

# THE PLAYERS Championship

Friday, March 14, 2025

Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, USA

TPC Sawgrass

## Akshay Bhatia

### Quick Quotes

**Q. Great day out there. Before we get into your round I need to know from one lefty to another, the third into the last, I kind of saw that limb. There was a lot of conversations. Was that a flighted cut sand wedge into the last? Walk us through that.**

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah, I mean, if I was four yards back of our number, I would have had no problem. Instead I was four yards closer. So I was just trying to hit it 30 feet right, and I just kind of played it back in the stance with a 50-degree, opened the face, and I mean, it barely missed the tree, obviously, but very fortunate for obviously to get the number right and for that wind to be off the right too, it just kind of helped with the side spin.

**Q. When you have an extra three months you're going to have to teach me that one. What happened last night, or did you find a thought, because yesterday we have you 97th in strokes gained approach to the green, today you're projecting second. Did you find something after the round yesterday? Did you just have good numbers? Did you find a feel?**

AKSHAY BHATIA: I honestly felt about the same. I think when you get out here and you get off to a pretty good start, which I did yesterday, you can kind of start playing more and more conservative, just because you know how important it is to make pars on certain holes.

So yeah, I honestly felt like the same. I'm pretty annoyed I made a bogey with a 9-iron. That was my first bogey of the tournament. So all in all, it's all the same and it's just been an intense focus kind of week for me. I feel like that was my goal to start the week. It takes so much to win golf tournaments, especially a PLAYERS Championship. So I just got to carry that mentality into these next couple days.

**Q. A lot of players this week have said some of the lines here are just awkward. They just can't make it fit their golf eye. From a left-handed perspective, thinking about the back nine coming home, 10, 11, 12 if we put the tee up, which we'll eventually see, 14 cutting it off the moguls on the right, 16, 18. This back**



**nine got to fit your eye pretty good?**

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah, I think last week was a blessing in disguise almost to miss the cut because I was able to have my coach come back to Jupiter and I went a completely different route with my driver, went back to my older head, changed the shaft, and it just has been such a relief for me because I feel like the driver's just kind of been the big thing holding me back.

So I do feel like a lot of these tee shots do fit my eye, and I just, I don't really have much fear when I feel like I'm swinging it well, minus one shot today. So it's a good feeling. This golf course, it's one of the best I think we ever play. It takes a lot of strength to kind of just hit the shots that you need to.

**Q. What were the adjustments with the driver?**

AKSHAY BHATIA: Just went back to my older driver and then I went back to a shaft I played four years ago and it's a little longer and so it's kind of been a nice recipe. Then working pretty hard on technique.

I have a good feel this week with my coach. Also feel like I put a mini driver in play this week, which has been a nice attribute to some of the awkward holes for me which when I need to turn it left-to-right. So just kind of a nice setup for me this week.

**Q. You were known for that controlled cut off the tee. Have you been trying to do something different off the tee this season?**

AKSHAY BHATIA: No, just some of the newer drivers are a little more fade bias, so the more and more I get wind off the right or just trees in the start line, the more and more it's like, man, I feel like I have nowhere to kind of hit it.

So this one's a little more, I would say, right biased, but still has a little bit of fade, just because the loft is down. So I've played it for a long time and I just go back to kind of what I trust.

**Q. You see your name up there, Min Woo too, more of the kind of younger Gen-Z-type names on TOUR. What do you think of the wave of young players coming out**



**and your success alongside all of that?**

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah, it's really cool. Obviously we had probably the youngest group in PLAYERS history with me, Nick and Tommy. So it's pretty amazing how young golf is getting and how many young players there are. It's refreshing to see. I feel like we're kind of the next generation of the Rorys and Scotties and obviously Tiger's way up there, but I think it's really cool. For PGA TOUR U to do what they do and for all three of us to have different kind of paths to the PGA TOUR is really cool.

**Q. You're seeing some of the guys that you competed against in elite amateur events and junior events. What is it like coming all back together on the PGA TOUR?**

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah, it's really cool. It's funny, I missed four years of school and so when I see Karl, who just won last week, and Michael -- it's just funny, I'm like, how was school; did you enjoy it?

So it's really cool. I feel like we all knew we were going to be here at some point. We obviously played the AJGA event here and I think there was a handful of people that I knew would make it out here. So it's really cool and it's nice to have people that are my age that I can kind of relate to a little more.

**Q. What's the swing feel?**

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah, typically we call it like a lawn mower, like start where I get like really fast, very draggy, and so it's kind of like a counter-rotation with my hips to get kind of the club more on plane.

So it's definitely a hard feel when especially the more and more I get going, the more and more I want to go faster and faster. So I've been doing that the last couple days and shortening my back swing with my driver. My speed's been getting faster and faster so I don't necessarily need to get longer at the top.

**Q. Are you doing specific things to get faster?**

AKSHAY BHATIA: No. I'm working out more and more on the road. I just hired a trainer who I think is really smart with how we're training week-to-week. Definitely eating more consistently on the golf course and also at home. So it's just, you know, I'm trying to be more of an athlete now versus -- and I know what it takes to kind of be at the top. So it's always a learning curve every year, so it's nice to have people on my team that can benefit me.

**Q. Was there a point where you learned that you had**

**to make that change?**

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah, last year I did a nice job for six, seven months, and then the last four months it was kind of always getting table treatment or just recovery stuff. So it's a fine balance because you don't want to feel too tired, but you also need to get the work in. I go into the gym all the time and see Rory and just see what he's doing, he's obviously one of the best drivers and one of the longest and his body's held up for such a long time. So there's a lot of motivation there when you see guys like that all the time just pumping weight.

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