

Sentry Tournament of Champions

Thursday, January 7, 2021

Kapalua, Maui, Hawaii, USA

Plantation Course at Kapalua

Sergio Garcia

Quick Quotes

Q. 2-over through your first two holes, what were you able to do to switch things around?

SERGIO GARCIA: Well, obviously didn't have the best of starts, just didn't hit a great shot on the 1st, 3-putted and obviously just a little mistake on the green, but yeah I was able to obviously the chip in on 5 or eagle was big to kind of get me back in the right frame of mind and then I started to hit some good shots, roll in some good putts in, which is always nice, just a little bit of a shame the last two holes, a couple mud balls there that probably cost me a shot here or there but other than that it was a good start after, it was a good round after the start.

Q. This is your first appearance back at the Sentry Tournament of Champions since 2006. How would you describe the appreciation to be back here in Maui?

SERGIO GARCIA: No, it's great. I've obviously, I had the possibility of coming way before this year, but being in Europe it's a very long way away to come for maybe one or two weeks. So this year it was a little bit easier because we were in Austin because of everything that's going on in the world and it made it a lot easier for me and the family to be here and just have a nice couple of weeks. So it's great to be back and hopefully can keep playing good.

Q. Good start to the week, not a good start to the round but you sure rallied really nicely out there to get that score in?

SERGIO GARCIA: Yes, definitely. Yeah, obviously a little nervy early on, I guess, a couple missed shots and a couple missed putts. But the chip in for eagle on 5 definitely settled me down a little bit and I started hitting it, trusting myself a little bit more, hitting a lot of good shots, hitting a lot of good putts and making a few in there. I still missed a couple good opportunities, but to be able to come back after being 2-over through 3 and shoot 6-under is a good start.



Q. You mentioned the putter, really outside of that short one back at 16, I thought it looked really comfortable for you out there. How good did you feel with the putter in your hand most of today?

SERGIO GARCIA: No, I felt good. Obviously didn't hit a great second putt on the 1st and didn't hit -- pushed it a little bit on the last, I didn't quite trust it that it was going to break. But other than that, yeah, it felt good. Hit a lot of good putts, I made some and the ones that I didn't make it felt like I gave them really good rolls. So that's always a positive and even when they don't go in. So just happy with that.

Q. Obviously getting reacclimated to a place that you haven't played in a while, I want to know mentally what's it like, how different is it? You got a family now to come with you on this trip, how do you approach this week compared to the last time you were here, which is I think 15 years ago?

SERGIO GARCIA: Yeah, no, it's obviously different, but it's great, it's great to be able to come here with the family. It's obviously a beautiful place to come and have the family enjoy it too. So not able to do it all the time when we're in the last few years being in Europe through Christmas, obviously it's a really, really long flight to come all the way here. So just happy to be able to be here this year and hopefully start with a great week.

Q. 15 years for you. Everything feel the same?

SERGIO GARCIA: It definitely, the course is definitely playing a lot slower than it used to last time I played here, the few years I played here. But I think it's a combination of the rain and how the course is, it's a lot greener, a lot lusher than it used to be, but yeah, but the essence of the course is still the same and obviously a course that gives you room but you still have to hit shots in the right spots and if you don't, then it becomes tricky.

Q. Was that a good shot on 5 or a lucky one?

SERGIO GARCIA: The chip? No, it was a great shot that obviously had a little bit of luck involved because I was



going through a couple of those weeds with my club.

Q. Were you just short?

SERGIO GARCIA: Yeah, it hit just on the edge of the hazard and bounced back into the hazard. So I could get to it but I had a couple of those weeds coming up that I had to get through with the club. But it went through nicely and obviously just a little bit of luck involved on a shot -- on any shot -- from the fairway it would have been a little bit of luck involved, but there a little bit more, I guess.

Q. How did you spend the last two months? How much golf did you play, practice, any that have?

SERGIO GARCIA: I played social golf with a lot of my friends in Austin. We weren't able to -- we were going to go to Europe, see my parents, so they could meet the little guy and unfortunately we weren't able to do that for a couple reasons, obviously because we got COVID, but also because everything got tougher when we were going to go there and they were starting to lock down countries again and Spain was one of them. So that was a little bit disappointing, but, yeah, we were able to, I was able to practice a little bit, have some nice rounds, some nice fun rounds and try to get here as sharp as possible.

