

PGA Championship

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Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Quail Hollow Club

Ryan Gerard

Flash Quotes



THE MODERATOR: Ryan Gerard is with us now at the 107th PGA Championship. Ryan, a real nice start for you today. What did you do well out there?

RYAN GERARD: Yeah, I just playing really solid for the first 16 holes and I was just really kind of keeping my ball in good spots.

Making quality swings and when I got out of position, I did a really good job of kind of giving myself a good look for par. Making something happen. Was really pleased with the majority of the round but overall a very solid start. Any time you see your name at the too much the board, especially in a major, it's a very good thing.

THE MODERATOR: Second one from me. I understand you work with Jason Baile. If you can tell us about that relationship and how influential he has been on you.

RYAN GERARD: He just walked in. So I can't say any bad things about him. He's been really good.

Obviously, you know, Coach of the Year this year, PGA of America, and there's a lot of amazing PGA of America people that have helped me along the way.

But Jason has been particularly amazing for me, especially in the last two or so years. Just kind of really helped me be more consistent with my game, and kind of raised that floor. So you know, I never really had terrible ball-striking days. They are all kind of average or really good, and it's in large part thanks to him.

Q. Your first PGA Championship, your home state and you went to school and college in this state. What does it mean to you? To me it reads like a Hollywood script. Tell me about it. It must be amazing for you.

RYAN GERARD: It's a lot of fun. It's really cool. Obviously it's nice being where I came from. You know, I feel very comfortable here. There's a lot of people here that I know and I've been fortunate enough to play this golf course a few times. And all of that is fantastic, and it's

definitely helped in the preparation.

But overall I just feel really comfortable. I love being here. It's a fantastic place. North Carolina in general, they show out for their guys in light blue. I heard so many "Go Heels" Today and just appreciate everyone that's supporting.

Q. How are you feeding off the energy of the crowd?

RYAN GERARD: It's nice when everyone is cheering you on. But it is kind of cool. I've seen so many people that I know this week that I know is going to be here and just a lot of people that are wearing the light blue, UNC logo shirts and everything out there. It's a big family of UNC Tar Heels where we all root for each other and support our own and I'm appreciative of all.

Q. Being a Tar Heel, it's regionals for the Carolina team, can you talk to Coach DiBitetto at all? Heard that 2007 this was first tournament you ever attended. Memories of falling in love with the game of golf and what this means to you?

RYAN GERARD: I did not talk to Coach DiBitetto. Unfortunately I think they came up a little short at regionals. I'm going to let them breathe a little bit.

But those guys are really, really good. All the UNC, both the players and the cave and administration, everyone is super helpful to me. In terms of this golf tournament in 2007, first time I ever stepped foot on a PGA TOUR event as a fan was three or four name changes ago.

But I just remember going out Saturday, I believe. Watched Tiger and Vijay Singh battle down the stretch for me as a young kid, that really was just starting to get into competitive golf and really loving the game; it was surreal, almost, to see those two guys kind of doing it.

This place is awesome. We came out here a decent amount in school, and they were nice enough to have me play here in 2023 in the Wells Fargo when I was a special temporary member.

So I have a lot of respect for the people here and they

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have done great things for me in my career.

Q. Given that you play a lot of golf in Carolina, and there are a lot of different conditions here in the States, and there's overseed this week, when you get wet conditions like this, what's the biggest challenge, like around the green, in terms of the types of shots you're going to play and how did it play out there today?

RYAN GERARD: Usually when you kind of get that grainy bermuda when it's wet, it's just really going to dig. So it's all about ball-first contact.

This Tahoma grass that they have in the surrounds a little bit easier. You can put through it in certain spots if you don't love it.

But it reacts really kind of firm, and you have to make good contact. But it needs a little bit of more pop to it if you're going to bounce through it. So you've got to really trust the shots and hit your spots if you're going to bounce through it.

But yeah, it's very comfortable for me, kind of in this environment. I mean, I grew up playing golf through pine trees and overseed is a newer thing but we play a lot of overseed in professional golf. So everything is very comfortable this week.

Q. Could you take us through that stretch, I know there's not a circle on your score at 9 but that's got to feel good to make par there, and then you run off four straight birdies. Can you take us through the clubs you hit there?

RYAN GERARD: I got 43rd Ryder Cup bunker on 7 to make birdie and that was a pretty easy up-and-down. Then kind of flubbed a bunker shot on 8 and made par. So I wasn't particularly happy.

9 is a brute this week. They bumped that tee box way back. I got a little extra off the tee which got me down there. I had 215-ish and it was downwind. I hit a 7-iron that came out about 15, 20 feet short. Lagged it up there.

