

Sony Open in Hawaii

Friday, January 12, 2024

Honolulu, Hawaii, USA

Waialae Country Club

Keith Mitchell

Quick Quotes

Q. Keith, a sizzling 64 to move into a share of the lead with 5-under your last six holes and eagle on the last. What got into the last six? What sparked you?

KEITH MITCHELL: I made two really nice putts. No. 4, it was a long putt and No. 9 was of long putt. Both were probably -- I was going to say the longest two putts of the year, but that's clearly obvious.

So in a long time. Felt like those two-putt were gaining some ground pretty heavily. Other than that, just kind of kept the ball in front of me. I still made some mistakes on the front. Just a little rusty off the off-season, but all in all, definitely happy.

Q. Mentioning a little rusty. In what way would you say you felt rust? Did that go away?

KEITH MITCHELL: It was just a couple ball striking things, some iron shots that weren't as solid. Not necessarily off line or short or long, just miss-hits.

So that's just -- just needs to tighten up a little bit. I made up for it on those two long putts. If you're going to win a golf tournament on the PGA TOUR in four days you don't have much room for error, so try to tighten that up a little bit and hope the putts keep falling.

Q. Anything in particular you worked on to sharpen up in the off-season? Just general maintenance?

KEITH MITCHELL: Definitely looked at some historical data and some stats to see where I needed to improve. Good friend of mine, Mookie DeMoss, helped me a lot there. I wish he was coaching me, but he's coaching at the University of Georgia now. So pretty excited for him and all the kids that are going to be able to have someone that intelligent, golf IQ, and that good of a person to be at the University of Georgia.

It's rare to say a TOUR player is kind of jealous of college kids about having a coach. We talked a lot about some stuff I need to do. I got to give him a lot credit.



Unfortunately had the flu last week so really, really zero prep coming into this week. I was so sick.

But that's just golf, right? Sometimes I feel like my mental game was incredible the last two days because I was -- didn't have much stress, not much expectations, had a lot of rest.

This game is crazy. Some days I think you got it figured out and some days you don't.

Q. Where were you weak?

KEITH MITCHELL: Was lacking out of the rough. I was lacking on some course management issues. Depending on where the pin was, wasn't looking where the pin was relative to what club I was hitting off the tee on some par-4s. Didn't realize how big of an impact that was.

I was really losing some strokes gained approach based off course management and where I was on -- where the pin was on the green and where I was in the fairway rough.

Q. Can you give an example of that here over the last two days?

KEITH MITCHELL: Yeah, No. 9. No. 9 today I hit 2-iron off the tee.

Q. Driver, you would've hit driver?

KEITH MITCHELL: I would've hit driver. I've hit driver every time. The fairway kind of necks up up there. The wind was off the left. Just made my fairway tighter.

I still could've hit driver. I remember telling Johnny walking off the tee, man, I just felt like that I was playing scared. He goes, that was playing smart. That's what it takes to win a golf tournament. Went and made eagle, so it was clearly a lot better.

Yesterday almost hit it out of bounds with the driver; 2-iron was the play there.

Q. 2 yesterday afternoon, straight downwind, driver?



KEITH MITCHELL: Driver on 2 yesterday, absolutely.

Q. Could have played back with an iron?

KEITH MITCHELL: But I looked at the pin. The pin was back left. If the pin was on the front right or over that bunker on the right I would not have hit driver. You would most likely be in the rough on your miss, and if you're in the rough going over that bunker, downwind trying to stop it, you can't.

But to a back left pin I think I had 17 yards of green I could work with, and landed it short and roll it back to the flag.

Q. Playing next week?

KEITH MITCHELL: I am.

Q. Is there anything this week or this season in general that you're hoping to prove to yourself? Is that something you think about at all or just stick to the day as best you can?

KEITH MITCHELL: I would like to -- I would always like to prove to myself that I can win again. Whether it's this week, this year, next five years, doesn't really matter.

That's always what I want to do for me. I won early, and when you win early in your career you feel like you're going to win often, and I haven't won even. I only the that one time.

That's a personal goal of mine, but it's not going to come by trying, trying to win. You know, I feel like I got a lot out of my game the last two days. If I can continue to get a lot out of my game it might be this week, and might not. It's just managing expectations and doing the best I can.

Q. You said when you won Honda, talked about you don't have to play perfect golf to win. When you're a kid you might think you need to play perfect golf to win on the PGA TOUR. Is that something, as you move into contention, you can pull from and keep from getting frustrated knowing that throughout the week it's okay to not be perfect?

KEITH MITCHELL: This week is a good example of not being perfect. I was 3-over through 6 and I felt like I could have given myself excuses of, oh, it's okay. You had the flu. You can miss the cut. That's just not the case out here.

If you feel sorry for yourself you're never going to make it. Johnny and I battled. It was playing really difficult

yesterday afternoon, and to be 3-over through 6 and to be standing here tied for the lead, that's just sticking to the process. As you like to say, KP, stick to the process.

So, again, golf never goes the way you plan it to go. If you try to force a plan and force things to happen like you think it should, it backfires really quick.

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