

WM Phoenix Open

Friday, February 9, 2024

Scottsdale, Arizona, USA

TPC Scottsdale

Maverick McNealy

Quick Quotes



Q. You played 28 today, right?

MAVERICK MCNEALY: Yeah.

Q. What was that experience like?

MAVERICK MCNEALY: Well, to be honest, it's about eight holes less than I've played a couple times in college, so 28 holes is still a big haul, especially when you get that adrenaline shot twice on that back nine.

16, 17, 18, it really gets the heart rate up here. It's a lot of fun. But the legs get a little tired, and I know from experience in college, I just have to make sure I hold my posture a little more aggressively than is natural.

They were great conditions today. This is about as easy as this course is going to play, and happy I took advantage.

Q. Talk about the difference in the environment between yesterday and today.

MAVERICK MCNEALY: Absolutely. My first tee shot yesterday I was wearing kind of a mock neck, a shirt, a pullover, a sweater, a vest and a rain jacket just to stay warm and dry. I hit a great 3-wood and they blew the horn.

I was down to short sleeves for a little bit today, with a couple layers, obviously. The ball travels further. The wind affects it a little bit less. There was hardly any wind today, and the greens were softened up by all the rain, so you could be a little more aggressive into the greens.

Q. Talk about the crowd today.

MAVERICK MCNEALY: The crowd was definitely a lot more -- I would say that the people that managed to make it through the rain delay yesterday and stuck it out until about 5:00 p.m., I think I knew what they were doing during their time off, and they were a little loud and it was fun. But that atmosphere on the back nine is so much fun.

It's a really -- you get the boos if you hit a bad shot on 16, but it's a really positive crowd and a really positive experience, and it's really fun when people cheer for good golf shots.

Q. If they finish this tournament after the Super Bowl begins, how bummed will you be, and who are you rooting for?

MAVERICK MCNEALY: I'm a huge Christian McCaffrey fan. I had a few classes with him at Stanford, and honestly, he was an inspiration to me with the way he trained and worked and what kind of a teammate he was.

2015, 2016 were my two best years in college. That was when I was No. 1 in the world, and watching the best player in college football like right across the dorm was pretty cool. Definitely an inspiration for me the way he worked and pushed his teammates. I'm a huge fan of his, so I'll be rooting for him.

Q. In the group behind you (indiscernible) they both looked traumatized. Do you remember the first time you hit someone in a crowd, and is it something that sticks with you?

MAVERICK MCNEALY: You know, it does. I do remember -- I pretty much remember every time I've hit somebody. It happens. I would say if you're a fan this week, the right rough on 15 is the most dangerous place. Is that where Hideki hit the fan? 15 is like the most dangerous place because there's water down the left, and the fans are four steps off the right edge of the fairway, and we're not going to miss it left because there's water. It's a hazard. It's tough when you're focusing on other things other than the golf to really know that you're dangerous area.

Last week on Saturday the final round at Torrey, I drilled a seagull in the wing on the 10th tee, and I did not feel very good about that. That was tough, on top of a 4-over front nine, so I was like, things just really aren't going my way. Felt pretty bad about that. It's never anything you want. You definitely don't want to do that.

I'm going to try and keep all my shots inside the rope line. Always do.

Q. You may have a long wait before you tee off on Saturday. How are you going to approach your routine?

MAVERICK MCNEALY: I'm going to sleep as much as I can tonight. It was a 4:30 wake-up this morning, and I wasn't able to get to bed until 9:00 last night because you get off the golf course at 6:15, you see your PT, you pick up dinner, you eat dinner, shower, clean up, get ready for bed and try and wind down. It was a short night.

I'm going to do the same thing, probably watch a TV show with my wife and eat some takeout and sleep as much as I possibly can. This is my fifth week in a row; I'm pretty excited about a little bit of downtime.

Q. What are you watching?

MAVERICK MCNEALY: I'm watching Modern Family for the first time. I'm basically TV show illiterate. I've like watched one TV show in my life, so it's kind of really nice to go from one extreme, which is the circus on 16, which is so much fun and I love it, to sitting in the hotel room eating takeout and watching TV. You kind of need both for balance.

Q. Do you have any shot today that was kind of memorable that either kept your day on track or sparked you?

MAVERICK MCNEALY: Oh, man. Yes. The third shot on 13 -- I don't even know what round. I think it was round 1. That was my second nine on round 1. I kind of laid up in the left bunker or I hit it in the left bunker, laid up, and it just trickled into the left rocks about 76 yards, and my leg was that far from a cactus, and it was just a little touchy wedge where so many things could go wrong, and I caught it perfectly, one-hopped, spun it in the hole for eagle. I was like, okay, it's going to be one of those days. Just kept the momentum going.

Q. Anything you worked on through the early week that you think has helped you through these two days?

MAVERICK MCNEALY: So starting last week, I started hitting cuts, and I've been hitting kind of underneath draws that if my tempo got off a little bit, it would be underneath stuck pushes. I look back on my best few years of college golf, and I was hitting slightly over-the-top cuts, which is the exact opposite. Definitely getting more comfortable aiming down the left side, and helps me hit the shot that I see under pressure or a tight hole. It's just this little

squeeze fade, and you can't do that from underneath and stuck.

Definitely getting more comfortable with that, and I'm really excited about the shots I'm starting to see come out.

Q. Did you say you've never really watched a TV show?

MAVERICK MCNEALY: I've never really watched TV, no. I don't subscribe to any streaming services other than ESPN+. I don't really watch TV. But I'm finding it's kind of a nice decompress, and definitely going to look forward to that tonight.

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