

THE PLAYERS Championship

Thursday, March 11, 2021

Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, USA

TPC Sawgrass

Sergio Garcia

Quick Quotes

Q. A lot of guys have uneven histories at this tournament but you played well quite a bit here. What is it about this course that you like so much?

SERGIO GARCIA: I don't know, I just love it. I've always said it, Valderrama and this course are some of my top favorite ones and for some reason they just, it just kind of fits my eye. I see what I want to do pretty much every hole and then it's a matter of doing it, but it definitely I feel more comfortable and I've done well. So all those things help.

Q. Any similarities between here and Valdarama?

SERGIO GARCIA: A little bit, yeah, they're different courses but you have to drive the ball well, fairways are not massive, greens are not very big, so you have to be accurate with your irons. It feels like if you are hitting greens you are having birdie chances, you're not like struggling from 50, 60, 70 feet like some of the other courses we play where the greens are just huge. So that obviously kind of suits my, the way I like to play and today I was able to do that, hit some good iron shots, drove the ball nicely, hit some good iron shots and give myself a lot of those 15, 12 to 20-footers for eagles and birdies and I was able to roll three or four of them and that obviously helps.

Q. On the first hole Webb and Rory were kind of laughing when you came jogging up. Were you just a little bit late were you running a little bit behind or?

SERGIO GARCIA: I thought I had plenty of time. Obviously I left the range at 7:35, I was teeing off at 7:40 so I figured it's going to take me probably two, three minutes at most to get to 10. I don't know if the clock on the range was behind or something, but when I got to the putting green just like 50 yards short of 10 I kind of looked at it and sun was coming up so I couldn't see if it was 7. Of the 38 or 7:39 but just in case I just took a little stroll, made sure that I got there before it turned to 40. But I think it was just about to turn to 7:39 so I actually had a little bit more time than I thought.



Q. You played a lot of golf with Rory, were you surprised the way he started on the front nine today?

SERGIO GARCIA: Yes, obviously, I mean I love Rory, he's an amazing player, I've been able to play a lot with him, not only in normal tournaments but in Ryder Cups and we had a good partnership. Yes, but this course, you don't have to be that far off to get penalized a lot. So it happens. Unfortunately, he didn't hit a good tee shot on the 1st, on the 10th hole, made double, which is never the kind of start you want. And then just a couple, just a little bit off and just missed a couple of birdies, feels like you're not making any ground, you try to force things a little bit and obviously unfortunately for him it bit him a little bit. But I told him when we finished, just go out there tomorrow and get it and you never know, I shot 7-under so he can shoot 7-under tomorrow and hopefully make the cut. So we'll see. He's able to do it.

Q. How did you play the last two? What club did you hit on 8 and how did you play the 9th?

SERGIO GARCIA: Sorry, the last two? Well 8 was playing tough, I thought. It was about 226 to the hole, into the wind, so I hit a really good solid cut 3-iron as close as probably you can hit it to that flag on the right. So probably about I would say 18 feet, 17, 18 feet, just left of the hole.

Got a nice read off of Webb who was just outside of me and I was able to roll it in. So that was really nice. That was a bit of a bonus.

And then 9 I hit a nice cut drive off the tee, left myself a really nice angle with a 5-wood from I think like 264 I think it was, wind was right-to-left a little bit down and I was able to hit a beautiful hold up 5-wood just right of the hole, landed in a perfect spot to be able to hold the green, which is never easy there, and left myself an, actually a really nice uphill putt, pretty much straight, maybe left edge. And I was fortunate enough to roll it in.

Q. Are you exempt from COVID testing because you had it in the fall?

SERGIO GARCIA: No.

Q. You have to take it again?



SERGIO GARCIA: No, it ran out for me at Riviera. That was the first week I had to get tested again.

Q. How hard was it to have to -- I'm sure it's hard to miss any tournament, but obviously to miss the Masters, of all things, you have this long major streak going, you didn't miss because you didn't qualify, you weren't injured, just wonder what, how tough that was?

SERGIO GARCIA: I mean, technically I kind of was injured because I had COVID.

Q. Did you get sick?

SERGIO GARCIA: A tiny bit, not much. Angela, unfortunately, got it worse -- I gave it to her and she got it worse than me, unfortunately. But yes, it was disappointing, I'm not going to lie. But you know that that can happen, that's why if you didn't want to take the risk, then you would stay at home and not leave. So it was unfortunate, it was unfortunate for -- I'm not too much of a record kind of guy, but it was nice to have that streak going. I think I was quite close to catching up with Tom Watson as second most all time. I know my friends they always like to keep record of those, all those stats. But to be totally honest, if I had to miss any Masters, that probably was the one. Obviously playing in November, the Masters is unbelievable, but it didn't have the feel that it has in April, for sure. So now we know there's a good reason why we play it in April and not in November.

So that was unfortunate, but it's what it is.

Q. Will you maybe be more cautious about where you schedule right before the Masters this year?

SERGIO GARCIA: Yeah, I'm not playing the week before, we have fans back, so you know that at any time you might get it from any one of them -- not that they're trying to give it to you or anything like that, but it might happen. And obviously Match Play, the week before, have to be careful. I would love to get closer to the fans, but there's too much at risk, at stake for us and if we get COVID because of anything, we're the one that pays. We pay the price. No one else does. So we have to be very careful as the fans come back into our game, which is great to have them, don't get me wrong.

Q. Rory's score today was much closer to the norm for a lot of people than you. Was this course harder for a Thursday than you remember it, your score notwithstanding?

SERGIO GARCIA: It's obviously the rough is a little bit thicker than it's been lately here, obviously just going back to March. The greens are probably as quick as I've seen them for a few years. And like I said earlier, because the greens were soft it was like it was tough to control your spin. You spin it a little bit with the speed of the greens and a little bit of slope, the balls were just rolling off the greens and you were hitting good shots and they weren't holding of the so it was a little bit tricky, even though I expected the greens to be a little bit firmer, obviously they got a tiny bit firmer as the day went on, but it was tricky to control the spin because of the combination of being soft and very fast. So it kind of caught us a couple of times here and there, but we were able to, I was able to manage it nicely towards the end.

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