

The American Express

Saturday, January 23, 2021

La Quinta, California, USA

PGA WEST Pete Dye Stadium Course

Russell Knox

Quick Quotes

Q. 8-under par today, 120 feet of putts made today. What was the difference from today versus the first couple?

RUSSELL KNOX: To be honest the first two days I've hit the ball very well, I've been extremely untidy especially around the greens. I think I missed six putts inside five feet.

So I've obviously made a lot of putts the first two days too, so basically just said to myself today just don't miss the short ones and keep rolling the good ones.

But I got into a beautiful rhythm with the putter today, started seeing the lines pretty early and just kind of kept it going. So it was -- rounds like those are fun.

Q. Not to bring up anything poor, but last season it looked like you struggled mightily?

RUSSELL KNOX: I don't remember that.

Q. Okay. Perfect. We're going to go ahead and skip that. This year though you've made four cuts, you've missed four cuts, but the ones you made, you've played extremely well. Is it just right now more about tidying up the little small mistakes in order to get just that consistency you're looking for?

RUSSELL KNOX: Yeah, a hundred percent. I mean for quite a few years I was fairly consistent at my level I should say, but I've just been lacking one or two things in my game that have just held me back a little bit.

I mean the driving and the putting are the two most important things I've just kind of been limping at. But I'm on a great path to make those much better and this week both have been very good.

Q. I know you said you don't remember what happened last season but when you go through a run like that does your confidence take a hit or did you just feel like, all right, if I keep playing I'll be fine?

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RUSSELL KNOX: It was a strange run, I mean, if I'm perfectly honest. I missed the cut at Pebble, where I shouldn't have. I think I needed to shoot maybe even the back nine or the front nine at Pebble to make the cut there and just was untidy.

I 3-putted 17 at Riviera for par and then bogeyed 18 to miss the cut there.

And then I missed the cut at Honda.

I hate Bay Hill, so I missed the cut there.

So it was just one of those kind of weird things where I really hadn't played terrible golf and then there was the big break and I obviously didn't come out all guns blazing. So it was disappointing to have a run like that. I mean, I never really imagined I would, but hey, here I am, I'm glad I did, I'm probably better off for it, it was a good kick in the back side to kind of rededicate I guess the next chapter of my career.

So I've had to work hard at times maybe I've been lazy in the past so it was nice to get to work on all parts of my game and it was nice to definitely see some good signs the last few months.

Q. Of the various tournaments that you played well in, what have you seen so far that made you feel like you're over the hump?

RUSSELL KNOX: Well I mean I never think you're over the hump. We're all going to play good, we're all going to play bad. For me it just comes down to two things, driving and putting. I mean, if I drive the ball in the fairway and putt good, I mean historically my iron game has always been there, it's been a strength of mine since I've been on TOUR.

So if I can just get the ball in play off the tee, which I have done beautifully this week, and I've made enormous improvements in my putting and I can't wait for it to kind of show up during four days.

But today I have to admit was probably one of my best putting performances I've ever had on the PGA TOUR. So

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it was beautiful to see the ball go in.

Q. Did you start feeling it right from practicing this morning or did you roll in one putt and all of a sudden it felt good?

RUSSELL KNOX: I've been feeling it for week, to be honest, I just haven't all put it together maybe as good as this in a round.

Like I said, the last two days I've putted very well at times and just unfortunately horrible at others. And even the short ones I missed the last two days I felt like I hit good putts, it wasn't like I was horrible strokes are anything, just didn't quite match up the speed and the break.

So, yeah, it's been super positive, to be honest, and it was definitely nice to get rewarded like a day like this.

Q. For your putting was it a mechanical change?

RUSSELL KNOX: Yeah, I made huge changes.

Q. What have you changed?

RUSSELL KNOX: First of all, I've been sticking with the same putter, which is nice. I've historically been pretty bad at that. But, yeah, I mean, I've realized I needed to do something bad, I mean if I'm strokes gained 150 or whatever, year after year, that's not very good. So I can't care how good I hit it at times, I'm never going to be up there.

So, yeah, I started working with Dr. Farnsworth in town here, I've known him for years, we worked together a long time ago and I should have listened a long time ago probably.

But we have changed a few things in my setup and also been working on this machine that's helped my acceleration numbers Evolution Putting a guy called Christopher Hahn, he's really helped me out, kind of knows my tendencies out there.

So that's really helped my speed and I'm pretty excited, I'm excited where my game's at and where my putting's at and definitely a round like this kind of validates the hard work I've put in so far.

Q. Kind of a weird question but being someone who lives in Jacksonville, played TPC a lot, what's the difference between 17 here and 17 at TPC Sawgrass?

RUSSELL KNOX: I think this hole, I mean, I don't want to say it's easier, but being elevated kind of hitting down I feel

like the green looks a little bigger, even though it's probably not, it's probably smaller I imagine.

But, I don't know, the fans make a big difference. I mean, I know here there can be a lot of fans on the weekend, unfortunately not this year, and obviously at THE PLAYERS there's a lot of people on that hole. So the buzz of it, so maybe not having that makes it slightly easier. But still, it's definitely a hole that if you hit the middle of the club face and look up and your ball's going towards the green, you're pretty happy.

Q. What was the best shot you hit today?

RUSSELL KNOX: I don't really know. I liked the putt on the last hole, that was good. But swing-wise, I was in the zone, I can't even remember it, it was just a blur. So I don't really remember. I hit a lot of good shots that I was proud of today, so I need to just kind of -- I got a lot of good mental images for tomorrow that can hopefully help me out.

Q. You shot 64 out here, what do you think a 6 to 10 handicap would shoot out here if they played Monday?

RUSSELL KNOX: Probably mid 80s. I mean it's -- it's a tricky course for an average golfer because there's a lot of weird bunkers and in weird places and there's some water holes, obviously. So, yeah, I mean it's not an easy golf course if you don't hit it where you're looking. So probably mid 80s.

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