

Cognizant Classic

Thursday, February 29, 2024

Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, USA

PGA National Champion Course

Andrew Novak

Quick Quotes

Q. 6-under today, really good start to the tournament. Can you talk us through the highlights for you?

ANDREW NOVAK: Yeah. I think the swing I made on 11, it was my second hole of the day -- I got a birdie on 10, but it is a par-5, playing a little easier.

The swing I made on 11, usually a tougher hole, tough front pin. Hit a really good 8-iron in there and I thought that kind of started it. I've been hitting it well, but making that swing there, I was like, okay, I've still got it. I can keep it going from there.

Then kind of got lucky, got away with one on 15. Didn't make my best swing but sort of kind of missed it right at the hole. Knocked it real close there at 15, which was another tough hole, then made an eagle over on 3 after the turn. I hit a really good 5-iron in there maybe seven feet or so to set up that eagle.

Q. Pretty low numbers compared to what we're used to at this course. Was it the pristine conditions?

ANDREW NOVAK: Yeah, the conditions of the course are about the same. The greens are always running really nice. Fairways are always perfect around here. It's just there's no wind. That's the biggest defense. There's water around, but the water is really shown off because the wind causes some funny ones.

I would say no wind here is definitely -- you're going to see some of those lower scores, but it looks like tomorrow the course is going to figure that one out and it's not going to be so easy.

Q. Is it nice having that first round in the books when the conditions are benign?

ANDREW NOVAK: Yeah, it is very hard to make birdies out here when it's windy, so I kind of knew going into today, today was going to be the one day where it wasn't that windy, and this is your chance to get some birdies, get them early, and the rest of the week might be a little bit



more of a par-fest.

Q. How much of today is obviously trying to get the best score you can but also taking notes in your brain like it's not going to be like this necessarily tomorrow wind-wise and sort of have a game plan for each hole?

ANDREW NOVAK: Yes, but today was the day that felt weird, though, because I've always played this course with wind. Tomorrow when I show up, it'll be back to what I'm used to, whereas today was kind of the odd one where it's like, wait, I can actually fire at that pin or I have way less club into this par-5 than what I would usually have.

I thought today was kind of take it for what it is. I'm probably going to be in some spots I'm not used to on some holes. Not necessarily bad spots, but usually have different clubs and stuff.

With less wind, you just kind of had to take advantage of lower numbers that were out there.

Q. We know the Bear Trap can be a difficult stretch of holes, but 5, 6 and 7 on the front also played pretty difficult. Can you speak to how that played today?

ANDREW NOVAK: Yeah, ever since the first time I got here, 5, 6 and 7 is every bit as difficult if not more difficult depending on wind direction than 15, 16, 17.

Anytime you're playing both of those three-hole stretches even par, you're very happy. Even if you give up one, it's not too bad. You just can't take the big numbers.

5, usually that front pin is a lot more difficult because we catch a wind off the left. Today is not no bad. But 6 is still a beast, and 7 is like 230 plus today.

Yeah, those middle holes on both sides, you really -- if you can just kind of hang on, there are a few other opportunities out there.

Q. What would you nickname that stretch of holes if 15, 16, 17 is the Bear Trap?



ANDREW NOVAK: Hang on, please. Make par.

Q. You talked about kind of turning is your season around a little bit after the slow start. What specifically, even if it was a small thing, did you kind of find during the weeks between Farmers and Phoenix?

ANDREW NOVAK: I think bottom line is I was really tired coming out of the fall. I didn't play well in the fall, which led to a super stressful fall since I 122, 123. I was kind of burned out. Like December I didn't really touch a club at all.

Honestly, I probably came into Sony a little bit underprepared. Didn't play well at Sony, didn't really play well at Amex, but I was working on it. I was getting back into it and working on some things.

Torrey I think was the first week owe oy I missed the round I played on Friday -- I guess it's Thursday because it's Wednesday-Thursday, but the second round I played there at the South Course was really, really quality golf. I shot like 1-under there, hit a lot of really good shots. It could have been 4 or 5 if a couple other things went well.

I felt like I was chipping it well, driving it well, doing a lot of good things, so I knew that I could take some good positives from that. Rolled that into my next week at home, had an off week, and put some more good work in then, and then Waste Management is kind of really where I rolled in, was feeling really good with the game.

Q. Is your trainer your father-in-law, also?

ANDREW NOVAK: Yeah, Randy Myers.

Q. Is that how you met your wife?

ANDREW NOVAK: No, no. I had no idea who he was. We met in college. It just kind of worked out that way. I didn't touch a weight until I was -- I didn't get in the gym, do anything really, until pretty much kind of after college -- I guess starting in college, but I had no idea who he was.

Q. What was his initial assessment of your fitness when you guys first started?

ANDREW NOVAK: Well, Randy will never tell you that you suck, but it was probably not good. He'll sugarcoat it I'm sure, but it was not good. I had no -- I'm not that flexible now, either, but I had no flexibility back then. My backswing was about here. It's only about here now, but it was about there. It was not good.

Q. Is it kind of a cool kind of unique wrinkle to your

story that as you progress on the PGA TOUR, kind of family has a role in it?

ANDREW NOVAK: Yeah. Yeah. Because then when I'm out here, I have support every week. I've got my wife here this week. I've got my mom here this week. It is nice to have that support from them and see familiar faces like that that are in your corner every week. Yeah, I do think it helps.

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