

Myrtle Beach Classic

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Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, USA

Dunes Golf and Beach Club

Jimmy Stanger

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome Jimmy Stanger to the media center here at the Myrtle Beach Classic. Your rookie season on TOUR but you're here at the Dunes Club where you've won not once but twice in the past. Start us out by reminiscing on 2016, General Hackler, and then coming back four months later and winning the Southern Amateur that summer.

JIMMY STANGER: Yeah, it was special. I've talked a lot to my family and my caddie about it this week. I don't know if I'd be a pro golfer if it wasn't for this golf course. That was my first college win in my junior year of college. It had been a couple of years since a junior golf win. That gave me a lot of confidence to know that I could continue coming forward.

Then the Southern Am was my first big amateur win, which kind of started getting the wheels turning in my head that I could compete at the highest level of amateur golf and kind of led to a great year after that where I was able to turn pro and make it out to the Korn Ferry TOUR that next year, end of 2017, and now we're here after six years down there. It's special. A lot of memories. A lot of great memories.

I remember thinking at that time the college win would never happen and then I was there and got the win, and again, it's just a lot of good memories because I don't know if I'd be here if it wasn't for this place.

Q. Differences you've seen maybe in the course from what you recall back in 2016, just it being set up for a PGA TOUR event here for the first time?

JIMMY STANGER: Yeah, I think it's in impeccable shape. Everybody is talking about that. The greens are incredibly fast and firm, even considering all the rain that we've got. So that's nice.

It's not overall that different I would say from when we played the Southern Am, when we played the General Hackler. I think the General Hackler was earlier in the year so they didn't have overseed, it was a little browner, but the



Myrtle Beach
CLASSIC

Southern Am the rough was about this length, the greens were firm and fast. It looks good now. I remember it looking impeccable back then. Nothing but good things to say about this place.

Q. What about this layout suits your eye or what allowed you to win here twice?

JIMMY STANGER: Yeah, I don't know if there's any secrets to it. I think I just played well those two weeks. I think the golf course has a lot of draw shapes off the tee. That's my shot shape. The greens are difficult but gettable. If you get it around the green with good hands, you can get it up-and-down for pars.

The par-5s are just really quality. If you hit the fairways on the par-5s you have a huge advantage. If you miss the fairways you're kind of in trouble. I think those play into the strengths of my game. Again, you've just got to go take one shot at a time, and I've played well here in the past, and hopefully we can replicate that a third time.

Q. Your rookie season on TOUR, have there been things that have lived up to your expectations or exceeded them or been really different from what you were expecting?

JIMMY STANGER: The courses are such a good challenge out here. I would say a good shot goes a very long way. A par on the PGA TOUR means a lot more than a par probably in any other stage of golf.

I mean, they treat us incredibly well. It's almost to the point where it's crazy to think that we get courtesy cars every week and omelette stations in the morning. It looked like there was an amazing dessert out there for lunch that hopefully I can exercise some self-control and not eat later. But they treat us well up here, and it's nice.

You have to remember, though, it's still about the love of the game. It's not about the money. It's about going out there and trying to compete and trying to win. I think that's what gets me excited to wake up in the morning. Anytime I start drifting from that and start thinking about how I want to make this much money or I want to make this cut or I want to go do this and that, it really comes back to I just want to go out there and compete my heart out and see how my game stacks up against the best in the world.

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Q. Jimmy, you had that nice run kind of end of February, March area. What did you learn about yourself in that aspect, and what are you trying to re-find from those few weeks when you had it dialed?

JIMMY STANGER: Yeah, again, I don't think I did anything really special or different than what I'm doing now in those weeks. I think what that did is it gave me a lot of confidence knowing that I can compete out here, that it doesn't take my "A" game necessarily to be in contention or it doesn't even -- I can go about my daily process and know that I can compete out here. That's kind of what that confidence gave me.

Last month or so has definitely been humbling, not quite what I was looking for, but I still played some good golf. Missed some tough cuts kind of right on that Friday afternoon time. I'm pretty confident if I can continue that same process, we'll go on another run here coming up. At least that's the plan.

Q. You hear a lot of guys say that after they contend for the first time, either in a TOUR event or a major, that hey, I learned I didn't need to be perfect. I'm sure you've heard that before, other guys say that, but is it one of those things when you have to feel it before you believe it for yourself?

JIMMY STANGER: Yeah, I think anytime your body, anytime you're experiencing something new, something you're not used to, which contending on the PGA TOUR would definitely be a new thing for me, nothing is comfortable. It's harder to do the basic little things. You think you have to be perfect in every area. I'd say that's me on the PGA TOUR and that's people at home working any job. That's you guys trying to write a big article or do something special in that way.

