

American Century Championship

Saturday, July 13, 2024

Lake Tahoe, Nevada, USA

Edgewood Tahoe

Adam Thielen

Mardy Fish

Derek Lowe

Press Conference



I got some feels. Just go after pins and see what happens. If you're not first, you're last, right?

Q. Mardy, you've made an incredible amount of birdies, 34 points today, one of the lowest rounds you have ever ever shot here, 65. So just assess your round today and just talk about when you started making those birdies, how the round flowed.

MARDY FISH: It kind of shows you what can happen if you sort of just stay the course. I didn't start well at all. I missed the green on 1 and pulled it, lost the ball for the second time on No. 4. Hit iron on that tomorrow.

So 1-over through four holes and was able to make a birdie on 5. It really helped just kind of get the round going just a little bit, just something positive.

Then the rest sort of becomes a blur because you can't really -- a lot of times you're out here and you're like, I'm 2-under, or 3-under, you can count, or I'm back down to one or back down to two.

DEREK LOWE: That's what we do.

MARDY FISH: I do that, too. And today it didn't feel like I was going to go backwards. It felt like every hole, let's just reset and just try to put it in the fairway, put it on the green, and it just felt like today -- sometimes you have those rounds where you go behind your ball and look at the putt or whatever and you see it like right away. And I had a lot of those today.

A bunch of putts, certainly 14 was one that I was obviously just trying to 2-putt -- couple that sort of went in. No. 8 went in pretty good. That felt good because somebody yelled "I hope you 3-putt" right before I hit that one. So that one felt good. And then you sort of get going.

And the delay was interesting. Weird or different. We didn't get a shot for almost 45, 50 minutes or so and all of a sudden you've got to hit a tee shot on one of the most important holes because they're the scoring holes at the end. You're sort of waiting for those holes and you know you still have a lot that you can score here.

THE MODERATOR: We've got Derek Lowe, Adam Thielen, Mardy Fish in the interview room. We'll just do the elephant in the room.

Derek and Adam, you basically were along for the ride on Mardy's round today. So just talk about being a part of that, and when you see a player making that many birdies kind of all in a row, does that channel the adrenaline? Does that push you guys to play further?

DEREK LOWE: Honestly, what makes it beautiful is you root for them. You want them to keep going. Like no way, no heck, no how are you're going to root against somebody. But when you start making 60-footers, when you start firing from 60, then it's like, uh-ho.

It was just a beautiful round. I was looking forward to this group last night, and I think we all had a great time.

Q. Adam, assess your round today, and also, Derek, you too. Then we'll go to Mardy. Assess y'all's round today.

ADAM THIELEN: Just kind of hung in there try to get some ups and downs. Felt like I played pretty well. Frustrated how it ended. I felt like I set myself up to be able to kind of score towards the end. Usually those are some scorable holes, but other than that, battled some of the bad shots and made some up-and-downs and that's all you can really ask for out here.

Q. What's the game plan for tomorrow knowing that Mardy has a decent lead? What's the strategy tomorrow going into tomorrow?

ADAM THIELEN: I think it's kind of like every Sunday. It's like, okay, like why am I nervous? I just played two rounds.



That's what makes it so fun here at American Century, is you have so many options at the end no matter what you're down. I had like an eight-footer or 10-footer on 18 for an eagle.

You just never know what you're going to get. Kind of a testament to just however your round starts, there's a lot of birdies out there, if you hit it in the right spot or whatever.

Q. On the scorecard, you birdied eight of your last 12 holes. And after those two bogeys, when you made birdies on 7 and 8 and then 10, does it feel like a little cruise control or does it feel like you can't miss, is there something that kind of kicks --

MARDY FISH: We're not that good. I've worked really hard on my -- I don't play a ton of golf, but I worked hard on my putting in the last six months, eight months, whatever. Just was kind of frustrated in Dallas when we went and played in Dallas. Just couldn't figure it out. I seemed to switch putters every other week.

I think a lot of people can probably feel that. But I do that for sure, too. I'm probably going to stick with this putter for a little bit, though.

Q. Adam, these are two of the best rounds ever. 24 and 21. I think your two best rounds before that were, if my notes are correct, twice in 2022 you shot 20 for a round. So you had a 24, a 21, what's the difference?

ADAM THIELEN: Just trying to take it one hole at a time and just play my game.

MARDY FISH: So cliché. Start over. (Laughter).

ADAM THIELEN: Usually I'm the type of person that looks ahead, how many points do I have? I've got to get to this number. The last couple of days I was trying to play my ball. Wherever it lands, figure out the next shot. How to get it, give me a chance at a birdie putt. Then if I hit a couple of bad shots, find a way to get up-and-down or at least get my chance of up-and-down. That's been my mindset, which is a lot different than the past.

Q. Feeds into my theory from before that someone like a pro tennis player or a quarterback or a major league pitcher like Mulder can manage a game and not think too far ahead but think far enough ahead as to how to plan their strategy. So apparently you're doing that a lot better this year.

ADAM THIELEN: That's probably why I'm not very good at it because I'm not a quarterback. I can just go out there

and react and not have to think.

Q. That's how Del Greco won a tournament. So there's always hope.

ADAM THIELEN: There you go.

MARDY FISH: Adam's a really good player. We haven't seen his best rounds. And he's going to -- I don't know how many years you've got left, but once he retires and he can start actually playing golf, he's going to be a mainstay at the top of the leaderboard for sure.

Q. Derek, you look like you're having fun out there.

DEREK LOWE: Oh, God, yeah. I love it. This is our Christmas. You can't wait for the invite. I think this is my 12th year. It's just a joy to come out here and compete.

