

Valspar Championship

Sunday, March 20, 2022

Palm Harbor, Florida, USA

Innisbrook Resort (Copperhead)

Sam Burns

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right. We'll get started. We would like to welcome the two-time Valspar champion, Sam Burns, here to the media room at the Valspar Championship.

Sam, you just captured your third win, the site of where you got your first win, and already two wins this season. Tell me how you're feeling.

SAM BURNS: Yeah, just, I don't think it's really hit me yet. Such a cool day and to be able to go back-to-back feels really good, and I'm just really excited.

THE MODERATOR: Went into extra holes. Tell me mindset going into 18, but especially exciting hole there on 16.

SAM BURNS: Yeah, I hit a really good 3-wood off the first hole on 18, then just kind of in between clubs there, I thought. I really thought Davis' ball had plugged in the bunker, just because they typically do into the wind.

So we hit half a more club just to make sure we got it past that bunker, and then hit two really good putts there, one in regulation and one there in the playoff hole.

16, just drove it right in the rough there, kind of a similar line to what I hit in the regulation. I just hit this one a little bit better, so it snuck through in the rough. So just trying to get something on the green to give ourselves a chance with the putter. Man, it came through. So it was really cool.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Questions?

Q. More curious than anything, on the putt that you made to win it, we don't often see that kind of emotion come out of you. I'm not saying the moment didn't deserve it. But what did that feel like?

SAM BURNS: It felt like it looked. Yeah, I just think that after last week, the last couple weeks, I've tried to conserve as much energy as possible, and all through



today just trying to make sure that I never got kind of too high or too low and just tried to stay kind of even-keeled. And to see that go in, I mean, that's just what I felt.

The last time I was in a playoff was the WGC in Memphis. Hit a really good shot on the second playoff hole to 6 feet and thought I hit a pretty good putt and it lipped out. So that stung, that one hurt a lot. So to be able to make that putt just it felt like it looked.

Q. (No microphone.)

SAM BURNS: No, no, I'm drained. I don't have that in me any more.

Q. How much do you love this course now?

SAM BURNS: I guess it's got to be my favorite at this point. Yeah, for whatever reason I wish I could tell you exactly why or what it is, but for some reason, I don't know.

Q. Just curious what plans are for tonight for celebration.

SAM BURNS: I'm not sure. Try to get home, hopefully see some friends and family.

Q. What club is it that you hit off of 16?

SAM BURNS: It's kind of like a hybrid/5-wood.

Q. As you look at that one hole and think of all the things that have happened to you on this place, is it kind of a may stink that one hole can be such a stage for you?

SAM BURNS: Yeah, for sure. I think that that's the Snake Pit, that's its MO, it comes down to some dramatic finishes and crazy things happen on that stretch. So to be on the good side of that last couple years is definitely something that I don't want to take for granted.

Q. John Cooper, the coach of the Tampa Bay Lightning, was asked what it would be like to win back-to-back Stanley Cups. He says it makes you



special. You won back-to-back now Valspar, does it feel as special?

SAM BURNS: I think that, I don't feel special, but it feels special to do it. I think it's really cool for Travis and I to get to experience our first win together here last year and then to do it again this year is so cool. I still think it's just, it hasn't really hit me yet.

Q. How did it change your mindset and approach when you saw posted on the leaderboard that Davis had made triple at 5?

SAM BURNS: I honestly never saw that. I did not know he did that. I think that I saw that he was, I don't know what hole that was, that he was at 15 at some point, I did not know he made triple.

Q. Did you just find it out from me telling you?

SAM BURNS: Yeah. Yeah. And Davis is a heck of a player, Davis and I have been friends for a long time, we've played a lot of golf together, he's somebody that I've always looked up to. He's a world-class player, great guy. Unfortunately, he went to Alabama, I let him off on that, but, yeah, he's an awesome dude.

Q. Such a clean round, wanted to ask you about 17. The bunker shot, the chip, what you felt over the putt and kind of holding it together right there?

SAM BURNS: Yeah, I think that honestly I wish I would not have seen JT hit first. The wind did not touch his ball, so I tried to take something off a 5-iron and just hit a poor shot.

And then the bunker shot, it was kind of tricky just because I felt like if I landed on the green it was going to get away from me to the right. So I was trying to land it kind of close to the edge and just came up a touch short. And then the chip came out funny, it came out a lot hotter than I thought it was going to. I just tried to read the putt to the best of my ability and I just told myself, just best stroke of the day, whatever happens, happens.

Q. Do you look at that putt the same way you would a putt on 5 or 7?

SAM BURNS: Sure. Yeah, I think it's, you know, that 6-footer is a 6-footer and at the end of the day all I can do is read it and put a good roll on it and after that I can't control it.

Q. Apparently it was 9?

SAM BURNS: Yeah, 9.

Q. You mentioned a minute ago that you don't feel special but this win puts you to number 10 in the world. It just kind of puts you in an elite class. How do you feel about that and did you feel internally that you were in kind of in that group all along and does the number make it anymore different for you?

SAM BURNS: I think, for me, I just try to put in hard work, just try to improve my game every year, every week, look at stats and see what areas I can get better at and then my team and I try to attack those areas. And that's all I can control and so I mean, it's nice to see that those things are paying off, it gives us motivation that we're working on the right things.

