

Senior PGA Championship

Congressional Country Club

Bethesda, Maryland, USA

Friday, May 23, 2025

Birk Nelson

Quick Quotes



THE MODERATOR: Here with Birk Nelson here at the 2015 Senior PGA Championship. Walk us through your round out there. 2-under on the day; how was it?

BIRK NELSON: Okay, so how was it? I'm going to go back to yesterday. So yesterday I shot 75, but man, I left a lot of putts out there. I hit the ball really good. Didn't putt very well. My goal going into today was try to make some more putts. It's hard to turn around in golf when you're not doing something well, and I was hoping to find something this morning on the putting green that I didn't feel like I did. So I went out early and I feel like -- let me remember this round. I three-putted the third hole to go 1-over. I pulled a short putt.

So I had to think about things a little bit, stew on, stew on my stroke, what it felt like, where I needed to make some correction. Then I did. Basically I felt like I just wasn't accelerating enough through the stroke.

Once again, I was still hitting the ball well. So from then on in, just trying to get a feel of trying to accelerate through my strokes, going through the round hitting good shots, and it all started coming together on No. 7 when I made a nice little putt for birdie on that par-3 into the wind. Just a little great putt, gave me some confidence. So I was really excited.

I hit a good tee shot on 8 so I was hoping to knock it in there tight on 8 to make another putt, keep that momentum going, but instead I holed it for a 2 so I had a nice little eagle on that hole. So that put me at 2-under for the round and feeling pretty good about where I was, where I was sitting.

Now, I still had a lot of golf left, of course. I think I bogeyed 9 and then went into the back nine feeling pretty good. I had a nice two-putt on 10, rolled in a good birdie on 11 and felt really comfortable the round out.

Q. What is the wind doing right now, blowing everywhere, blowing --

BIRK NELSON: Not everywhere, but it kind of picked up more on the back nine, definitely. The front nine was a little bit more calm. The back nine it picked up, especially when you get exposed on those upper holes up there. I grew up in wind, I play well in wind, so I don't mind it at all. I played well last year at the Senior Open where I took 16th and that was a really windy golf course, so the wind plays in my favor.

Q. What is Orange Whip?

BIRK NELSON: Orange Whip is a golf training aid. We've been around for a long time, a lot of people have in their golf bags that teaches rhythm, tempo and balance, fantastic training aid. In fact, my caddie was the inventor of the Orange Whip.

There's a good story. He used to caddie on the PGA TOUR and then he used to give golf lessons, and then he wanted to develop a training aid to help his students feel the swings that he was seeing on TOUR. So that was really the genesis of where the Orange Whip came up.

Q. Why did you take all that time off from golf?

BIRK NELSON: It's a good question. So I was a head pro, and I love being a head pro. It was really fun. But in Oregon you give up your weekends. You give up your holidays. You give up your summertime to be a head pro, and it's hard to be a father, especially a good father, and be a head pro in Oregon, the father that I wanted to be.

So I really decided to get out of golf even though I loved it so much to be around my kids more. Makes me teary. So it was great. It was a good decision.

But I realized you've got to have passion in your life. You've got to enjoy what you're doing. It's good to be good at what you're doing and try to find a way to make a living at it. Now, once again, I love being a head pro. I wouldn't mind going back and doing that again. But once my kids are graduated out of high school and gone. But right now I enjoy being a father better.



Q. How old were they when you --

BIRK NELSON: Oh, boy, like one and three.

Q. Boys, girls?

BIRK NELSON: A boy and a girl.

Q. How old are they now?

BIRK NELSON: I've got a 16 -- no, 15 and 17.

Q. Where were you a head pro at?

BIRK NELSON: Diamond Woods Golf Course. It's a public golf course near Eugene, Oregon, in Junction City, Oregon.

Q. You were a Beaver?

BIRK NELSON: I was, yes, Oregon State.