15, striped it down the fairway. Had 282-ish to the pin. Hit a 3-wood pretty much right at it, and it just kind of rolled off to the right side. Just bumped it kind of out of that collection area to about four feet or so.

11, hit another really good drive kind of down the left side of the fairway. Had 170, actual was like 176 adjusted. Hit an 8-iron kind of up there about 15, 20 feet right of it, and kind of wiggled that one in down the slope.

12, I hit another good drive in the fairway. Had 157 yards, I would say, and hit a pitching wedge about pin-high, nine or so feet right. Made it.

13 was feeling pretty good about the shot. It was 208 or 210 adjusted, and kind of down out of the right and just hit a really nice 7-iron and kind of off the face felt really good. Landed perfect and rolled up there real nice.

Q. I wanted to ask you about another North Carolina guy who is playing really well at the moment, Alex Smalley. You grew up in the same area as him. How well do you know him and did you ever play together while coming up?

RYAN GERARD: Yeah, I know Alex really well. He's a great kid. He's a little bit more quiet but he's fantastic. I mean, you've got to kind of dig into him a little bit, and he'll give you something back. But he's fantastic.

Unfortunately he went to Duke. So you know, I can't be too nice to him.

But we grew up playing a lot of junior golf events, kind of in the triangle, Triad area of North Carolina. He's about an hour away from me. We would always play in the same groups or similar. He was always a little bit older. They grouped us by age group. I was up there in age, and he was younger in the next age group.

Yeah, I played with him dozens of times in junior golf and a couple times in college.

Q. And when you look up at the leaderboard at the end of the day, does it give you any additional pride to know that, hey, two of the top four guys are from North Carolina?

RYAN GERARD: A little bit. I mean, it's just cool to see, you know, guys that you know growing up with playing well.

And you know, when you're kind of young and getting into it, and you're like one day I want to play in major championships, and I want to play, you know, at the highest level, it's kind of a dream.

But to make that become a reality and see it be a reality for other guys that were alongside of you and working hard kind of next to you, and you could kind of see all that pay off, it is a little bit extra special.

Q. How would you scribe your season to date?



RYAN GERARD: Solid. I feel like I've playing really solid for a lot of stretches, and I had a couple higher finishes but I'd say for the most part, I've been kind of just hovering in that 15 to 30 range a lot of weeks. That's not a bad thing.

But you know, I'm kind of looking to kind of step on the gas here. I feel like I'm playing better golf sometimes than what the results are showing, and you know, that's definitely something that I've got to learn from and score a little bit better sometimes.

But I feel like over the course of a season, that stuff kind of evens out. You know, the bounces kind of even out. The shots kind of even out. I feel like I've played a lot of really good golf recently and haven't gotten quite as much out of it. I'm hoping to continue the good golf and hope to get a little bit more out of it.

Q. What's the biggest change you've made to the swing since starting with your coach?

RYAN GERARD: I don't think I've really made a ton -- he's back there shaking his head. I have not really made a ton of swing changes. We do just little small setup kind of tweaks and checks and some angles work, and just really making sure that everything is dialed in.

I mean, I had a really good foundation with Carl Lauren, and Jason has really done a good job building on that. You know, there's a lot of good things that both of them taught me kind of just about myself. So when I get out there in the middle of a round, if I feel a little bit off or I feel like things are going a certain way, I can just kind of circle back to the basics, do a little small adjustment or kind of just understand what's going wrong or what I might need to do to change it, and so I can get back on track.

Q. Do you remember what you were doing the week of the PGA when it was here in 2017?

RYAN GERARD: That was my first week of college. I think I was moving into my dorm room. And then we came out here like the week after the PGA to play like a round as a team, kind of one of their first rounds of the season, was one of my first rounds as a college golfer and the grandstands were still up. So we thought that was pretty cool.

I'll give you a fun anecdote. In 2018, so six months after the PGA we came out here as preparation for the NCAA nationals and our coach made all six of us go on 18 tee and everyone had to play the 18th hole until all six made a par and at the same time in the same group.

So we were out there for quite a while. I learned a lot

about the 18th hole on that day and I hope that carries forward into this week.

Q. How do you define "quite a while"?

RYAN GERARD: I want to say it took like four or five times. Like we'd go, all six of us would play the hole as a group, three guys would make bogey, go back to the tee, all six of us would play, two guys would make bogey. And then you just didn't want to be that one guy that had like the 10-footer for par that missed it for everyone to go back.

So I mean, it probably took an hour or so but it was fun and we did make it happen eventually. We weren't going to leave unless we made that happen.

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