

THE PLAYERS Championship

Sunday, March 13, 2022

Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, USA

TPC Sawgrass

Anirban Lahiri

Press Conference

CHUAH CHOO CHIANG: Good evening, everyone. We have Anirban Lahiri in the media center with us. It's been a long day, long week probably, but 9-under through 11 holes of the third round and at the top of the leaderboard. Just give us your assessment of the day and the week so far.

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: It's been great. Obviously nice to catch the good side of the draw to start. Yeah, I think to be honest, going to bed last night I was a bit scared how cold it was going to be. I'm not used to playing temperatures sub-40, and I did struggle a little bit when I came out, but it was nice to just get back into a good process and a good rhythm.

Made a lot of good swings today, just kept it in front of me, made good decisions. Yeah, I mean, it was a great day.

Q. Earlier this week you said you're one week away from Augusta, you're one week away from having a two- to three-year exemption. You're one week away from having a conversation with me. Did you have any sense it would be this week?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: Not really. I think the nature of what we do, it could be -- it's unpredictable. You just don't know. You grind away, you keep chipping away, you keep working on your game, and when it clicks, it clicks. It could be this week, it could be next week. As long as it happens, and that's the belief you've got to have, and that's the commitment you've got to have.

I'm just happy that I'm playing well. I'm just happy that I'm hitting my irons well. I'm just happy.

When you are in that state of mind, you usually play well, and that's what's happening.

Q. I know there's a lot of golf to be played here and who knows what might happen the rest of the way, but could you talk about what you think the significance of a win for you would mean here, not only for India but also how much it speaks to the global diversity of



golf?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: I mean, obviously it definitely be a career highlight. That goes without saying. This is the next thing to winning a major I would say.

Yeah, who doesn't want to win THE PLAYERS Championship?

I think it just shows the diversity of the players that play on this TOUR. I've been here for seven years now, so this is home for me. Today I played in an all-international pairing with Joaquin Niemann and Cam Smith who have won a lot and played very well, and I'd love to join that club, obviously. That's what we all work towards, and I'm just going to go out there and try and enjoy myself.

Q. What would it mean for India?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: It would be huge. I think with Every Shot Live, it makes a big difference because people get to watch me play. Even the times that I play well, a lot of people are like, man, I didn't get to see that many shots, and this week they can tune in and see as many shots as they like and every shot if they'd like. I think that makes a huge difference, too.

It's not every week that you play well, but you play well in a week where people can actually see golf shots, they can see you play, it makes a bigger difference.

Q. Just curious if this wasn't the coldest that you played this morning, what was the coldest before this morning and what were you wearing?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: I think the coldest I've ever been in my life was probably the 2013 Ballantyne's Championship in Jeju, Korea. I was borderline hypothermic the whole day. I was so happy I missed the cut.

But to answer the second part of your question, I had four layers on to start, and I was carrying a fifth in case I needed it. And the funny thing is I knew what was going to happen, so yesterday I came out at like 4:00 and I have a bin that a lot of us have with the Hulkas. They drive a truck around and carry all our stuff, so I have one bag that goes from tournament to tournament with all my warm wear and



I literally carried a duffel bag with every single warm piece of clothing to the back of the range to try and figure out how mobile can I be and the most layers that I can wear. Tried this guy with another guy, that was not working, then I tried another guy, then I threw my rain jacket on.

I was as prepared as I could be, I suppose, but I had four layers on this morning.

Q. How does this course compare to the course that you grew up playing?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: (Laughing) I'll invite you to come and play the courses I played growing up.

It doesn't compare.

We do have some good golf courses in India, don't get me wrong, but I grew up playing on Army golf courses. To give you an example the first junior event I played at the age of 10 at Royal Calcutta Golf Club was the first time I ever played on a no-preferred-lie golf course. That's what I grew up on, greens rolling about 6 on a good day. This doesn't really compare.

Q. What did you call it, no preferred lies, first time on Calcutta?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: Yeah, that's when I was 10 years old. That was the first time I went to a golf course where we played no preferred lies. I grew up with an inch and a half pretty much on the fairways at the Army clubs I grew up, so just seeing a ball sitting down flat on the ground was a little intimidating. I had to ask my dad to buy me a 7-wood because I wasn't sure I could get it up in the air. I'm just being honest.

Q. It's the final day tomorrow, but you're still almost halfway through, still a long road ahead of you. How do you approach that?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: You just do what you need to do next, like order food, eat, go stretch, sleep. There's not really that much to think. I think that's a good thing because you don't have that much time, so you go to sleep, you wake up, you stretch, do your routine, warm up, go and hit the next shot.

I think that helps me because, like I said, it's just do the next thing.

Q. What are you doing that makes you think you can win tomorrow?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: I'm just being in the moment right now.

I'm really happy -- like I just mentioned, I'm happy, I'm confident. The ball seems to be coming out in front of me, which hasn't happened that much in the past. You know, I'm just going to try and do the same thing: Fire at pins that I'm comfortable with and clubs that I'm comfortable with. When I get an uncomfortable shot then just respect it and try and make a putt. I think that's all I can do.

CHUAH CHOO CHIANG: I think we'll wrap it up. Thanks for your time.

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