knowing how thick the rough is out there. You have to get into a fairway bunker and be able to attack from there. Once you do, the greens are so good and you've to make a lot of putts, and I did a lot of that today.

Q. Where did you do your work the last few weeks?

KEVIN CHAPPELL: Scottsdale.

Q. What were you seeing?

KEVIN CHAPPELL: Seeing an increase in speed, increase in ball control. Got a boost of confident and little pep in my step which I haven't had in a lot of years.

Q. Did you ever -- when you say back, do you ever have any regrets about surgery, or was that --

KEVIN CHAPPELL: No, surgery was the right thing to do. How I handled it was completely wrong and completely

backwards and I wish I would have really addressed kind of the mental side then and taken the time to work on myself as a person, and let the golf stuff happen.

Q. Did you come back too soon?

KEVIN CHAPPELL: No. I mean, I was healthy and able to play. I think there's just a lot of unknown, and I'm using hindsight to answer these questions, and unfortunately I have that.

Q. How many kids are you up to?

KEVIN CHAPPELL: I have three kids now.

Q. Do you know their names?

KEVIN CHAPPELL: Yeah, Wyatt, Collins and Scottie.

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