

# The Memorial Tournament Presented By Workday

Friday, May 30, 2025

Dublin, Ohio, USA

Muirfield Village

## Akshay Bhatia

### Quick Quotes

**Q. How would you describe that round? On the scorecard, it looked like it was really steady.**

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah, I felt like this was the best my iron play has been, ever. I mean, I hit two flagsticks today and then felt like pretty much anytime where my caddie told me to hit it, I was literally hitting it there. So that was really nice. I felt like a little better with the driver, which is good. Still stepped over a couple and didn't really know where it was going to go, if it was going to go right or left. That's definitely getting better. I'm starting to see it go in the fairway, and I feel like the curvature of the driver is getting there.

**Q. How satisfying is it to be in the mix through two rounds?**

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah, this is a great tournament. I think it's great preparation for the U.S. Open, which I think this is one of the hardest tests we have all year. And it's a different type of challenge today. I think the first two days have been two totally different types of challenges, and so it's really fun, and I think tomorrow we got some wind. It's always nice to be at Jack's Place.

**Q. What was going through your mind this morning? You see the conditions you're going to have to battle, and now when you finish, how relieving is it to be like, all right, I made it through that?**

AKSHAY BHATIA: I looked at the weather and I was like, man, I thought we were going to dodge some of the weather. But you know, once you get out there, you don't know how the round's really going to go. You feel like -- the first hole of the day, I was trying to cut it, and I hit a straight pull in the rough, and I'm like, man, this is such a tough golf course to play out of the rough. Once I got out there, I felt like pretty determined to just keep plotting my way around and hit the right shots. I didn't make too many putts today, but I made enough to kind of keep rounds going, and I just hit it really, really good from the fairway, so that helped a lot.



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**Q. We had Max Homa in here the other day. He was talking about what impressed him most with Mr. Nicklaus was kind of the consistency, the cuts made, things of that nature. When you reflect on your tournaments and the conditions you face, like today and the ups and downs that come with a round, does it impress you more now that you're playing to see kind of some of those numbers and what those guys were able to do?**

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah, I mean, it's an absolute joke what Mr. Nicklaus has done, and I think -- when I talk to him, he just makes it seem so nonchalant. I was talking to him about his miss with the driver and he curved it a lot back in the day with the type of golf ball they had, and he's like, Yeah, you know, you just got to just try and hit fairways. And I was like, man, I wish it was that easy now.

But I mean, the guy is a walking legend and it's just really cool to be in his presence here this week, and even when I'm home at the Bear's Club, he's always playing cards like a normal human being, so it's really cool.

**Q. Did you ever cross paths with Ben Griffin growing up? I know he's a little older than you.**

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah, I mean, we -- you know, I think he turned pro a little before me, but I remember -- you know, we talk about at Q-School, first year we did Q-School together in 2019, we stayed together and we have the same agency and played a little golf together in Raleigh, but he was never kind of there. He was either in Sea Island or back in Chapel Hill. So we have a great relationship, though. Obviously, as North Carolina natives, it's great to see him playing really good.

**Q. What impresses you about his game, he's been on a great run the last month or so.**

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah, I think he, he's just a, once he kind of gained some confidence, he does feel like, you know, he can perform at a high level. And I think he has had so many opportunities to win, and then kind of once you get that monkey off your back, then it seems like it's



just, it just gets a little easier and easier. So he's obviously doing everything really well right now, but his putting has always been really good. Now he's hitting it really, really long, so it's been really impressive to see him put some more emphasis on his body and now he's 185, 186 ball speed, which last year I think he was 175.

**Q. Are you more comfortable yourself like in this position of contention now than you were a couple years ago, or do you feel like you were confident from the get-go?**

AKSHAY BHATIA: I always feel excited and confident going into being in contention. I think that's what I strive for. I always feel like it adds a little bit of focus. It's just so enjoyable, you get the chills when you make a great putt or just keep executing and executing. I feel like the last four weeks or so I've kind of been tiptoeing in contention since, I would say, Augusta, and then I just kind of have some drop-off periods. The PGA was pretty disappointing, kind of being top 5 for a long time and then missing that cut. That's one of the reasons I went to Schwab. I had a chance to try and win that golf tournament, and obviously didn't on Sunday. So I'm just honestly tired of being there and then not being there. So this is just a nice step in the direction of having two good days here at a tough golf course.

**Q. I notice Ben Griffin is not wearing his sunglasses today, but you wear them all the time when you play. What's the difficulty of playing in the rain like it was today?**

AKSHAY BHATIA: Just water spots on the, on my glasses is tough. But I just wipe it off and --

**Q. Do you have a routine with your caddie?**

AKSHAY BHATIA: No, I just try and keep 'em as dry as I can. But thankfully I have a brim on my hat.

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