

PGA Championship

Thursday, May 18, 2023

Rochester, New York, USA

Oak Hill Country Club

Michael Block

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Michael Block joins us after his opening round, even par-70 at the 105th PGA Championship. Michael, how would you summarize your first round today?

MICHAEL BLOCK: I was expecting that. My goal was even-par. I feel like I can shoot even par at pretty much any course in the world. I figured, why want today?

I was lucky enough to come off that double on 10, which was very disappointing because I didn't feel like I hit any bad shots and ended up recovering with a couple of birdies after that with a little bounce-back.

Finishing at even par, I don't know where that stands right now, but I feel like it's pretty good here, and I feel like I could do that another three days. I'm looking forward to it.

Q. Was there a pep talk the 11th tee?

MICHAEL BLOCK: Oh, absolutely. I don't like to lose, much less make doubles. When I made that double without really hitting a bad shot, I told my caddie, I go, we've got a couple of birdie holes coming up.

I was looking forward to it. I knew I was going to be on the television coverage on hole 14 with a couple of the guys on ESPN, and I didn't want to go into that being three or four over, honestly.

So I made those couple of birdies and got in there. I think I was 1-over at that point, and I was happy about that.

Q. What were the birdies coming in? What was the highlight there?

MICHAEL BLOCK: A couple good putts. I hit it close. I think that was on 15. I birdied -- I took a driver off of, what is that 10, 11, 12 where I normally wouldn't in the practice rounds, but it was, like, 270 over the bunker. I was, like, I'm sending it, and I stuck it to 10 feet. I saw Hayden make a birdie, and I followed him up from about 10 feet away.

On the par-5 I hit a horrible 3-wood. I was trying to cover the bunkers on the right, heeled a little bit and went in the lip of the bunker. Had about a foot in front of me, and I hit a full 9-iron out of there to the front left pin. Hit probably one of the best bunker shots of my life to about, I don't know, 8 feet and made a little downhill right-to-left putt for birdie there as well to make it two in a row to get back to 1-over.

Then it was a good day. Yeah, it was awesome.

Q. It looks like two different guys playing the front and the back. Who was the guy playing the front, and who was the guy playing the back?

MICHAEL BLOCK: Well, the guy made the double 2 on 10, which doesn't have any marks on it. Outside of that, yeah, like I said, I'm not very happy at all being over par in my life no matter where I am. When I'm even 1-over, whether it's at a PGA Championship or at home playing against my kids, I'm just -- I need to get back. It's just how I am.

So I made sure that I got back to even par, and I did, and I don't care if it's at a major or in a skins game on Tuesday back at my home club, it's just how I roll. Honestly, it's how I'm going to play the next three days.

Q. It you got on the first tee, did you have any idea what was happening? Top players in the world going plus-6, plus-5.

MICHAEL BLOCK: We had the big delay, so we teed off pretty late. We were sitting on the couch earlier today with all my friends. I said, I think 4-under is going to be leading today. I told them that. I really truly believed it, and it looks like that's what's happening.

I knew even par is going to be a good score after four days. This is playing kind of a mock PGA Championship/U.S. Open right now. I know I think last year maybe 5-under won at Southern Hills. I see that kind of same number, if not maybe closer to level par after this week. I plan on being there.



Q. What did you think of the walk and talk with SVP?

MICHAEL BLOCK: Great. For them to ask me to do that as a club professional, I remember I think I was watching, was it JT or Max in the Masters walking and doing it. Sitting on my couch here a month ago, when they asked me the other day, I go, wow, that's pretty cool that they want a club professional to do that. I really made it my prerogative to be on that hole on 14 and not in an embarrassing score. I really -- it was one of my goals of the day.

I got there at 1-over, and I thought this is cool. Then I made par and missed an easy couple of birdie putts, and I stuck it there on a couple of holes later on 16 and got back to level and finished off the day nicely with a couple of pars.

Q. So you have a prediction about what's going to happen with the tournament in general. What do you think is going to happen with the club pros? How many are going to make the cut, and what would be the best score?

MICHAEL BLOCK: I honestly have no idea where anybody stands outside of myself at this point, but I would love to see multiple club pros make the cut like they did a couple of years ago. I've never made the cut. This is my fifth one.

I'm aligned to do it. I've got the game to do it, I know. I will do it this week. I hope there's another couple of guys to give me a run at the low club professional for the week because a big goal of mine this week is to be on the 18th green on Sunday receiving the low club professional with the champion of the tournament.

Q. Where do you get your competitive fire? Where does that come from?

MICHAEL BLOCK: I have no idea, honestly. My whole life I grew up playing baseball, tennis, and golf at the end. Just the golf, in general, though, however my game has been over the last ten years, anything with a plus sign next to it is very disappointing. Honestly, it pisses me off. I can't handle it.

So I will practice and do whatever I can to make sure that I don't do that. It should work out well in a major more than when I play in the American Express when I was 8-under through my three rounds and missed the cut.

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