

Sony Open in Hawaii

Sunday, January 15, 2023

Honolulu, Hawaii, USA

Waialae Country Club

Hayden Buckley

Quick Quotes



Q. How would you assess how today played out for you?

HAYDEN BUCKLEY: You know, I feel like it definitely played tough out there, so I feel like my ball-striking was right where I wanted it. A little shaky earlier. I didn't hit it exactly where I wanted to early on, but again, the front nine is so difficult that I knew if I could just grind out a few pars and find my way to the back nine, I'd have a great chance.

I feel like the putting was a little shaky. It didn't feel great all week, even though I did make a lot of putts. I made over 200 feet of putts at least in a couple days.

With that, I feel like I made a lot of those long putts, but I struggled on the short ones. That was dating back to Thursday. Thursday I missed a three- or four-footer for birdie, and it feels like I missed one or two of those almost every day.

That really just caught up to me at the end. I feel like I had control of the tournament pretty much the whole way, but just a late miss I think on 15 from three or four feet really hurt, but I bounced back with a birdie and gave myself a chance.

Overall I was impressed by what I did, and I think I'll remember this day and it'll just make me better.

Q. What impressed you the most about how you played this week and how you handled being in a new position on the PGA TOUR?

HAYDEN BUCKLEY: I mean, honestly the ball-striking, I've always known that it's my strength, but just to see it, especially after a month off. I really didn't think I needed to work on too much this off-season. I felt like coming in, again, just keeping my body healthy was important, and I did.

Just to see what I can do with the driver I think is something that will benefit me I think in the long run. It's not a very easy course to drive the ball and it's really hard

to score out of the rough.

I put the ball where I needed to and fell short, but I feel like good things are coming. Obviously this week was incredible. We can never really complain about finishing second.

But again, I think it's just going to light a fire under me to keep working hard, and next time I'm in that situation not let it go that way.

Q. Did you prove to yourself that you can win on the PGA TOUR?

HAYDEN BUCKLEY: I feel like I've always known I could win out here. I think that's kind of the process. You go through Canada, you go through the Korn Ferry TOUR, and to see success at those levels, even going back to college, I think it all sets up for success out here.

But again, winning on the PGA TOUR is the hardest thing to do and sometimes you just get beat, and I feel like that's what happened today.

Q. What did you see in that putt on 18 for birdie?

HAYDEN BUCKLEY: I knew it went left. Again, I feel like it was just so grainy that -- it's tough. I feel like I missed left all day. That's kind of my tendency. It's tough to mentally come back from that when you're missing a lot of putts left and you have a right-to-left putt at the end.

But I feel like I hit it on a good line, maybe just not enough speed.

Again, it's something to look back on and learn from it, but also get to work next week. I'm taking next week off. I'm going to get back home and really get to work on fixing that, and hopefully next time it won't happen.

Q. How did you feel like the nerves were today from the start and then down the stretch?

HAYDEN BUCKLEY: Pretty good. I feel like, again, the front nine is so difficult to me that I think there's just a few



holes where I can't really hit driver, and that's what I want to do on every hole.

I didn't hit great tee shots early on, but I found a way.

I think a big opportunity for me I think was on 8 and 9. I hit an incredible bunker shot on 8, a fairway bunker shot, and had an easy look at birdie. 9, I was in the front of the green. That was a big turning point not to convert those birdies.

Again, I held in, and seeing a late birdie on 16 knowing I want to say Si Woo maybe birdied 17 right in front of me, and just giving myself that chance, I think it's something that I'll remember but I'll use it to benefit me hopefully in the future.

Q. When you look back on this week, what's the biggest thing you're going to take away from it?

HAYDEN BUCKLEY: Just confidence. I feel like I had a good fall. Obviously I had somewhat of a chance in Japan. Not necessarily right in the lead or never really had the lead, but I've been in situations similar. U.S. Open, again, second to last group on Saturday. I've had opportunities and haven't been able to convert.

But again, I think confidence is something that I will never lose it just because I've seen the way I hit the ball, and I've seen the way I can just rise to the occasion. Unfortunately it didn't happen today, but I think good things are coming.

Q. With so many other players in striking distance, did you have a number in mind coming in today what you'd have to shoot to win it?

HAYDEN BUCKLEY: No, I never have a number. I know that somebody is going to play well and go win it, and that's the goal.

Again, that little stretch on 8 and 9, I felt like I could really break away, and it didn't happen.

I think the magic number is always around 20 out here, it feels like, and I did what I had to all week to have the chance. Just fell a little bit short.

Q. I saw something about you in Kauai. Was that when you were in college?

HAYDEN BUCKLEY: Yeah, in college. I shot 61 there. That was kind of my turning point of when I thought, this is what I could do for a living, and I'm going to pursue this really hard. I was doing it but I wasn't pursuing it very hard at that time.

Q. What course was that?

HAYDEN BUCKLEY: I think it was at Princeville Makai or something like that. That was just a big moment for me.

I have a lot of great memories in Hawai'i, a win in college, 12th here last year, and then runner-up this year. A lot of good things in this state, and I look forward to being back.

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