Q. Would you have played here regardless even if there weren't obviously traveling to Europe right now you said is difficult?

SERGIO GARCIA: I don't know, I mean if I have to come all the way from Europe, it's tough, I mean it's probably like a, from Spain it's probably like a 21-, 22-hour flight. So if I would have done it, I probably would have just come myself, but this way it was nicer because the whole family was able to come and we get to all enjoy it together. So, I don't know, I mean I would love to tell you the absolute perfect answer, but I'm not a hundred percent sure.

Q. It's been 19 years since you won here in 2002. How much do you recall of that event?

SERGIO GARCIA: Yeah, I remember it was my first year here, so obviously really nice to be able to win on your first try. I remember I played really, really well on Sunday. I played better as the week went on and played really, really well on Sunday, obviously made a couple, made a clutch putt on 18 to give myself a shot at being in the playoff with David Toms and then the putt I made. I was doing an interview the other day and they showed me a couple of clips of those putts and, yeah, I looked really young (laughing) which was nice. But, yeah, it was fun, it was fun to recall some of those memories.

Q. Any other golf course in the world that you have gone 15 years between appearances at?

SERGIO GARCIA: I don't know, to be totally honest. I'm sure there's -- I mean on a Regular Tour event, maybe not quite as much. But I'm sure there's, there are some, I couldn't tell you though.

Q. That stretch from 10 through 13, how did you play those?

SERGIO GARCIA: Yeah, I hit a great drive on 10 and hit a really nice like wedge from 114 yards into the wind, hit it to about six feet. So made that for birdie.

Then I hit a nice cut 9-iron on the next, the par-3. Left it probably about 12 feet short. Hit a really good putt and just kind of left it on the just on the high side, missed it.

12 it was funny because I hit a great drive and it's another one of those holes that usually in the past they would have gone pretty much all the way up to the green. And I was about 60 yards short of the green, so I hit a nice chip, it bounced, it was going just --

Q. Did you hit it on the ground or up in the air?

SERGIO GARCIA: No, I hit it up in the air, I was far back enough, I flew it just on and it hopped and it second bounce into Brian Gay's pitch mark and it bounced way left to about probably 12 feet and I made that. So that was nice.

Q. Did that hit in the pitch mark, did it hurt or help you?

SERGIO GARCIA: Well, I mean I hit it nicely, so I don't know, I mean it took a big first hop, so I don't know if it would have stopped right next -- I mean if it would have spun and stopped right next to the hole, it would have been probably four feet left. Instead, it went left, but it stopped it -- so I don't know, I mean it probably hurt it a little bit, but I was able to make it, so that was nice.

And then 13 I hit a really good drive down the middle and I hit a chippy 9-iron from 124 into the wind, just left of the hole probably about 18 feet or so and rolled that in, so that was nice.

Q. If you could think back to 1999, did you feel like when you came out, when you turned pro, that your best game could beat anybody or did it take winning a tournament before you really believed that?

SERGIO GARCIA: I don't know, I guess everyone is

different. I felt like very if I dent with what I could do, but I knew that I was starting from scratch, so my amateur career was great and it gave me confidence, but I was starting from zero. So I had a lot of respect from everyone that was out here and playing against the best players in the world. That didn't, that doesn't mean that I wasn't trying to beat them and trying as hard as possible, but I had a lot of respect for the quality of players there were out. So I felt like I could beat them, but I probably said it to myself.

Q. What was your first win the Irish?

SERGIO GARCIA: Irish, yeah.

Q. Did you feel differently coming out of Irish than you did going into it?

SERGIO GARCIA: I was really happy, for sure, very proud. But, no, not really, because I played well weeks before and it does, it does, when you come out and when you get your first win, it definitely does kind of take a little bit of weight off your shoulders and it kind of makes you relax a little bit and kind of say, well, I'm kind of settled in nicely and you can kind of just keep doing it.

Q. I guess I was thinking of the belief. Did it change your level of belief?

SERGIO GARCIA: It obviously gives you extra confidence and you believe that you can do it even more, yeah, but you have to believe it before, if not it probably doesn't work.

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