

THE PLAYERS Championship

Thursday, March 12, 2026

Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, USA

TPC Sawgrass

Sahith Theegala

Quick Quotes

Q. Been trending well. Just feel kind of more culmination of how you've been playing?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, yeah, for sure. It's so tough to not be results oriented, but I tried my hardest not to be, and the results have luckily been there so far to start the year. But yeah, every part of the game is trending. I think I said it earlier, but I had to refocus on kind of my short game to try and make it -- it feels like that's been the best part of my game my whole life, and I just want to let it shine, and it really was not where I needed it to be.

It's always a work in progress, but super happy with that part. The ball striking will come and go. We have a great plan. I'm hitting it great. This new driver's been good. My ball flight's a lot straighter now; I'm not playing a huge cut, which also helps the body a lot. That's a lot less stress on the body. I can still hit that big cut, which is nice, especially out here where all the trouble is left, just kind of work it off that. But, yeah, just kind of a culmination of all the hard work.

Golf is a fickle game. All these guys out here are grinding and putting in hard work. It never necessarily leads to anything, so to see this kind of start is really cool.

Q. The ninth hole, the sand shot, can you take us through that one?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, I mean, I got a couple nice breaks today. That bunker, if it hadn't just rained, that bunker wouldn't have been -- that bunker, usually you get a horrendous lie in there; you're literally chipping out sideways. So it just rained, my ball's sitting, like, on top of the sand. It's the only time you can actually kind of clip one, like basically like you're hitting a shot off the fairway. Yeah, that was nice to be able to get that on the green. I was just trying to hit it long right, and it just hit into that slope and killed it. For it to be on the green was such a bonus.

I ended up three-putting anyway, but, yeah, short game's been really nice. I've just enjoyed putting in the work and



enjoyed hitting all the fun, wacky shots around the greens. Just helps me find the bottom, which is a big thing for me in the short game.

Q. When you go through kind of what you did last year, aside from things like short game, how does that maybe change you as a golfer when you are in good form now?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, I think everyone kind of goes through this process of you have a certain way you play the game as a kid, and I was still doing a lot of that last year, even though it had worked great the first three years on TOUR and it's not like we're changing a bunch of things, but just kind of a shift from, okay, how do I play the absolute best golf I can every single round to how do I get the most out of my game, but also, you know, save your body and try and have as long of a career as possible.

I'm very lucky; my back is in great shape. I just want to keep it that way. So just a couple things we had to address on the off-season to take some stress off my body. It wasn't a lot of big things. Luckily I have long levers so not lacking too much in the speed. Everyone's trying to chase it. But I'm pretty happy in my mid to high 70s.

Yeah, just kind of a refocus on staying as healthy as possible. I want to play on the PGA TOUR as long as I possibly can. So just a little bit of refocus. It's tough, though, because you can do all the right things and still have something happen. There's not a single guy out here that's playing 100 percent. I think any sport is that way.

But weirdly, golf you just get these little, like, nicks and little pains randomly. But, yeah, just try and get as close to 100 percent as possible on a week-to-week basis.

Q. Could you take us through 12 and what club you were hitting and what you saw?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, I had 99 yards. That pin is on that little shelf, so usually it's just a stock lob wedge, but I hit a little 54 degree to try and just one-hop it up the slope there, and I blocked it a hair. I hit it a little skinny and just came out a little right. Got a nice bounce. You know, like, hitting that shot you actually have a little room right of that and past it, so my aim was a yard right of it, but I ended up



hitting it like seven yards right of it and it kicked off the side of the bunker there and had plenty of spin. But it was probably going to spin left off that slope, was probably going to go like 20, 25 feet down that slope, just straight left of the hole. So for it to crash into the pin and go in is pretty cool. It's a nice bonus.

