

# Honda Classic

Friday, March 19, 2021

Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, USA

PGA National Resort

## Sam Ryder

### Quick Quotes



**Q. 63, how different was the golf course from Thursday afternoon to Friday morning?**

SAM RYDER: There was some wind. I think the wind direction was different, it was more out of the west today. Didn't seem like they put much water on it, if any at all yesterday after we finished. I think they anticipated maybe a little bit of rain. We got a couple little sprinkles but nothing. So I mean it's still got a little, it's still a little soft, but it's going to change quickly with no rain, just the wind direction was slightly different. Not as northeast, more west today. So it made some of those holes a little bit -- it just played a little different. It's just different. This course is always going to be hard, so yeah you just take each hole at a time and kind of deal with it.

**Q. You played The Bear Trap 4-under. 2-under each day. Had a birdie on 18 each day. 6-under the final four holes. You got to feel that's certainly helpful in the position that you're in and how do you approach that area of the golf course?**

SAM RYDER: Yeah, that's not my game plan, really entering The Bear Trap. You're really just trying to make the most committed, best, smartest swing decision you can make. I've been swinging my irons really well, and made a couple putts, that's all it was, was just -- you have a 20-footer or a 25-footer or 15-footer, then you feel like you're really like licking your chops, because usually it's just something on the green -- there's just -- you just have to play smart and you really have to think through it and you just really have to get committed because if the wind switches a little bit, it's difficult. So you don't really expect that, I was in a good position where I didn't have to press and try and make birdies and it just kind of happened, so it was nice to finish with a couple birdies, but yeah, just I'm happy to get them, but would have been happy if you told me I was going to par all those holes coming in too.

**Q. I know it hasn't been the year you had hoped for, what have you struggled with and what have you found now that's leading to some good play?**

SAM RYDER: Yeah, I think a lot of it was just kind of just different year last year and some fatigue late in the year. I had a terrible fall, but it's nothing really new or different, I think it was just so different with getting back to playing after the pandemic kind of put everything on hold. Everyone just played so much golf and I kind of was suffering from fatigue late in the year and I -- and I needed that break a lot. So it's been nice to work with my coach some, Adam, in the off season and I had some good weeks to build on, like even though I missed the cut in Hawaii I saw some signs that gave me a lot of conditions. And then I was leading for a minute in Palm Springs and then had a top-10 at Torrey Pines and it's there and it's a fine line out here, I felt like I was playing really well last week and made a couple bogeys when I could have easily made birdies. And it was a good test last week. So that's just how it is out here and you just kind of have to believe in what you do and stay focused on that and trust it and the putter hasn't been great but it's showing signs of life and it's just kind of a little bit of everything. When one little aspect of your game is being stressed, everything else gets stressed a little bit harder, so it's really just about kind of getting back to all the things that I've done when I played well and building on that and not trying to do anything different or crazy right now.

**Q. 7-under for the day, bogey-free. How much confidence does that give you going into the weekend, especially at a place like PGA National?**

SAM RYDER: Yeah, I love this place. Last year was the first year I played, I missed it my first couple years on TOUR. I think my last nine out here on Sunday I wasn't in contention, but I shot 3-, 4-under or something on the back nine, which is one of the better nines we play on TOUR. So I like it. I think it rewards some good shots and it's penal if you start hitting it off line and it's really a good ball-striker's course and you have to play smart. So I feel comfortable with my game plan out here, it changes based on the wind directions and stuff, so I can't really try and overpower it too much, but you just take your opportunities when they come and make a lot of pars and like I had a couple really nice saves that kept the round going, so that's huge out here.



**Q. This is your best round I believe since November, 2018. What was working well today in your game compared to maybe the last year of golf?**

SAM RYDER: Yeah, I think most of it was making more putts. I think I just sprinkled in a few more 20 -- I haven't looked at stats or anything like that -- but I've had flashes with the ball striking and I've had some really good ball striking rounds early in the season on the West Coast Swing and stuff but matching that up with making some putts is huge and scrambling when you have to, like even yesterday I saved a couple that could have let the round get away, it's just a really fine line.

So I think things don't seem that much different, I think when you play well and you shoot rounds like I did today, it's hard to say, because you're just like I'm not really doing much different, just staying patient and getting off to a good start. I think that's important out here. Because if you get behind the 8-ball then you feel like you have to press, that's when you start making bogeys. So I think it's important to get off to a good start and not have to try and force it.

**Q. Similar to how Torrey Pines kind of asks for every single part of your game, would you say that this is a venue that requires excellence in every part of your game?**

SAM RYDER: Yeah, I think it's very much like kind of a, yeah, definitely. You have to, I didn't putt great at Torrey Pines, but I hit it great. I was No. 1 I think in strokes gained approach and I was up there off the tee too. It's like, when you can't, you can't really force it with the ball striking here because you have to still make some putts and scramble. I mean people talk about the courses like a Torrey Pines or like here, which are really hard ball striking-wise, but because they're so hard at some point or another you're going to have to chip, have a good bunker game and make some putts. I made a couple nice little par saves and that was huge. So I think it's, it gives you confidence because at a place where you can really fake it with one aspect of your game it gives me confidence moving forward.

**Q. The conditions out here are always the story line. Yesterday you played in the afternoon, how did you fair in the conditions this morning today versus yesterday?**

SAM RYDER: Yeah, I mean, obviously the score is a lot better, but it's just, I feel like not much has changed. This course it looks like we're getting the day's getting kind of nicer and nicer as it goes on, but it's always going to be hard and it doesn't matter if it's five miles an hour wind or 20, it's going to be hard, you can't really get lazy out here,

but just the wind switching, changing, you see that in the Florida swing, you see it at Bay Hill, you see it at PLAYERS, when you get a north wind or a west wind, it changes the course dramatically and I think today it was different and we'll just see. I think it's going to continue to get harder and harder as the week goes on. The greens are going to get crusty, holes like 17 where I hit a 9-iron kind of back there to the pin, I'm probably hitting a wedge just trying to cover the water and just get it in the middle of the green. So it's definitely going to be a lot different tomorrow afternoon, if there's no rain, and just going to be one of those things where you have to kind of make as many pars as possible and take a couple birdies on par-5s or wherever you can.

**Q. How tough is it on a player's mindset to not kind of let that enter your psyche and have it overwhelm you too much about worry and what it's going to do from one minute to the next out there?**

SAM RYDER: You just have to like learn as you go. You see guys really kind of taking note of, okay -- I'll do it with my caddie -- I'll hit an 8-iron on 12 and we had this wind, in out of the left, it flew X number and whatever. And it's kind of like improving. I made a couple mistakes yesterday early in the round, not really bad shots, but kind of misplaying the wind. The more you kind of play it, the better you get as the week goes on. But you can't control some of those gusts and things of that nature, so you just have to like, I think one thing I like to do is try and keep the ball out of the air whenever possible, so I can minimize the help or the hurt, whatever the wind's doing. I like to hit a little kind of a cut shot and I like to kind of carve it into a right-to-left wind whenever I can, but it's out of your control and I think as the round goes on you kind of learn and you get a feel for it. So it's really, I think that's really helped is just kind of taking note what I hit on some of the holes and trying to improve as I go.

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