

Valspar Championship

Thursday, March 17, 2022

Palm Harbor, Florida, USA

Innisbrook Resort (Copperhead)

Jhonattan Vegas

Quick Quotes

Q. (No Microphone.)

JHONATTAN VEGAS: Absolutely great. Exactly what I needed after last week. Game was there. I took advantage of the great conditions this morning. Greens are little softer, not much wind, absolutely a perfect day out here. So, yeah, lucky to have shot a nice 64.

Q. 16 of 18 greens. What was most comfortable about the iron games? Was it the numbers? The visuals? The feel? What was working for you today?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: To be honest, it was actually great because I haven't been hitting my irons great. I'm in a switch of irons for this week after last week and kind of old irons, I just kind of have my feels back. I started hitting it good and solid again.

Kind of a good flow started happening throughout the round. And I just feel like I hit my irons extremely well, especially at the end of the round, which is something that I'm really looking forward for the next three days.

Q. Nice to have that comfort back in the bag. What does that feel like for you? Is it the look of it?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: I got to think one or two wins with those things and it's just the feel of it. Just one of those things, the moment you strike the golf ball you know exactly how far you're hitting it and it just gives you that extra confidence that we all need out here, just to play well.

And obviously that's always a big component for me, just kind of something that I've done great throughout my career. If I keep hitting the ball close, I'm not the best putter out here, but if I hit it close enough, I'm going to make a nice share of birdies.

Q. What does that confidence do on this golf course as you try and expand on this lead tomorrow?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: It's a course that keeping the ball in play and hitting good iron shots is key with all of the tight



shots that you have, that you hit out here.

But it's a golf tournament. There's so much golf to be played. You got to enjoy this one, learn a lot from it, and take all the confidence that I can for the next few days.

Q. 7-under, an eagle on 1. Talk about your day.

JHONATTAN VEGAS: Yeah. Absolutely. A great round to start a great golf tournament. 7-under is always a fun round to shoot, especially on a course like this. I think we're fortunate to have absolutely great weather this morning and I was fortunate to take advantage of those situations.

So I hit the ball great. I feel like I hit my irons pretty solid. Something that I've been looking for a lot. And it's just super exciting.

And when you hit the ball good into the greens you can give yourself enough chances, you feel like can you make birdie a lot. So there was lots of pluses today.

Q. Were you in the bad wave last week?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: I was not, but I still screwed up 17. (Laughing).

Q. Tell me, what club did you hit into No. 1 to set up that eagle?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: I had actually a really good number. I think like 235. It's not my most comfortable shot but a shot that I'm somewhat comfortable hitting. I had like a nice high fade into that right pin. So I hit a nice 4-iron into it, but it was also a perfect number that I could hit a hard 4-iron.

I knew that it was unlikely to go long, so it kind of gave me that extra confidence to put a good swing and I was fortunate to hit it to four, five feet.

Q. How come you haven't played this tournament that often?



JHONATTAN VEGAS: You know what, I don't know, because I usually played before this week quite a lot and it's kind of one of those things that it just doesn't really quite fit great into my schedule. Obviously with the whole schedule, it's been different this year, it just fit in nicely.

But it's a great golf course that we all love playing because it tests every aspect of the game. But it just hasn't fit into my schedule throughout the years.

Q. No top 10s yet this year. Where is your level of frustration at this point?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: It's quite up there because I know that I'm playing good golf. I just haven't been able to put good rounds together or a good four rounds together. It's been good rounds here, kind of bad rounds there.

So I know that I'm playing well. It's hard to be patient. But I know that I'm playing well. I just got to keep giving myself chances.

Q. It seemed like you hit the ball well. Coming into this pro-am yesterday you hit several good shots. Do you have a high level of confidence before you struck your first tee ball today?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: It was good. To be honest, I hadn't been hitting the ball great, especially with my irons. I made a switch to irons this week to an old set of irons.

The moment I came in yesterday I started feeling kind of the flow again of hitting into the greens. Kind of had a great day during the pro-am yesterday and just kind of, the confidence kind of kept building throughout the round today and there was no secret for a good round today.

Q. You're playing in the group in front of D.J. and Bubba and those guys. What did you think of the crowds out here for a first day?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: It was good. This is always a great event. The Valspar is just always a fun event, one, because we usually get a pretty good field. People come support us. It's a great golf course. Hopefully the weather can cooperate this week and we can have a great championship.

Q. You doing anything different putting-wise? You were pretty hot out there today.

JHONATTAN VEGAS: Nothing different. Just once confidence goes up, you know you're hitting it close, you know you're going to give yourself a pretty good amount of chances, kind of putting takes a little bit of less stress. Just

start letting things flow and once a few balls go in it's easy to get the ball rolling.

Q. Did you make a change in the set of irons this week?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: I just switched irons. Same brand but another set of irons that I played for awhile and just kind of went back to them.

Q. What model?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: It's MP-4 Mizunos. Just been playing, once I went away from Nike I started playing those and kind of switched middle of last year to a different set and I just kind of went back to those.

Q. Holes 16, 17, 18, could you rate your performance on that and how well you did on those three holes?

JHONATTAN VEGAS: I actually did pretty good. I think I played them 1-under par. It's never a fun kind of stretch of holes, you definitely have to elevate your level of concentration, especially 16, 17 and that 18 tee shot. But I felt comfortable today kind of early in the morning, we didn't have much wind so it kind of played easier to an extent. So just kind of made a great par on 16 and then a nice birdie on 17 and a pretty solid par on 18. If I can do that three more times I'll have a pretty solid week.

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