Q. (No Microphone.)

SAM BURNS: I just wanted to try to keep improving, I want to see what areas that lack and just try to make things better. That's ultimately what I love to do.

Q. I know you have a lot of belief in your game, last May you were proving to yourself you could win at this level. A year later can you kind of compare your confidence level being in that arena today?

SAM BURNS: Yeah, I think, you know, when you're coming down the stretch and you're near the lead and you want to have this belief that you can do it, but sometimes it's tough when you haven't done it yet. So I think for me today it was just only thing I can control is what I'm doing, how I'm reacting to the shots, everything else is out of my control, whatever Davis does or whatever JT does, I have no control over that. So for meaning it was more important to just kind of stay in my little circle, Travis and I just do our thing and at the end of the day we'll add 'em up and hopefully it's good enough.

Q. Do you think periodically about that day four years ago I think it was when you played with Tiger at Honda and you played your way into this event?

SAM BURNS: The round with Tiger?

Q. (No Microphone.)

SAM BURNS: Yeah, I feel like I gained some confidence from that round. It was a cool opportunity for me to play with him on a Sunday and just get to watch him up close. That was always a dream of mine to do that. So it was also nice that I was able to play really well that day and ultimately top 10 to get into this week. So, yeah, it was definitely a special day.

Q. You mentioned your coach, Brad?

SAM BURNS: Pullin. P U L L I N.

Q. When was the last time that you said, I need you to come out here? You mentioned him coming out here or heading here Monday.

SAM BURNS: I mean usually we try to plan like, hey, come every three or four events, but he was down earlier in the week at PLAYERS and I just called him on Monday and I was like, Man, I'm struggling, I'm not really sure. And he was like, I can be there tomorrow. And I said, You know, I don't want to affect anything you have going on your schedule. And he was like, No, I'll be there tomorrow.

So he drove 12 hours on Tuesday or Monday, Tuesday, I don't even know and we just got to work. So that just, I've always known this about him, it really just shows me that he cares and he is passionate about what he does and that he would do anything for me.

Q. You called him after the round Monday?

SAM BURNS: Yeah.

Q. Was that a tough one for you?

SAM BURNS: Yeah, but also I knew that I wasn't playing well and so I honestly didn't have that high of expectations.

Q. What did you guys tweak for this week?

SAM BURNS: We worked on a couple things in my golf swing that kind of we went back to, just tried to get a little more consistency in there.

Q. Either now or when you're in the middle of it, when you look back at last year when that 7-iron on 16 pretty well clinched it. Three-shot win. Or today. Which is more fun?

SAM BURNS: I think they're so different. I don't know. I don't know. I think that today, to win in a playoff probably is more exciting for someone watching, but also last year being my first -- I don't know, it's a toss up, I guess.

Q. Secondly, when Davis had that 15-footer in regulation to win it, I think you were watching, weren't you, were you off to the side?

SAM BURNS: Yes.

Q. What was that like?

SAM BURNS: It's tough when you have no control. I wasn't rooting against him, but I just wanted a chance. I wanted just one more chance to have my say.

Q. Thinking about your first two shots on the second playoff hole, of course they're not exactly what you want, was there a moment when you realized that your golf didn't have to be perfect in order to make a birdie or do something special?

SAM BURNS: Yeah, I think that you're always learning out here and that's just in life in general, you just try to -- you know you have experiences and you try to become better from them and so I think in the past I would have said that you have to play perfect in final rounds to have a chance to win and in reality it's just not the case.

So, yeah, walking there off 16, Davis is in the fairway 20 or 30 yards closer than me and I'm in the rough, odds are in his favor.

But everyone knows in the game of golf anything can happen and so I just tried to put a good swing on a 7-iron, we just tried to get it somewhere on the green and just have a chance. Thankfully that ball went in. It very well could not have.

Q. When you started the round today you were three strokes down, did you show up at the course and think, there's a number I got to shoot or did you just play shot to shot?

SAM BURNS: No, not at all, I just tried to play shot to shot. Just because, like I said, anything can happen, golf's a crazy game, so it doesn't really matter how many strokes someone's ahead of you, everything can change quickly.

Q. In this constant learning process you're in have you found yourself taking more out of winning or more out of rounds like Shriners, you had a chance, PLAYERS last week you were right there and a bad final round. Do you take more out of learning on the bad ones or the good ones?

SAM BURNS: Yeah, I mean, it's tough, you just don't win a lot out here. I mean the percentages are just not in your favor. So I think for me it's just after those rounds that or the times that you're close you just try to look back and see what you could do better. A lot of times somebody else just beats you, somebody else plays better or somebody else gets a break here or there that you didn't. And that's just kind of part of the game.

So a lot of it is -- you know you don't want to be frustrated after you finish third or fourth or second or whatever it is,

because you did something really well that week and you have to kind of hang your hat on a lot of the good things you did, because once you start going down that path of the negative stuff, it can be tricky.

So I think for me just trying to find those areas where I could do better, but also looking at the positives, too.

THE MODERATOR: Sam, three-time PGA TOUR winner and back-to-back Valspar championship winner, thanks for joining us.

SAM BURNS: Thank you, guys.

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