

# Valspar Championship

Thursday, March 21, 2024

Palm Harbor, Florida, USA

Innisbrook Resort (Copperhead)

## Peter Malnati

### Quick Quotes

**Q. 66 today. You were 1-over through 5. What clicked from there?**

PETER MALNATI: I actually played pretty well the first five holes, too. This is a great, great, great golf course. Tiny bit off can -- the course can jump out and bite you a little bit. So I made two sixes in the first five holes and really, I didn't hit any shots that were that far from what I wanted 'em to be, and then I just felt like I was playing well, so I tried not to worry about the fact that I was over par, like you said, and just go -- went to 6, tried to do my best and made birdie on 6, and obviously made the turn at even and played great on the back nine.

**Q. What specifically in those first five holes was getting you?**

PETER MALNATI: Well, in the first fairway -- I hit the fairway on 1, which is not that easy for me to do. The fairway is kind of narrow where I hit it. I hit the fairway, had a little mud on my ball, which we get that all the time. I should know what to do. But it affected it more than I thought and I hit my second shot over in the trees on the right. It felt like a pretty good swing, but it ended up in a tough spot and I didn't do so well from there, so ended up making six, six with no penalty shots on first hole after hitting the fairway.

Then on the fifth hole, which is -- I would imagine if we look back at the end of the year it's got to be one of the higher scoring average par-5s the TOUR will play. I was trying to be aggressive off the tee, and I thought I hit a great one, but it just snuck into the corner of the bunker, and it's a difference between like you can almost get on in two if it misses the bunker, but instead I was chipping out with a wedge and made it a really tough hole. But people who play the hole smarter than me don't hit driver off the tee, they stay short of the bunker, but I didn't do that, I was trying to go. But, so no real terrible shots in the first five holes, so even though I was not where I wanted to be score-wise I felt good.

**Q. After Sunday's round at Sawgrass do you have**



**anything that you were really focusing on heading into today's round?**

PETER MALNATI: Sunday was, I just kind of had to chalk that up as just one of those days you get in golf. I really was playing well. Sunday, I didn't do anything well, I was off in all facets of the game. And so I was a little disappointed, obviously, I don't want to really harp on that because I had done so much well, and when I got here and got to work on Tuesday I was really pleased, everything felt kind of as it had most of the week at Sawgrass, not how it did on Sunday. So I just haven't missed a beat. Went out and played today a lot like I played on Saturday at Sawgrass, which was the culmination of a really good week of work that just didn't end the way I wanted it to on Sunday.

**Q. Do you believe in momentum?**

PETER MALNATI: Momentum's a -- in physics it's a real thing, of course. So, yes, I believe in that sense. And in golf -- I'll never forget, I was a rookie on tour and I was talking to Geoff Ogilvy, who is a very thoughtful guy, but I think smart, and he said, Golf is so unfair, because when you need to play well is when it's the hardest to play well. He says, If you play really well, you don't need to play well anymore, it gets easy to play well. So momentum, I never quite had the feeling of not needing to play well, like I've always sort of needed to. But when you do play well, it just -- I would say confidence in golf is stepping on the first tee knowing you're going to make six birdies, because if you know you're going to make six birdies you're not worried about making a mistake. And, you never know, it's a tricky course out there, so you never step on the tee knowing you're going to make six birdies. But I felt like I would make some birdies today, so I wasn't too worried, I was able to play aggressive, I wasn't too worried about making a mistake here or there, because I felt I was going to get my looks at birdie and make 'em and I was able to do that.

**Q. Making your eighth start here. You mention you love this course, kind of a love/hate relationship here?**

PETER MALNATI: Yeah, for sure. It's just, like it's so -- I think our loyal fans have an idea of what a Florida course



is like, and they picture like where we play at Cognizant, water down both sides of the fairway, palm trees, that kind of stuff. This course is more like Hilton Head. Like, this course is tree lined, thick rough, so it's very un-Florida here, but it's really, really cool. I'm sure guys do hate it, because if you're not driving it well, or if you're not sharp in all areas, like the course will beat you up. It's tough, the greens are small, the greens were firm today, not like crazy, like unholdably firm, but you get some bounce, so if you're out of position you couldn't hold 'em. It's just, I love this kind of course because I think it really distinguishes good ball striking from mediocre ball striking. I think that's the greatest compliment you can give a golf course.

**Q. Tracy West and Team Valspar do a good job. Did you have fun with the penguins yesterday?**

PETER MALNATI: Yeah, so great. Yeah, so it's cool to see. Obviously, we play on the greatest tour in the world, and we've almost come to expect to be spoiled, but it's still really nice to see how the tournaments go above and beyond to make the players and our families feel special.

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