Q. Do you ever find yourself in those fairway shots expecting it to go in or are you playing for approach?

SAHITH THEEGALA: I don't think I ever expect it to go in. I feel like, you know, I made one hole-in-one when I was 12; it was like a skanked 8-iron. I've only holed out one time, like, in my whole life from the fairway over a hundred yards or -- sorry, not with a lob wedge. It was BMW three years ago.

But like, I just feel like the way I hit my irons, I'm never -- like a lot of times I'm not really working them into the pins, I feel like I'm working off the trouble and away from the pins. A lot of the times if I hit it close, it's like kind of an accident.

So yeah, not a great answer, but I'm not expecting it to ever go in. When it goes in, guys cheer. I always have to double check that it went in. Especially playing with Jordan and Rickie; the cheers are a little louder than a normal week. So like everyone went loud, but I didn't know if it went in or not. But yeah, it's a huge bonus. I never expect it to go in.

Q. Did you get a chance to enjoy it a little bit since you haven't holed out too much, or did you have to turn your attention quickly to the next hole?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Oh, it was nice that I hit first. I had probably 15, 20 minutes to enjoy it and then we actually waited on the next tee like 10 minutes, so, yeah, it's really nice to kind of savor it because a lot of times you hole out and it's just on to the next shot right away. Which in a way it is that; especially with the last six holes here being no joke. So, yeah, it was nice to savor it a little.

Q. Now that you're through the injury, when you think back, what was the hardest part of going through the injury?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah the hardest part was just not being able to do what my team is telling me or not being able to do what I'm seeing. The problem was it wasn't an injury where I had to be sidelined. It was an oblique strain, and something I definitely could play through and I tried playing through for a while. But I lost a ton of speed. It was jacking up my mechanics. I just was telling myself to quit being soft.

But when I got the second round of imaging, it was the exact same as it was three months ago, and I'm like, this is ridiculous, and I ended up hurting my neck because of the oblique. It was nice to see that my back structurally was all good and met with a spine specialist and he was really happy with my spine and kind of how -- I had to change my posture a little bit. I really wasn't using my low back at all. Just a little bit more low back and core usage.

But, yeah, he was happy with the way it is and, yeah, just the whole thing was frustrating because I only ended up missing probably somewhere between nine and 12 events. I played probably half the events I played last year hurt. So, yeah, it was nice to start this year healthy. I was healthy in the fall, but my speed took forever to come back and guys were just telling me to stay patient, guys that had left shoulder and left oblique injuries or rib injuries. They said the speed just takes awhile to come back. Your body just doesn't trust it until it's way outside the injury.

So the speed is fully back. It's the easiest I can get to the speed right now in my life. I feel like I'm in the best shape I've been. So yeah, it's just nice to be able to listen to know my coach and do what he tells me to do and listen to my trainer and do what he tells me to be able to do. So, yeah, it's a feeling that I don't ever want again. I'm sure it will happen again, and I'll be prepared to tackle that, so, yeah, just really grateful, yeah.

Q. Feels like the course that fits your game; what's your relationship with the course?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Honestly, I don't think this is a course that really necessarily fully fits anyone's game. It's such a volatile golf course, which I love. I'm always a proponent of chaos. Not silly chaos, but good shots are really rewarded here and bad shots are really punished here. So I've never been like a great golfer when there's a ton of hazards, but out here I feel like a lot of the hazards are places where I typically don't miss it anyway, so I like to work it off a lot of the trouble here.

Like 7, 14, 18 are great examples. I don't necessarily hit those fairways a ton, but I don't feel like I hit it left too often, and if I do, I know it's kind of just an anomaly with how I work my game off the tee. But I think it does fit my game, just because it's a tougher scoring golf course.

There's a bunch of birdie opportunities out here, which is also nice, but it's just, there's a double bogey waiting on every hole. So the winning score never gets too low, which I love that, starting the week knowing that you don't need to shoot 27-under. I'm sure 20-under has won here a few times, but I feel like the typical winning score is somewhere around 15. I'm probably too optimistic about golf courses; I

think too many fit my game. I know some of them don't.
But I really like this golf course.

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