

The American Express

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La Quinta, California, USA

La Quinta Country Club

Ben An

Quick Quotes

Q. They're showing the 7-under 65 that you had. Top the leaderboard right now. One of those rounds that looked easy watching it. What was it like for you inside the ropes?

BEN AN: Like you said, it was, I never thought about the score all day because it was one of those days you hit driver on the green, most of the birdies I had today were probably inside three feet. I made one putt that's about 18 feet for birdie on the par-3 and that's about it. Everything else was just, the par-5s, I hit some good shots and hit some good chips and I had some good up-and-downs for pars.

There's a few of them out there I missed the greens and got a great save and then, just one of those steady rounds and at the end you shoot 7-under par, so everything worked.

Q. Speaking of steady in your career, you've been a steady player. Slow start to the season in the fall making two out of seven cuts. You had a month and a half off. What did you work on?

BEN AN: I was struggling with my long game, I would say. I've been always a steady player, I was hitting it pretty decent, but I struggled a little bit with my long game, so I tried to tidy it up with my new coach, Sean Foley, and I worked pretty hard during the off-season on my long game, and then it seems to, obviously it's paying off, I'm hitting it a lot better and I'm hitting some good shots and still making some progress out there, but it's good to see some results with the progress. So yeah, we're happy where we're going right now and hopefully it gets better.

Q. When did you start working with Sean Foley?

BEN AN: It was, I think, two weeks before Cancun last year, Mayakoba Classic. So it was, I would say it was like second, third week of November, so it's been only like two months maybe.

Q. What, how did you end up working with him and



what are you trying to do?

BEN AN: I have known him for 11 years now, because I when I first moved to Lake Nona, Justin Rose was there and he was always there, so I've seen him around, I've seen him at tournaments and we're good buddies. I asked him for a bit of help. I was struggling with the long game, so we worked on it in the off-season and it seems to be working.

Q. When was the last time you lost, I think you said six golf balls in a practice round?

BEN AN: I do that more often than you would think, to be honest, because I wasn't focused that much because, there is a lot of water on the Stadium Course, to be fair. There's water on almost every hole and I lost like six balls and I ran out of them, so I asked my buddy for golf balls. I had to borrow like two, three balls for the last three holes. It was my caddie's fault. He only brought like five balls out there, so...

Q. What were you happiest about in the round today?

BEN AN: I would say off the tee, and then into the greens, I hit some great shots, and I didn't really mis-hit any of the golf shots. I probably mis-hit once, probably twice, one, the first tee I blocked it way right and then other one was the par-5 on the second shot into it and just pulled it like 10 yards left. That was about it. Other than that, I hit it pretty solid and where I wanted.

Q. Why do you think your neck was bothering you?

BEN AN: It was just like a golfer thing. We get injured everywhere. Necks, backs, wrists. I've been playing golf for a very long time, so we get a lot of injuries. But it's not like I had to take like a couple weeks off, just little tight neck, so I had to get treated Sunday and Monday and Tuesday. So it feels a lot better today and then, it started yesterday I felt fine, so just happens over time.

Q. Considering you lost all those balls are you surprised bogey-free today, 65?

BEN AN: No, not really (laughing.) Like I said, I worked pretty hard and, me and Sean worked really hard during



the off-season and we're still trying to get to where we want it. It's great to see the result by shooting 7-under today, so.

Just got some ways to go and then just, I wasn't worried about it too much, that's what we kept telling each other is just don't worry, it's just golf. Even though I lost six balls, it's fine.

Q. What was the par-3 where you made the 18-footer?

BEN AN: It was the back nine, I think it was 11 or 12? That was the par-3. Yeah so that hole it was just straight uphill putt so that was the longest putt I made all day, so that means I hit it pretty good.

Q. What has been the focus with you and Sean? Has there been one area?

BEN AN: Yeah, I mean, I first asked him -- I wanted to keep the spin lower with the short irons. I've been spinning too much, not around the greens but into the greens, it just got out of control a little bit. And then it got to the driver as well, it was spinning a little too much and then the dispersion was getting a little wider.

So trying to get that tightened up and then I definitely saw that today out there. Tried to get a little bit of less face changes and stuff. We're not doing a whole lot, we're not changing a lot, but just need to tighten up a little bit so I can hit more fairways and hit more greens and try to make more birdies.

Q. What's your goals this year?

BEN AN: Probably same for the last five years, win the tournament and try and play in the TOUR Finals that's my goal, that's been my goal for the last five years.

Q. What do you think has held you back from getting a win on this TOUR? I know you won other places?

BEN AN: It shows how tough it is to win out here, I think. I had three chances, I played pretty well, but I need some luck and also need to some things need to drop or hit it a little better.

But it just shows how tough it's win to win out here, I think and so I'm not too worried about it and if I hit it like today and putt like today then I'm sure I can get a win this year.

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