

CME Group Tour Championship

Friday, December 18, 2020

Naples, Florida, USA

Tiburón Golf Club

Austin Ernst

Flash Interview

THE MODERATOR: What a great round. Second round under your belt. How do you feel now that you've got two rounds left?

AUSTIN ERNST: Game feels good. I looked up at the leaderboard a few times and saw they were only at 8-under, so hopefully don't get too far away from me.

It was nice to just shoot another solid round.

Q. You started off 1 with a bogey, but then you came back really quickly with two birdies back to back. When would you say the momentum started kicking in for you today?

AUSTIN ERNST: I think pretty early. Hit a really good shot into 3. Hit it to about three feet and then hit another really good shot into 4 and actually hit a really good shot into 5; just misread the putt a little bit.

But made a good par save on 6. I drove it kind of in the right bushes on 6 and ended up making par there.

I just took advantage when I did hit a good shot. I had a lot of really close iron shots today and that's where my birdies came from, and then the rest of the day I just plotted along and made a few putts here and there.

It was just a solid round overall.

Q. You mentioned your strong irons. Would you say that's the strongest part of your game right now, or all around just great right now?

AUSTIN ERNST: I think everything is solid. Today it was nice to hit some really quality iron shots and have some kind of easy look at birdies.

You kind of need to be able to make a lot birdies out here. We kind of get a lot of wedges and you got a couple par-5s that you can reach in two, so you need to be able to go low because you have a lot of holes that play tough.



But luckily I made birdie on 3 and 4 and those are two of the hardest holes kind of at the beginning of the round.

Q. You may be one of the only players who almost shot two rounds bogey-free. What is it about this course that just fits your game so well?

AUSTIN ERNST: I been driving it really well, and out here you hit it in the fairway or you're in the junk, in the bushes.

So I've driven it pretty well, and then I think since my iron play has been so good I've been able to leave myself in good position and attack pins, and when I haven't, I've left myself in a good enough place where I could get it up and down.

Q. You mentioned the leaderboard. Do you normally look at the leaderboard or does it depend on the day?

AUSTIN ERNST: It's nice that there are leaderboards here. This year has been weird with not having leaderboards. I just glance at them. I just kind of like to know where I stand.

But out here you kind of know you need to make birdies. Especially with 17 at the end of the round. You've got a chance to reach that one in two and maybe get an eagle. You just kind of need to keep the pedal down.

Q. The last question I have is two more rounds left. What do you think will be the most difficult part if they change the hole locations, or what do you think will be a challenge in the next two days?

AUSTIN ERNST: I think just wind direction. I think the wind is supposed to switch, so it'll be interesting to see how different holes might play a little bit easier. The beginning of the round might play a little bit shorter than it has with the north wind if it switches to the south, but then you'll have a few of these holes coming in. 17, 18 will kind of be into the wind.

So the wind kind of dictates where you can attack and what kind of clubs you have in your hand. So I think they'll tuck some pins, but the wind is kind of going to dictate when you have a shorter iron and when you can go at pins.



