

U.S. Senior Open Championship

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Newport, Rhode Island, USA
Newport Country Club

Bob Estes

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Please welcome Bob Estes to the interview room here at the 44th U.S. Senior Open hosted by Newport Country Club. Bob, 4-under 66 today, four straight birdies to start today's round. Did you feel like you were in a particular rhythm when you stepped on the 1st tee and know that might be coming?

BOB ESTES: No, not exactly. Birdieing the 1st hole is always nice. Then I made a nice putt on 2. Then I made a great iron shot on 3 and converted that one.

Then on No. 4, I pulled it a little bit, and it turned out right around the hole. Had a slippery 4-footer downhill right to left. That's one that you can three-putt if you don't make it, but luckily it went in.

So that was a great start.

Q. Could you maybe give us a bit more of a description on those opening birdies. What did you have into 1 to convert that one?

BOB ESTES: On the 1st hole, I thought I could maybe get my rescue club onto the green, but it came up a little bit short. Then I hit a good pitch shot up there within a few feet, landed it short, bumped it up there. Then made the short putt for birdie.

No. 2, I hit a good 3-wood, trying to make sure I didn't go too far down the fairway with that pin in the back left. I had a pretty good angle, but not as good as I would have liked. Then it went maybe a little bit too far.

The second shot, I actually hit just a fraction thin trying to land it into the upslope and scooted up top. It ended up a little bit past the hole and to the right, so I had about an 18-footer right to left. Broke at least a foot. Maybe couple. Made that one.

Driver, 5-iron, kind of holding it against the wind, hit it as good as I could hit it. Ended up directly below the hole.



Had about a 6- or 8-footer, something like that. I can't remember now. It was a long time ago. Made that one.

Then it was a 7-iron that I was kind of toeing it in, holding it against the wind, the wind was blowing in hard left to right with a back left pin. Pulled it a little bit so it landed between the fringe and the flag, and then hopped up, released just past the hole.

Q. Nice round today. It seems like 1, 2, and 4 are birdie holes essentially. That's how they're playing throughout the week. Is there a sense, when you start on 1, that you might need to be aggressive right away to put something in the bank for your round?

BOB ESTES: Yeah, guys are hoping to at least make birdie on 1 and maybe make eagle because some of the longer hitters can probably get on with an iron, depending on how good a tee shot or how firm it's playing.

So I came up just short, like I said, and got it up-and-down for birdie.

Then No. 2, yeah, some of the guys can -- I could have driven the green, but you don't want to hit driver and miss left. Then you've got nothing. So you have to think about what you want to do and what club to hit off the tee on No. 2 based on where the pin position is and of course the wind direction.

Then No. 4 is not necessarily a birdie hole back into that wind like that, but I did hit a very good draw 7-iron that ended up close. So I'm sure there were some more birdies on No. 4. Yeah, it's still not an easy hole.

Q. Mr. Fujita here seems to be playing flawless golf right now. What would you have to do to catch him the way he's playing right now?

BOB ESTES: Well, the way he's playing right now, I'd have to go really low tomorrow. But Sunday is Sunday. Sometimes things are a little bit different on that final day. So who knows? He might just keep it going and shoot 16-, 18-, 20-under.

But for the most part, we've got our hands full with the golf course and with the wind blowing like it is. So we can't think too much about what anybody else is doing. Not until



the last -- the back nine or the last four or five holes would you maybe do too much different playing this golf course to try to catch the leader because there's a lot of danger out there.

Q. You live in Texas. You play in the wind for most of your life probably. And it's predicted that it may blow even harder tomorrow. How do you feel about those conditions and your chances in that situation?

BOB ESTES: Yeah, so long as it's not blowing so hard that it's blowing me over, I know how to play in the wind. I've got the equipment and the golf ball to keep it down and play those shots, just like I did on No. 11. Hit a beautiful knock-down 6-iron back into the wind that stopped just about whatever it was, 10 or 12 feet short of the hole.

So I can hit it as low as I need to, so, yeah, let it blow.

Q. Just generally, how have you found it this weekend getting around the first three days, and what do you like about the golf course so far?

BOB ESTES: I think everybody loves the golf course unless the straighter -- or the straightest hitters who maybe like the fairways to be a little more narrow.

Yeah, it gives you plenty of room off the tee to drive it. There's not too many tight tee shots. So it's mostly about the approach shots and then the chipping and putting, if you miss a green.

It's a fun course to play, but it's not easy.

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