

The American Express

Thursday, January 22, 2026

La Quinta, California, USA

PGA WEST Pete Dye Stadium Course

Vince Whaley

Quick Quotes

Q. Great opening round. Can you take us through what was working for you today's on the Nicklaus Course?

VINCE WHALEY: Yeah, first of all, you know Nicklaus Course is playing pretty easy, and you know you're going to have to make a bunch of birdies. You kind of just, you have a lot of wedges, and you can take some aggressive lines. I felt like I just hit a few close all day and made some putts.

Q. Is the aggressiveness that is demanded out here, is that kind of naturally how you play or is it a little bit of a switch you have to make for this event?

VINCE WHALEY: I would say it is naturally how I play, which isn't a good thing. I usually tend to have to go the other way. But, yeah, it's different than a lot of weeks having to make so many birdies, but you don't really have a choice and that's what it calls for.

Q. Eagle on 1, I believe. Can you take us through how far out were you?

VINCE WHALEY: It was like 100 yards and it was just a full 60 to the front pin. The greens were still a little firm, so I wasn't worried about it spinning back, and just got lucky that it went in.

Q. You mentioned you love coming out here, your sixth time playing this event. What about La Quinta and this area do you really enjoy?

VINCE WHALEY: You're coming to a dome almost. You got hardly any wind, perfect turf, perfect golf courses, and it's just a good check to see where your game's at in kind of very benign conditions. Because if you can't hit a 6-iron out here, you're not going to hit a 6-iron good anywhere, so it's just good to see where you're at.

Q. Great playing today. You've been a cut machine of late, especially last year. Great day today. What's the difference do you think for you between making all

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these cuts and grabbing that first win?

VINCE WHALEY: Yeah, I think it's something I struggle with. It's sometimes, you know, it seems so important to make the cut, but if that's what you're looking at, you're not close to the lead and you're not going to have a chance to win the golf tournament. So I'm trying not to focus on that, and just trying to play the best I can every week. And I don't know what's going to get me over the edge. Hopefully it just happens.

Q. You just referenced briefly your history here, your fondness for the area. This tournament, now in its 67th consecutive year, no shortage of talk, rumor, conjecture, that next year the PGA TOUR could have a more condensed schedule, which could put this tournament potentially under some threat. What might you say in defense of keeping this tournament where it is and when it is?

VINCE WHALEY: Yeah, it's tough. I don't know anything about what they're doing and what the plans are. But same with last week, same with a lot of tournaments. All these tournaments are really good, and it's really hard to see any of 'em going away. So I really, I don't have a lot of say, but I really just hope they don't, and know that it means a lot to the communities and a lot to different players every week.

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