Ultimately after you finish it up and you look back at it and you have some time to reflect, you realize, hey, if I just do those little processes well that I've been doing for years on end, it's going to work out fine. Things are going to turn out good. If I don't let myself get caught up in the moment, we're going to be contending on the PGA TOUR, and that's pretty cool. That's the mindset that I'm trying to take this week.

You have to be in the moment a little bit because you get fooled by your nerves. You can't let it fool you. You have to kind of stick to what you know.

Q. Have you formulated a plan yet about how you're going to approach, attack the course, and if so, have you identified any particular holes that you think are

gettable?

JIMMY STANGER: Yeah, I think -- I really think playing the par-4s just trying to get the ball in the middle of the greens in two, you're going to be in a really good spot. A lot of the greens slope away from you after the front half of the green, so if you're in the middle of the green putting for birdie, even if it's from 20 or 30 feet, you're in a really good spot.

Par-3s are tough. Same thing, middle of the greens.

It's really the par-5s. If you can capitalize on the par-5s and just hang in there on the par-4s and par-3s, I think you can get after this golf course. I think that's part of what I like so much about this place.

Q. 2016 was eight years ago. Can you mention maybe just some of your other highlights as an amateur and kind of take us through a little bit where you've been as a pro getting to this rookie year here?

JIMMY STANGER: Yeah, it's pretty cool thinking back to this place. 2016, I think when I won the General Hackler here, it was sometime in March. So around that point, I know I was ranked 600th or something in the World Amateur Golf Rankings, halfway through my junior year of college. So pro golf wasn't necessarily -- I wanted to play pro golf, but I didn't know if I had the stuff. From winning the Hackler to the end of that year, I went from 600th to 10th. It was just a year that I started playing good golf and was like, when is this going to stop.

Kept playing good golf, won the Southern Am, got to the round of 16 at the U.S. Am a few weeks later. Went that fall and played some good golf, too, winning the Golf Club of Georgia, the U.S. collegiate at the Golf Club of Georgia. It just kind of started that trajectory that went forward.

The next year I won the ACC championship, which was, again, special in so many ways. That was something a year before I didn't dream of winning.

Continue from there to -- gosh, I'm trying to think how to summarize it up. Basically went through Q-School, got to the Korn Ferry TOUR in 2018, and after 2018, 2019 through 2023 last year, I finished between 30th and 50th every year on the Korn Ferry TOUR. So kept kind of sneaking my way out of the PGA TOUR I would say. I was close every year and finally broke through last year.

There was a lot of highlights along the ways, a lot of seconds to 10ths on par and finally got a win last year and got up here now.



But yeah, I'd say amateur-wise, I won here, I won two other times in college, ACCs and the Golf Club of Georgia, and then the Southern Am, played well, obviously won that tournament here, too.

Q. When you were making that jump as an amateur, did you change anything as it relates to process, practice, Coach, anything like that, or did you just start playing better?

JIMMY STANGER: That's a great question. I've tried to figure that out myself really. I'd say the biggest thing I changed was my mindset went from I want to be a pro golfer to whatever God wants me to be I'll be that way. I started going from showing up to tournaments thinking, okay, when is this going to turn around, when is this going to turn around, to I'm going to enjoy playing golf and golf is a really freaking hard game. Every time I hit a bad shot I'm going to say it's a hard game and I'm just going to move on past it and I'm going to laugh at it because you have to laugh. I think that was the biggest change that happened this year, and that's something that I'm still trying to hold to this day, where hey, golf is a hard game, you're going to hit some shots that make you look foolish, and that's what makes you enjoy those good shots even more, as opposed to maybe expecting the good shots to happen every time.

Q. When you earned your card, was this an event when you looked at the 2024 schedule that you kind of circled?

JIMMY STANGER: I remember laughing so hard whenever they announced this event. I forget exactly when. I don't think I had locked up my PGA TOUR card when they announced this event a year ago. But I remember having a good start to the year and thinking, how funny would it be if after winning here twice that I would be coming back for the third time for the three-peat in a sense for a PGA TOUR event. That's something I never would have dreamed back in 2016, especially in the inaugural event.

It's just a special place for me. It gave me chills to think that I get to come back here. Anytime this year, my rookie year, I get to go play a golf course that I've played before in the past that I'm not having to learn 100 percent Monday morning when I show up, I think that's a good advantage. We'll see what we can do with that.

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