

U.S. Open Championship 2024

Thursday, June 13, 2024

Village of Pinehurst, North Carolina, USA

Pinehurst Resort & C.C. (Course No. 2)

Aaron Rai

Flash Interview



Q. When is the last time you played this course?

AARON RAI: In the U.S. Open?

Q. Yes.

AARON RAI: 2017, Erin Hills.

Q. You had to qualify to get here, too?

AARON RAI: Yes, we did.

Q. Tell me about playing in this U.S. Open again after all these years. What is that feeling like?

AARON RAI: Yeah, incredible. Very, very happy and fortunate to be here. I mean, I went into the qualifying in Canada with pretty reasonable expectations. I hadn't really seen the course before. Now come off in a stretch of three events back to back. Knew I was playing well. Obviously played well enough to qualify.

It's amazing to be here. To play at Pinehurst is pretty special.

Q. When you put a red number on the board in the first round, what does that do for you and your confidence?

AARON RAI: Yeah, red number's a very good score in any U.S. Open. It was one of those situations where I didn't know exactly how the course would play this morning. I wasn't sure how similar it would be to yesterday and the previous days of practice.

But it's nice to get a feel for it. Obviously it's nice to have played well and pretty consistently, and as you said, a good number today.

Q. Three birdies and a couple of bogeys. What was good about your game today?

AARON RAI: Felt like all of it was pretty good. Drove it well. Felt like I hit a lot of greens, as well. Generally missed it in pretty good spots, with the exception of I think

hole No. 14.

My putting was pretty well. Held out well within kind of six feet. It all felt pretty consistent and kind of kept the score ticking along pretty well today.

Q. What did you learn in your first U.S. Open that helped you this time around?

AARON RAI: It was such a long time ago. In terms of my game, I feel it's quite different now compared to 2017. The biggest thing that I can take from it is probably preparation. I felt like I got there a little bit too early last time. Didn't play a huge amount the week before. A huge amount of travel, as well, coming from the UK to the U.S. in one trip.

Just tried to keep the practice ticking over a little bit more last week. Tried to come here on Sunday, as I normally do for events. Tried to treat the preparation as normal as possible, taking into account all the challenges the course presents.

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