

John Deere Classic

Thursday, July 4, 2024

TPC Deere Run

Silvis, Illinois, USA

Sami Valimaki

Quick Quotes

THE MODERATOR: How would you assess your opening round with a 61, career low?

SAMI VALIMAKI: I played really awesome. From tee to green whole day was really good. Of course putter needs to be good if you want to shoot low. From tee-to-green that was the key.

Q. What's it like to shoot a career low but still not the round of day with Hayden shooting a 59?

SAMI VALIMAKI: Yeah, still happy. I saw him actually in I think it was my seventh hole. I was like, okay, I need to keep shooting lower and lower.

Quite didn't catch it, but still a good round.

Q. Three straight birdies to close. What was the mentality heading into 16?

SAMI VALIMAKI: I actually -- we had a pretty good club on the 8 -- on 16, 8 club, and just hit perfect golf shot.

And then of course the last hole, nice putt to finish. (Smiling.)

Q. That putt right there, did you think it had a chance? When did you think it had a chance?

SAMI VALIMAKI: Almost right away when I saw it. I was like, okay, this is the day it's just going to go in.

Q. Sami, you saw when you woke up this morning not much wind; it's lift, clean, and place today. What's the mindset? Low score automatic day?

SAMI VALIMAKI: I was still thinking like if I can shoot 4-, 5-under that should be pretty good and keep that one for the week.

But then of course kind of getting hot start, hitting nicely, so that kind of keep me going. Played solid.



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Q. The bogey didn't seem to bother you either.

SAMI VALIMAKI: No, I mean, the 6 birdie was really good. Nice bounceback, so it's always kind of turn it around. Sometimes if you make those easy bogeys it might turn the day wrong way.

Q. This was your career low round. Was this your best round of golf? Did it feel like your best round of golf out there?

SAMI VALIMAKI: Yeah, I would say it was. I mean, it was so easy whole day kind of. Not many missed shots, and if I miss it it was always in kind of right spot.

So I didn't have any issues today.

Q. The one bogey, correct?

SAMI VALIMAKI: Yeah, I did, but I still feel like we had a little bit tough read for the wind.

I feel like we hit a good shot and the wind just didn't help. Finished on the front bunker.

But even that one, it was easy day.

Q. You got to the golf course this afternoon, saw the 59 posted. Did that change your approach to the day at all?

SAMI VALIMAKI: Yeah, saw that in the seventh green so I decided, okay, I need to make more and more birdies.

Q. Talk to me real quick. You have played in the Olympics once, correct?

SAMI VALIMAKI: Yeah.

Q. And you're qualified for this year?

SAMI VALIMAKI: Yeah.

Q. Talk about that experience and what it means for you guys to be playing golf in the Olympics.

SAMI VALIMAKI: Of course it's awesome to represent your own country. Last time it was in Tokyo '21.



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I feel like that we couldn't get the best experience because the golf course was two hours away from The Village so we stayed in the hotel and it was the COVID year.

I'm looking forward this year staying in The Village and seeing as many athletes as I can.

Q. How does the Olympic Games being where they are on the calendar affect your PGA TOUR or golf, professional golf schedule?

SAMI VALIMAKI: I would say they're really bad in the position right now because I'm going to go next week to Scotland, play The Open, and then I am not coming back here for 3M, then it's Olympics, and then we have the Wyndham. So if I wanted to come here, it's one week here, one week back there, one week here. Could be better.

Q. Are you on the charter flight to the Scottish Open from Sunday here then?

SAMI VALIMAKI: Yeah.

Q. Talk about that as a perk. What does that mean for you guys to have that access to that flight from here?

SAMI VALIMAKI: Of course it makes life so much easier. I was actually thinking I need to go to Chicago and fly from there to London to Edinburgh. Right now it's easier, so I'm happy they do that one.

Q. Did that at all factor into your decision to come and play here this week?

SAMI VALIMAKI: No, I didn't know before two weeks ago they had the charter so I was sure to come here.

Q. Talk about the adjustment coming from Europe and getting used to playing on the PGA TOUR. How would you say that's gone for you this season?

SAMI VALIMAKI: I would say it's getting better and better. Of course the start we play couple of those tougher courses like Torrey Pines.

In the same breathe, I feel like over there I feel like, okay, my game is enough over here because that was kind of one of the toughest setup for the year.

That kind of give me good confidence as well. Sometimes it's hard, and of course when you don't know the courses so you need to learn every week.

Q. Give an assessment of this course. This is the first time you played here, correct?

SAMI VALIMAKI: Yeah.

Q. What did you like about the course? How does it set up, fit your game?

SAMI VALIMAKI: I actually said I missed the cut last week and we had a really good wedge session with my caddie on the Saturday, and after that we been hammering them.

I feel like now I feel like I actually use them really well. Hitting a lot of good wedges, and of course it plays bit soft, so that's why you have so many scorable holes.

Q. Did you come in early after missing the cut last week? Were you here over the weekend?

SAMI VALIMAKI: Yeah, I travel here Sunday but first day was Monday on the course.

Q. Considering the ups and downs of your rookie year on TOUR, how gratifying is it to come to the John Deere Classic, shoot a low round off the top, and be in the mix?

SAMI VALIMAKI: I mean, of course it's nice. That's why we play. We try to win the tournaments. I feel like now I put my position of the first day, so that's always good.

Try to put the clutch down and play better tomorrow.

Q. You mentioned having to learn every golf course, learning things on the PGA TOUR. There is an adjustment there. How comfortable are you feeling on the PGA TOUR right now?

SAMI VALIMAKI: I would say okay. Not the best yet, but I feel like next year going to be of course easier. You know the places where you want to go and maybe some of them you might not go.

But I would say it has gone okay.

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