

The American Express

Friday, January 17, 2025

La Quinta, California, USA

PGA WEST Pete Dye Stadium Course

Charley Hoffman

Quick Quotes

Q. What was working out there for you.

CHARLEY HOFFMAN: Yeah, solid. I was hitting fairways and then I was able to attack into the greens, hitting some wedge shots close and obviously making a few putts. It's one of those golf courses if you keep the ball in front of you, you can attack some of those pins. If you don't, you're not able to. I was able to make a few putts hit some wedges close and it all added up to a 63.

Q. You're very familiar with these properties, what do you enjoy most about coming out to the desert cities and playing some golf here?

CHARLEY HOFFMAN: Yeah, obviously this time of year from probably October through next month or two, I mean this is paradise if you like golf. Unfortunately, I have a lot of bad memories being here too, playing Q-Schools and not playing as good as I wanted to, but I started early in my career playing a lot of Q-Schools out here in the desert. But it's nice to come out and start your year here. Good practice facilities, good weather, and you can hone your skills in a little bit more than the off-season winter.

Q. You did pick up your first win here back in 2007, when you come back here do you ever find yourself tapping trying to tap back into anything that you felt that weekend or just reminiscing back on your time in that victory?

CHARLEY HOFFMAN: Yeah, golf course-wise no, because we play a completely different rotation. But I think some somewhere inside me I embrace the pro-am aspect, I embrace playing with amateurs, I embrace getting to know these guys and hanging out with them, having them root for me while we're playing, I embrace that. Sometimes it's hard for other people, but I really do enjoy playing with amateurs, getting to know them, trying to help them play a better round of golf than I do. I think that's the difference between I would say me and maybe the newer guy on TOUR, I've always especially embraced that aspect of this tournament.

THE
**AMERICAN
EXPRESS™**

Q. In your years playing this tournament do you have a story with an amateur that sticks out to you that you either look back that makes you chuckle or you're fond of?

CHARLEY HOFFMAN: I've been through it all I played back when it was a celebrity pro-am to now that more business side of it, but no, a lot of great memories meeting a lot of people. And obviously still good friends, golf's a small world, and the friendships you make out here during these few days is something you'll carry along for a lifetime, so that's what I remember about it.

Q. The year you won here wasn't it like 12 degrees?

CHARLEY HOFFMAN: It was cold and windy, that's for sure. I remember first round Bermuda Dunes I think the greens were frozen when I first teed off. I don't know if the TOUR believed in frost delays back then, but yeah, it was a cold year.

Q. Not to put too fine a point on it, but you won this tournament four months before Blades Brown was born.

CHARLEY HOFFMAN: I hadn't thought about that, but I was the captain of his junior Presidents Cup team and I got to meet that kid and he's a great guy.

Q. To be that long ago, 17 years, 18, I guess technically, it's 2025, isn't it?

CHARLEY HOFFMAN: Yeah.

Q. And yet you still got game out there that continues to play, not everybody keeps that going at 45, 46, 47 years old. Is that because you're looking forward to two years or you've just?

CHARLEY HOFFMAN: As I said, three years ago I wasn't very healthy, and I wasn't a very good golfer. If I -- I feel good right at this second. As I say, tomorrow morning I could wake up and feel completely different. When I'm healthy, the weather's warm, I feel like I can beat anybody in the world. When it's cold and my back's not feeling good, I don't think I can beat anybody in the world. So right now I'm in a good spot, I still enjoy practicing, I still, I love

ASAP sports . . . when all is said, we're done.®

the competition more than I do love the practicing. I don't like being away from the kids, but I'm lucky enough my wife and kids are here, they're actually competing over at thermal, competing on their own, doing equestrian hunter/jumper stuff. So they're spending money and I'm trying to make money (laughing).

Q. You say you made a few putts, you made 10 birdies, you must have made more than a few putts today. Were they all close or were there one or two that you were surprised went in?

CHARLEY HOFFMAN: Yeah, you know what, nothing like crazy long bombs, all of 'em were fairly close. Like, on the Nicklaus, if you get the ball in play you have a lot of wedges in, par-5s are all reachable, so it was a round that felt like I could have got a couple more even than the 10 I got, but obviously very happy. I got away with a couple iron shots aiming for the center of the green that ended up closer to the hole, like number 8, got lucky there. I'm not nitpicking, but I'm happy where I'm at.

Q. You did what you're supposed to do in your rotation, which is take advantage of the first two courses and be close to the lead or at the lead going to the Stadium the next couple of days. Just thoughts on Stadium?

CHARLEY HOFFMAN: Totally different mindset out there. You're trying to hit middle of greens for the most part, make a few longer putts. That's a hard golf course to really attack because the firmness of the greens and the new undulations they put into those greens. It's a golf course that's a little different mindset than the first two, but I'm still going to try to keep the pedal down and make some birdies out there also.

Q. I wanted to ask you about Blades Brown. What's your impression of his game?

CHARLEY HOFFMAN: Yeah, he's very polished. Let's put it this way, surprisingly, this is what stuck out with me is, I got up before the team, before the team played at, we'll say 5:00 in the morning, I would go and work out because I had to get some work because I'm still playing, and he was in the gym, and he was in the gym working out. I don't know if I had that work ethic at 17 -- I promise you I didn't. I didn't know what the gym was. I didn't learn about that until probably my college golf coach. He puts the work in, he's a solid golfer, and obviously the future's very bright for him. It's not easy out here though and hopefully he has a lot of success, but it's a tough training ground out here on the PGA TOUR, and hopefully he gets some success early on.

Q. You said you're back's doing all right now. What's your recent history with the injury and where are you at?

CHARLEY HOFFMAN: My L4, L5 fragmented about three years ago, and everything sort of healed up and obviously constant maintenance keeping on it, making sure everything is good. I got a great chiropractor at home, I got a good golf coach, good team I built to make sure everything's good. Don't push it too hard on the practice anymore, don't play too many events in a row, don't -- I probably spend more time in the gym staying healthy and recovery than I do work at golf any longer, because I know I'm probably -- this old dog's probably not going to learn any new shots, but if I'm healthy I can still hit the good ones.

Q. How do you stay hungry?

CHARLEY HOFFMAN: The competition is fun. I like going walking down the fairways and guys are like, How old are you? I'm 48. And they sort of give you a look, like, What, you're 48 out here still playing? And I consider myself, in this day and age when we're going to a hundred players now, guys playing 48 on the PGA TOUR is a thing of the past, I don't think you're going to see that much longer through the PGA TOUR, but I'm going to try to battle out here as long as I can.

Q. Before 2007 even when was the first time you played on this set of courses this general area, how long have you been coming here?

CHARLEY HOFFMAN: Geez, I remember playing junior like events as a kid probably 13, 14 years old and coming out here playing with friends and stuff. We never owned or anything, but always would come over here maybe once or twice a year playing the local golf courses.

Q. What do you think of the evolution of this event from where it was when you first started, like you said, celebrity pro-am, different vibe, different courses to where it is now?

CHARLEY HOFFMAN: Geez, that's a pretty loaded question, but American Express saved this event, it was in dire straits for a few years. It was a huge event as a kid growing up, obviously what Bob Hope did, and George Lopez tried to continue that tradition, he did an amazing job, then it just sort of slowly, I would say, went the wrong direct, unfortunately. Got a great title sponsor with American Express, Squeri, has done an amazing job with this event, getting his partners and people, his friends to come play the event, and I would say this is a premier pro-am on the PGA TOUR now with the limited field over at

Pebble, these are where guys want to play that love the game of golf and support the game of golf.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

