



Aaron Rai

Quick Quotes

Thursday, April 10, 2025

Q. Aaron, nice playing today. How did it feel to be out there and have a nice under-par round to start?

AARON RAI: Yeah, really good start overall. Without playing this course under competitive conditions before, it's very difficult to figure out how the course is going to play in the flow of it.

We did a nice amount of practice at the start of the week in February, but I really didn't know how the course was going to play just with that lack of experience. Yeah, very, very pleased with how it went overall today.

Q. When you have that kind of start, what are you thinking? You found more of a dream start to your first nine?

AARON RAI: Yeah, definitely beyond expectations. Played really nicely. Holed a couple of nice putts for birdie and a couple of nice putts to keep the round going early on.

I tried not to get too far ahead of myself, but I knew there were some difficult holes coming up, especially around the midsection of this round, around 12 and 13.

Tried to stay as present as possible, and the course definitely called me out on that middle section today.

Yeah, great start and great first round overall.

Q. How much different did the course play from your practice rounds to today?

AARON RAI: We had a little bit of everything in the practice round. Got here on Sunday, and the greens were very firm, pretty fast as well.

Had a lot of rain on Monday.

Tuesday was extremely soft.

I feel like we've had a little bit of everything over the last three or four days.

Again, there was a bit of firmness on the greens. The greens definitely felt faster. The fairways were a little bit tight as well. Nothing wildly different, but just different enough to create a challenge.

Q. A 2-under par start is a great start over here at Augusta National, but tell me about the time when you first came in February to play a practice round over here and then when you came for the week. What were the thoughts on absolutely on the first time that you came in -- because you've been telling me it's your first dream tournament to play, your first Masters.

AARON RAI: Yeah, extremely special. My dad came over from the UK as well for a couple of weeks to see this place, to

have a look at it together, and that was amazing to share it with him.

We definitely enjoyed a few moments around here at some of the iconic holes and pieces of it.

We tried to get into the golf course as much as possible and really look at what the course presented. Obviously we both saw a lot of it on TV over the years, but it's always different kind of getting a real feel and sense for it in person.

We tried to have a good two days, played nine holes each day, and really took our time to try and understand as much as we could in two days. But at the same time, it's a place that you can never have enough experience. I think every time you play it you'll always learn something.

Yeah, I was under no illusion that I'd feel experienced coming into it, but it was good overall. And great to share it with my dad.

Q. So you had a great first round, and yesterday there was such a beautiful moment of your girlfriend hitting the ball inside you and making you caddie. Can you just talk us through that? Is she professional? That swing was amazing.

AARON RAI: Yeah, it was great to share it with her. It's not the only time that she hit it inside me. She got me, I think, three times during the round. Yeah, she played great.

Yes, she plays professionally. Just amazing to be sharing it with her also.

Q. What tour does she play on?

AARON RAI: She plays a little bit on the Indian Tour and a little bit on the LET.

Q. Your warmup doesn't seem to last super long. It's pretty efficient. Just wondering what your approach is to pre round preparation immediately before?

AARON RAI: Today was actually a little different to how I normally prepare. It was quite different having the pins early in the morning versus last evening, which is what we usually have on the PGA TOUR. Kind of cut the warmup a little bit shorter as a result.

But just try and hit a few putts just to get a feel for it, a feel for how the green speeds are as well to chip to, and just enough fore shots to play some shapes and to kind of get the body moving. So I usually take between an hour and an hour and 15 to warmup.

Q. And why did you cut it short exactly. Why did you cut your warmup shorter than usual today?

AARON RAI: We had an early tee time. We started off at 8:50. I think the pins came out at 6:30, so when kind of planning the course and doing the pins it just took longer. So kind of factored that in to just keeping the warmup shorter.

Q. Before you hit the range, what does that look like? Before you hit the range, what are you doing to warm yourself up?

AARON RAI: Do quite a bit of stretching before every tournament round. Probably around 20 minutes, 20 to 30 minutes of stretching, and usually a 5 to 10 minute dynamic warmup. It lasts anywhere from 30 to 40 minutes.

Q. Did you look at the leaderboard at any point in time today?

AARON RAI: I looked at it towards the end. I think around 16 or 17.

Q. (No microphone.)

AARON RAI: No, I didn't look at it that section. It was quite an interesting round getting off to a good start and then

felt we dropped a lot of shots in the midsection by dropping three shots in a row. So just thought I'd look at the leaderboard just to kind of get a sense of perspective overall that we're still in a good position even though it 1-, 2-under par. I had to look at it on the green of No. 16.

Q. (Regarding Gaurika.)

AARON RAI: Yes.

Q. Of course I know her. We all know her.

Q. Can you take us through how you played 12 and what your mindset was when you got through?

AARON RAI: Obviously 12, extremely tricky. I was just trying to play through the middle of the game. That whole section between 11, 12, and 13, just a very challenging part of the course. You've really got to execute your shots and try to miss it in the right spots if you do miss it.

Yeah, didn't play them badly particularly, but just didn't -- yeah, short game wasn't quite good enough to kind of keep the round going during that section.

Q. (No microphone.)

AARON RAI: We ended up in the bunker, the front bunker.

Q. Are there any holes out here where you drastically change the height of your tee just given how the hole is?

AARON RAI: We've only done it once so far, which was on hole No. 15, just to lower the tee to take a little bit of spin off. We usually try to play different flights with the driver off the same height of tee. So I feel like it requires a lot of different tee shots, a lot of different flights and shapes.

Generally, I keep the same tee height for 95 percent of it.

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