Q. Did you ever think about playing pro golf?

BIRK NELSON: You know, I did. I played mini-tours for a long time, and unfortunately I felt like my best golf was in college when I was playing really good, and by the time I hit the mini-tours, I wasn't hitting the ball as well as I was in college. I feel like the -- if I go back, we can all be retrospective, but my senior year in college, I decided to red shirt to develop physically and mentally to be the best golfer I could be, and I feel like honestly when I look back that probably wasn't my best decision because I ended up spending the year working on a golf swing that wasn't broken.

So I had a good season my senior year but I didn't have the momentum that I had come out of my junior year going into professional golf. I was just sort of a starving artist out there just playing every mini-tour imaginable trying to make ends meet, and at some point you realize that you have to make a living. So that's when I went and became a head pro at diamond Woods Golf Course.

Q. Do you incorporate the Orange Whip into all your instruction?

BIRK NELSON: I definitely do, yes, without a doubt. So I do teach, just so you know. I work for the Orange Whip, but I teach at Shadow Hills Country Club, also in Eugene, Oregon. So the Orange Whip I use with my students just to help develop balance and rhythm and tempo, really the whole genesis or the reason the Orange Whip exists.

Q. When you stepped away for seven years as head

pro, what did you do?

BIRK NELSON: IT sales. It was interesting but wasn't my passion.

Q. Deciding to play competitively now, where did that come from?

BIRK NELSON: I love competitive golf. I always have. That was from college on. So when I got back into the PGA, part of that reason was to get back into competitive golf. I find it so fulfilling, and I love situations like this, like today, just the big stage where you can just intensity focus and hit good shots or not hit good shots, but really it puts me in my happy place.

Q. Your favorite course at Bandon?

BIRK NELSON: Oh, it depends -- any day I play, it changes which day I play. Last time I played it, I think it was Old Mac. But before that it was Pacific, and then I love Bandon Dunes and I love Bandon Trails. It's hard for me to pick. Every time I go it's a different course.

Q. Have you played the new one, the short one?

BIRK NELSON: Oh, the short one, not the Preserve, the par-3?

Q. No, there's Shorty's --

BIRK NELSON: Yes, no, I haven't played the Shorty's.

Q. Sheep Ranch is the 18 --

BIRK NELSON: I played Sheep Ranch, yeah. Not my favorite.

Q. You qualified through the national championship last year?

BIRK NELSON: I did. I did.

Q. Did it feel like a little bit of a home game for you?

BIRK NELSON: Pardon me again?

Q. Sun River is not too far from you, is it?

BIRK NELSON: No because I had never played that course. I maybe played it early like in my 20s, but I didn't know that course very well, other than growing up in Oregon and kind of knowing that area. I didn't feel like it was too much of a home course advantage because I didn't really know the course. But I qualified the year



before down there.

Q. Are your kids golfers?

BIRK NELSON: Yes, they are. I'm remarried, and so we have -- my wife has a daughter and a son, and I have a daughter and a son.

Get this story. So our kids are freshmen, sophomore, junior, senior in high school. Her son is 16. My son is 17. They're both golfers. So they love it. They love it a lot.

Q. Same school?

BIRK NELSON: Same school, yeah.

Q. You've got to like where you are through 36 holes?

BIRK NELSON: I wish I would have puttred yesterday. But yes, I'm happy -- the first goal as a club pro is to make the cut, and then making the cut, I feel like I can make a charge. I was hoping to go lower today. My goal was even par total for the tournament, so I was one off of that. But if I can keep that momentum going, I feel like I can be several under par on this golf course. You've got to drive it well, you've got to hit your irons really well, you've got to chip well, you've got to putt well, but I feel like I'm really close with all that stuff.

Q. Are you surprised the scoring is as low as it's been?

BIRK NELSON: Yes. These guys are so good. I go on the range and I hear the ball coming off their club face, so part of me is not surprised because they can spin it. They hit it so high and hard, it's beautiful. But the practice rounds, when I get done with the practice rounds, I was like, man, this course is so hard, and then once I got in the tournament, you're hitting -- it's different golf. The course is a little bit softer from the rain, but you just start hitting more quality golf shots, and that's where I feel like I am right now. I'm hitting some really nice irons into the greens and getting the ball to stop. I'm hitting my distance. That's really the key for me this week is distance control.

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