

# Cognizant Classic

Thursday, February 27, 2025

Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, USA

PGA National Champion Course

## Billy Horschel

### Quick Quotes



#### Q. Billy, talk to me about the gator encounter.

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Yeah, we were on No. 6 green and I just putted out, went to the left side of the green there. Right about to walk to 7 I saw the gator coming across. The cop who was working with us walked over there and tried to shoo him, but he didn't have anything to touch him and he was trying to get as close as he could. It was either someone was going to have to go up to No. 8 and grab a rake or I was 30 yards away, 25 yards away, and I just grabbed a club and went over there and pushed him away.

Listen, he was going nowhere good. So I just went over there, helped the cop. As Cam said before I went over there, he goes, what was he going to do, try and use a Tazer on him? But I think he would have had to get a little close on that one to try and make it effective.

#### Q. That's the move of a man who's lived in Florida a long time.

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Yeah, I'm not afraid of gators. Listen, as I tell most people, I said, they're more afraid of you. The majority of the time they're only going to come after you during mating season where they're a little aggressive and then if you're around their nest when they've got some eggs.

The majority of the time, they're fine. I grew up with my dad grabbing their tail when they're on the side of the bank and shooing them back in the water. I never touched a tail with my hand but I've done it with a club. Not that big of a deal.

#### Q. What club do you use to shoo a gator?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: I had a 60, and I didn't think about it, but the good thing I did grab a 60 because I've got two extra ones in the locker so if that one did become unavailable, I had two more in the locker.

#### Q. Talk about the conditions. You've played here a lot.

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Yeah, there was no wind so it helps tremendously. You've got to tip your hat to him. He shot a 12-under par 59 at PGA National, which no one ever thought. I know we had a discussion earlier this week and I've probably changed my tune a little bit. I think the overseed has -- the rough is not long enough. It's not penal enough when you miss the fairway.

I really wish we would just play this as a straight Bermuda. From tee to green, everything be straight Bermuda. I know it doesn't look prettier on TV and I know that's one of the reasons why it's overseeded.

But it is unfortunate because for me, growing up in Florida, the one advantage I have is being born and raised on Bermudagrass and understanding the intricacies of playing on Bermudagrass and chipping off it and judging the lie out of it. I don't have that advantage as maybe someone playing out in California on poa annua greens, feeling comfortable on poa annua greens.

So it is a little disappointing that -- I'd say the condition of the course is very scorable, but at the same time, you've still got to go out there, you've still got to hit golf shots, you've still got to make putts. But this will be, right now, if scoring sort of stays the way it is going into the afternoon, I'm going to suspect because there's not much wind projected this afternoon, this will be the lowest scoring average in the history of this tournament by I'm going to say a shot and a half.

#### Q. That's about what it is.

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Like I said, it's just a little disappointing because it's such a great test of golf, and like I said, the conditions, no wind, we've had rain this week, which makes it softer.

But I think if you add the Bermuda factor in -- if you had Bermuda rough and Bermuda fairways and if you missed the green you had to chip it off Bermuda instead of overseeded rye, it makes it a little bit tougher.

Listen, it's three days left. Hopefully the wind picks up. Hopefully we see a little bit of PGA National because it is fun playing this golf course when it's tough. I think a lot of



us do enjoy it. I think Sepp and I talked about that and Cam Young. We all three talked about how enjoyable it is to play a really tough golf course and not have to feel like you've got to go shoot 5-, 6-, 7-under par. Normally 2-, 3-under is a really good round here.

But like I said, we've got three more days and we'll see what happens.

**Q. You said just walking over maybe the most feet of putts you've made all season. How has the journey been with the putter this season?**

BILLY HORSCHER: Yeah, it's been a struggle. Mechanically the setup hasn't -- there's been maybe one or two weeks where it's felt pretty good, and then at the same time, I've hit a lot of good putts that burned edges. This morning hit a good putt at 11 and 14 and 15 that I thought I made, and a dimple, more of a break and all three of them are in the hole. So it's been that way a little bit.

It's been nice to make the last two on 8 and 9. But the consistency in the putting stroke and the way the ball is coming off just hasn't been there this year, which is unusual. I don't usually struggle that much with my putting. I can fix it quickly, and Todd Anderson and I have worked really hard on it. We worked for several hours yesterday on it, and it feels better, but I've just to get comfortable and start getting more confidence in it that the ball is going to come off the way I want on a consistent basis, instead of when I make a stroke it doesn't come off with the speed I want, whether it's too soft or too hard or it's a little bit of a pull or a little bit of a push. We're trending in the right direction, and so I'm just an impatient guy at times.

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