

Masters Tournament

Thursday, April 7, 2022

Augusta, Georgia, USA

Danny Willett

Quick Quotes



Q. Danny, 69's your best opening round at the Masters. Talk me through what went well today.

DANNY WILLETT: I didn't get in too much trouble. I got lucky on the 1st with a mud ball trying to move it around the tree, so it was a little bit tricky. Just a really good clean round of golf in what is really tricky conditions. We all know you're not going to be that far off around this golf course to make it really difficult for yourself.

Got out of position a couple of times and kind of hit it into the areas where it would give us the best chance statistically. We had a good up-and-down. You don't always do it, but we kept it relatively stress free the last 11, 12 holes, after a great 4 on 6.

Yeah, the wind was swirling. It was blowing. It was lying down. It's a tricky enough day.

Q. Did you sense you were going to be playing well when you came here? Did you feel that this was on the cusp?

DANNY WILLETT: Things have been trending nicely. We're playing nice. The body's good. And this place lends itself to the certain golf shots that we've been trying to work on and trying to hit. It doesn't mean you're going to hit them obviously, but it's always nice when the kinds of things you've been working for and what you've been working at kind of pay off.

It doesn't mean they're going to pay off the next three days, but it's always nice to get a good start around this place.

Q. Danny, as a champion here previously, how much does that experience play a factor when you're out here?

DANNY WILLETT: Yeah, a little bit. So it was quite a lot of Sunday pins out here today, I thought. It was just a tricky enough day with how the wind was, trying to get to a few of them front flags bumping downwind and stuff. Augusta always gives you the opportunity to get it close. They give you banks to use, but if you miss them,

you can be in some pretty big trouble.

The memories are always nice. You kind of remember certain breaks, certain putts, but by the same token every year Augusta National sort of change little things. That's why we play Monday through Wednesday to kind of get to know.

There's a few more changes again this week. The golf course is playing probably the longest it's played, especially with how wet it's been. So, yeah, it's surprising to see Cam at 6, but yeah, 3's a lovely start.

Q. Did you get any kind of jolt of confidence earlier this week maybe at the Champions Dinner and just kind of coming back to this place?

DANNY WILLETT: Actually, it is nice to be back. It is just really nice to be back on property. Came Saturday, played Sunday with a friend of mine and Jimmy Dunne and Frank, who are members here. Just good vibes.

You can't come to this place and not wake up every morning with a smile on your face. I think it's impossible. It's impossible for the players, and I think it's impossible for the 25,000 patrons who come and walk round here every day. It's a pretty special place.

It's nice we can bring the nice work we've been doing and bring it here, and it does kind of give you that little bit of butterflies still walking around this place.

Q. You talked about working certain shots. Was that certain shots for here that you've been thinking about working on in the buildup just right before here?

DANNY WILLETT: Just knowing how this place kind of plays. Knowing the fact that, if you can drive the ball well and you can hit driver a lot, you gain an advantage coming into these greens. So really trying to work on controlling ball flight with driver in the crosswinds.

A lot of the visuals out here, you can't really sense. Until you stand on the tee box, no one can tell you today to hit the fairway on 18 today is very, very tough. We

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had three great drives, and I was just in the right semi, and the two guys, Jason was in the right fairway, and Talor was in the middle. But me and Jason are still bending it 25 yards around the corner trees because you can't get far enough up today because it's into the wind.

So just certain visuals that play certain tricks with you and trying to get the start lines really tight. I was hitting a fade and were trying to get back to that. Trying to get the start line really tight to the left tree lines.

Q. How about that putt on 9? Was that a bit of experience?

DANNY WILLETT: You know it's going to come in. You know you've got to stop it at the top of the hill. This place kind of helps, the cheers and stuff, because it gives you opportunities to do things that look a little bit crazy on TV, but actually it does every time. So it's not a fluke. That's kind of where it will be. When you get ones like that, it's good fun.

Q. When you're playing so well again here, do you get the flashbacks to '16? Do you get that feeling again?

DANNY WILLETT: I'm not quite sure I'd ever get that feeling again, but like I said, there's a lot of Sunday pins out today. The one on 9 was very similar to a Sunday pin, so you kind of know how that break's going to come back in. 8 was similar to a Sunday pin. 7 is off in a Sunday pin, the one on 6. There was a lot of really tricky pins today.

With the weather how it's been, if the greens had been firm, they would have had to change a few of those pins around. With the weather the way it's been, they tucked them away a little bit to protect that score just a fraction. So we'll see.

Q. Did you already do a shoe change? Or did you play in that?

DANNY WILLETT: No, I played in that.

Q. How did you keep them so clean?

DANNY WILLETT: OCD.

Q. Danny, given what's happened for you since you've won, is there any part of you that feels you've got a point to prove to come back here?

DANNY WILLETT: No. If you come back to a golf course like this -- because, again, you're at the same venue every year and you come back with your game

ready, hitting the shots that you know you're going to need and you're capable.

I think that's why you see quite a few more winners around here often spaced a while apart because the golf course gets longer, but you still remember certain breaks, certain putts that guys who have played it once or twice might not see or might not ordinarily know.

So I think playing this place over and over and getting more used to it, I think really helps. Jordan won on his first or second time out. We won on our second time out. And even since then, I'm still learning little nuances the golf course gives you.

I think it's just a constant -- they try to change it a fraction, like I said, every year. They hollow out areas to make banks bigger. They'll raise it in sections to give you another area to train into, but you're always making notes and you're always taking from years gone by.

It's just a great place to come back to and hit shots that you've seen in the past.

Q. You seem a bit surprised to see 6 leading right now. He's not in the house yet, but how good a day is that?

DANNY WILLETT: It's not even 6, is it? He's 8 since the 4th. I mean, we played real solid golf. Jason played nice with us. You've seen Scottie's at 3. Sungjae's off to a nice start. It's windy out here. It's not drying out fully, fully on the greens, but it's going to get that way later in the day.

For him, he'll be able to get in the house and enjoy his afternoon watching.

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