

Honda Classic

Friday, February 24, 2023

Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, USA

PGA National Resort

Ryan Gerard

Quick Quotes



Q. Ryan, congrats on a great score today. Birdied the last; that'll make lunch taste a little better. It's been a long week for you. Obviously you had to Monday to get through. Sort the emotions out there, and just a few comments on the round today?

RYAN GERARD: Yeah, thank you. I felt like I hit it really well all day. Just kept the ball in the short grass, which is key out here, and kept it out of the water, which is another great key.

Definitely felt like I just put myself in good spots all day. Wasn't a lot of stress on the scorecard. Really only hit one kind of bad shot, and if you do that, it's kind of hard to make mistakes, and got a few bonus putts to drop towards the end of the round there on 16, and got a really nice up-and-down on 18. I feel like I've had to take advantage of the conditions this morning when there wasn't a lot of wind and the greens were pretty soft and really smooth.

I know this afternoon will be tougher, but I'm glad I took advantage of the morning when I had the opportunity to.

Q. How much fun are you having? I know you've had a long and good road, but how much fun are you having in the midst of it all?

RYAN GERARD: I wouldn't want to be doing anything else. This is my dream ever since I was a little kid, just playing PGA TOUR events. I'm still on the road there, not officially made it yet, but I just really enjoy playing golf. I love everything about it. I love the competition. I love challenging myself. I love playing against the best players and seeing how I stack up.

I think that in and of itself is fun for me, but I had some friends get to come out here today just because I live right down the road, and it's been really cool to see kind of everyone embrace it and see that I can compete at this level and that my game is good enough to translate.

I'm excited, pretty confident in how I've been playing, and would like to keep it going, but I just love being out here. I

wouldn't want to do anything else.

Q. What's life been like since you left North Carolina as a professional? What have you learned about your game and yourself?

RYAN GERARD: I think North Carolina was really good for me. I spent five years there, and I struggled at times, but I felt like my coaches and my teammates really did a good job of pushing me to become better.

I knew when I left UNC there, I was ready to play professional golf. I felt like that was probably a big key for me.

Since I've turned pro, I knew I was ready to turn pro, and just wanted to keep playing.

When I've had the opportunities, I've felt like I've done a good job of capitalizing on them, whether it's being conditionally exempt into PGA TOUR Canada and making a reshuffle or getting to the Korn Ferry finals and getting starts out there, stuff like that.

I've felt like as soon as I've turned pro, I've really -- when my back's kind of been close to up against the wall, it's never really been there yet, but when it's been close to being up against the wall, I've performed well, which is what I think is important to me and what I take a lot of pride in because you don't really find how good you truly are or how much you truly believe in yourself until you're faced with adversity.

Haven't really been quite there yet, but I've felt like every time I've had the opportunity to be in a position where I could change my life, I've done it so far, and would like to continue doing that.

Q. One great example of that was getting through the playoff on Tuesday. What's the week been since getting through the playoff to get to this point?

RYAN GERARD: It's been a little stressful. It's been a little bit hectic. But there's such a big difference in just the infrastructure and the amount of people and all the other



stuff that goes into a PGA TOUR event that isn't at a Korn Ferry event or at least the international ones that I've been playing.

But I feel like I've done a really good job of just trying to cut out all the distractions and make sure that I'm ready to play golf when I get the chance to.

I had to really take advantage of my one practice day on Tuesday and that afternoon, but I've played this course a few times before, so I felt confident, and was just trying to get a feel of how it was playing and certain pin placements, what they might look like.

I've definitely been running ever since I got through the playoff on Tuesday and excited to take a little bit of a breather here this afternoon and hopefully be a little bit later tomorrow.

Q. What was the best shot you hit today?

RYAN GERARD: I really liked that chip shot on 18. It was pretty sweet, kind of tucked up against the rough there and pinched it and had a kick-in almost for birdie.

Think the biggest shot for me was the tee shot I hit on 6. I made a sloppy bogey on 5, and that's a really hard shot kind of into the wind, and I just smoked one right down the middle there, and that kind of set the tone for the rest of the day.

Q. When was the last time you played the violin?

RYAN GERARD: It's been since high school. I don't own one. I was renting one. They're pretty expensive.

But if I win this week, I might buy one (smiling).

Q. If I would have told you on Monday or Tuesday that you would be sitting in solo third at your second start in a TOUR event, what would you have said to me?

RYAN GERARD: Man, you're crazy. I don't really know. I would have taken it for sure. I think I'm in a good position. Something that I've really wanted to be in, in contention in a PGA TOUR event.

I had to go through a lot to just get to the tournament and then get to this spot, so I think it's a lot of just solid play since then.

But it's definitely something that I'm not surprised that I'm in this position. I may be surprised that I'm here this early in my career, but I've always kind of felt like I wanted to be here, and I was going to do whatever I could to make that

happen.

Q. Has your mentality shifted since Tuesday morning to Friday morning?

RYAN GERARD: I mean, Tuesday was definitely stressful. You go into a playoff, and it's every shot kind of matters, and you can't really afford to screw things up.

As soon as I got out here, I mean, I know I had a great chance to play well this week. I like this golf course. I've played here before. But I felt like I was playing with a little bit of house money.

Not a lot of expectations. There was really no downside to me if I went and hit it badly. But I knew I was playing well, and I've been playing well. Just trying to keep that up and just keep it rolling.

Q. On Tuesday your mom said how proud she was of you and that she's hoping that you were going to go grab something to eat. Have you talked to them yet today and what do you think they'll be saying after today's performance?

RYAN GERARD: Yeah, she's sitting right over there filming this whole thing, so I think she's pretty proud of it.

I don't know, I definitely did eat something because whenever your mom tells you to do something, you'd better do it.

But I think my parents, both of them, my mom and my dad, have been really instrumental in getting me to where I'm at currently. They've made a lot of sacrifices just to put me in a position where I can play, whether it's taking me to tournaments, spending money, all sorts of stuff, and I'm forever thankful for them. It's really cool for them to get to see me play out here because this is my dream. It's almost every parent's dream to see their kid live out their dream. I'm really thankful for them, and I wouldn't be here without them. So I'm proud of them, too.

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