The best thing about today is sometimes you've just got -- somebody just beats you. That's what happens in sports. Someone was just better than you today. That's what happened today with Mardy. We'll wake up tomorrow and go out there and try to do the best we can.

Q. Keep up the practice because Barkley is now in red score?

MARDY FISH: I was just looking at that. I took that bet. Cash that check.

Q. Mardy, when you won here a few years ago, you said -- I remember you saying you wanted to bomb it out there as far as you could and figure it out from there. What has changed, if anything?

MARDY FISH: I mean, I'm just trying to be somewhat strategic. I wasn't strategic at all with that. I was just like tee it high and swing hard and go find it kind of thing.

I won a good round, that was the 63, 10 birdies. That's 30 points in 10 holes. So I was just trying to be smarter around here, just trying to ask a few of the guys around. I know Smylie is here, Smylie Kaufman from NBC Sports is here, just trying to pick his brain a bit, what would he do around here. Putting wedges in your hands and stuff like that is the most important thing. That's what I've been trying to do.

Q. Adam, we asked Michael Jordan this and we asked Steph Curry this. Do you think you'll be able to win the tournament after you retire? Jordan was positive that that would give him an edge. Steph said, "I can win it while I'm still active," which he pulled it off. Where's your head on that?

ADAM THIELEN: First of all, it's great to get out here at the American Century Championship. It's such a great event. And for us, even while I'm still playing football, there's just the competition factor, you look forward to coming out here and competing with these guys.

My mindset is always I come out here with the hopes of winning it. I don't ever come in here thinking I don't have a chance; there's no way. I come in here thinking, hey, I'm going to practice up these last five, six days and give myself the best opportunity to go out and try to win it.

But, yeah, when I'm done playing football, I'll have a lot more time to be able to spend on my golf game, which I'm excited about. Hopefully that doesn't put me into retirement because I'm really excited about playing more golf some day.

Q. Mardy, I think you were standing around the corner there when Mulder was joking, or maybe not joking, about sabotaging you tonight. In all seriousness, what is tonight going to look like for you? How are you going to keep yourself grounded?

MARDY FISH: Colin Jost is doing some comedy. Spend some time with the American Century folks. Get to bed fairly early. I don't know what time we play tomorrow. And this is the first time -- usually I leave Sunday night right after kind of thing. We're staying until Monday so we don't have to rush too much. I'll get plenty of sleep. Don't worry.

Q. You're not going to let them get to you?

MARDY FISH: Mark? No. I sleep with sound machines. A full concoction of medicine. I won't hear anything.

Q. You've talked about this early in press conferences, but walking 18 and seeing the No. 49, could you just talk about your teammate, Tim Wakefield, and what he's meant to you and also kind of the void of Tim and Stacy not being here, what they meant to this tournament?

DEREK LOWE: We're very fortunate -- I think this is the fourth event we've had -- and every single place has done a great tribute.

We took a picture next to the 49. Obviously he loved this event, him and Stacy. I just remember last year, we went on a boat together, and he's sorely, sorely missed. This was our 20th anniversary of the '04 Red Sox win. You wish he was there, but every event, they've done an amazing job of giving a tribute to him, rightfully so.

ADAM THIELEN: I think for me, it's cool because I didn't have the relationship that he had, but he probably made as big of an impact on me as he did on Derek.

And I say that because I didn't have a ton of time around him, but the times I was sitting at the same table as him, the player meeting, stuff like that, the stories he would tell and how just -- he was a guy you want to be around. Great family, obviously, and obviously missed.

Like he said, the four events, he was at all those events in the past. Definitely miss him and his wife and thinking for his kids and the families and miss them.

MARDY FISH: He used to come to my foundation event before the Orlando tournament every year. He'd do it like on his own volition. We almost wouldn't even ask him. He was like, can I come or do you want me to be a part of it kind of thing? Of course we do. I got to know him a little bit more than most.

I'm a big sports fan. I love saying hello to everyone and meeting everyone and the new players and stuff like that.

Someone like Tim was like, we got to a point where -- he wore that World Series ring around everywhere. Not many guys do it. So it's pretty jarring. It's big. So it got to a point, I'd just sit down and he'd take it off and hand it to me because I was going to ask every single time.

We miss him like crazy. I don't know him as well -- Adam and I don't know him as well as Derek does or as much as Kevin does, as much as those boys on the team, Clay Buchholz, and all those guys, but all of us have unique experiences with him on our own, and we'll remember that forever. Miss him like crazy. Every time I walk by the 49, I'll try to give it a kiss.

Q. Mardy, I don't know if you can do this, but can you tell me how many birdies you've had in these really big rounds? You said 10 when you set the record. Today was nine. Last year you had 29 points and 26 points. Do you remember the birdies?

MARDY FISH: Not on those rounds. I remember the 63 and today, because it just happened. I remember the 63. But I remember -- someone had to tell me because I didn't know that I birdied like 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18.

Q. I just remember -- I think last year you had a better score than Steph because he had the eagles and the hole-in-one, and I think you had like 15 or 16 birdies on the week.

MARDY FISH: That's the thing about the American

Century, is the scoring is different. It's not stroke play. It's Stableford. And that's what makes it fun. That's why like the ending is so fun and what we saw last year with Steph coming back.

I think he bogeyed 17 -- I think he bogeyed 16 and 17 to get down three points and then obviously eagled 18. It was a lot of points out there at the end.

Q. You don't remember total birdies last year by chance?

MARDY FISH: No, I don't.

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