

Cognizant Classic

Thursday, February 26, 2026

Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, USA

PGA National Champion Course

Billy Horschel

Quick Quotes

Q. The comments on overseeding we saw on Twitter overnight, does it take away from what this test used to be? Can you sort of expand on what your thoughts are there?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Yeah, I talked about it last year. This is a really good golf course. It's a very fair golf course. When it blows hard, it's a challenge, and when it's sort of benign like it is today, it's gettable.

A few years ago the rough was longer and then they started cutting it down and then they overseeded the golf course. Listen, I think the TOUR gets a bad rap, and it's not anything against the owners of PGA National. I understand where they would want to overseed. People want it to look pretty on TV, and if it looks pretty on TV, maybe people will want to come play it.

But at the end of the day, as I've said for many years on the PGA TOUR, towards our rules officials and towards the execs at the PGA TOUR, I understand we are using a golf course that we don't own a lot of times, and sometimes we're at the discretion of what the owner wants to do. Obviously we give our opinion of what we think is best for the golf course and how they want to set it up and challenge it, but also, the owners have a say in it.

This isn't just PGA National; it goes to a lot of courses that we play throughout the years.

But I think for me, as I said last year, born and raised in Florida, playing a Bermuda golf course, this far down south and playing overseed, it's going to be soft. I talked to Shane; like Bear's Club is not overseeded; I bet Medalist isn't overseeded. A lot of courses in the area aren't overseeded.

At the same time, I'm glad it's not overseeded because I hit the ball and missed every fairway possible, and a lot of times I had a chance to hit a shot because there was a little bit of Bermuda and it's not long, so with the ryegrass it sort of sits up, and very rarely do you have a lie that you can't get on the green. If it was Bermuda rough, I'm not sure I



would have shot 2-under par today.

That's just my comments. It's nothing against the owners of PGA National. They've done a great job of hosting this event. Obviously it's changed hands many times over the last decade, but they do a great job of putting on a good event, and like I said, I think as many TOUR players will speak of, I think when you look at the data, and I can pull it up on my phone, in '20, '21, '22, there were three times in a row where it was a top-10 hardest golf course. I think it was like 4, 7, 6. Then it went to 12, and then the last two years it's been in the 30s.

Some of it has to do with wind. There's no doubt about it. If this place doesn't blow, it's very gettable. As TOUR players have always talked about, it doesn't matter how long the golf course is; if it's no wind and it's soft, we're going to shoot a number.

That's just my take on it. Like I said, it's not a shot at anyone. It was just sort of commenting to someone who was taking a shot at the PGA TOUR, and I sort of gave them a little more insight that it's not always in the PGA TOUR's hands. If they want to try and do something, it's not always in their hands to set it up the way they want to.

Q. Do you think it's kind of a misnomer that players don't want it hard here? I remember 6-, 7-under has been winning scores here, and I think guys enjoyed that test.

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Listen, some guys do and some guys don't. I was talking to Shane, and he talked about you could get to 8-under par and win this thing. I think he said a couple years ago when he had a chance to win, I think it was '22 when Sepp made three or four birdies coming in, and Shane got unlucky on 18 with the weather rolling in. He said he had a two-shot lead with four to play, and he parred the last four holes or five holes and lost the tournament by a shot. That's unusual. Or you usually would win that. Obviously Sepp went out there and did something special to win it. But I think 8-under par won it or 9-under par won it.

Listen, I've always been a big fan of 8- to 12-under par, 15 at most winning. I think that really says the course played



fair, in my opinion. I think it really shows the players at the top, they were the guys that really truly probably played the best that week because it rewarded probably really good driving, iron play, short game, all that.

I think when you get -- listen, we play Amex and we know that score is going to be 20-something-under par, and you're going to have to hit a lot of close iron shots and putt well. Not every course is going to be an 8-, 12-under par setup. But I think this course over the years has always been a challenge, and I think for me, I've always enjoyed it.

Now, there's years I've played awful and I've hated that it played really tough and I missed the cut. But there's years where I've played really good and I've hit it really well, and I have played the track very solid when it was tough conditions.

Yeah, like I said, it's just something going forward that I think as a tour, as we start looking at improving our product, one thing that I'd mention is just making sure the course that we choose and the way we set it up is a challenge because I think the fans, they want to see quality golf shots rewarded. They want to see bad golf shots get punished. They want to see birdies.

I think a lot of data would say 12-, 15-under par, I think fans really love seeing a score in that range or area.

Q. That being said, how was today compared to last year?

BILLY HORSCHEL: I think the rough is a little bit longer this year. There's no doubt about it. Like I said, there was really no wind until the last four or five holes. I don't think it's going to blow too hard today. But yeah, listen, I think there is a little bit more -- it is a little more penal if you do miss the fairways this year. You're not guaranteed a good lie in the rough. It's a 50/50, and there are some lies that sat down for me.

I hit one left on No. 4, and even with a wedge I didn't get enough club on it and hit it in the bunker and wound up making double. But I got away with a lot of stuff today, and I need to make sure I hit it in the fairways more because the rough is a little bit more penal than it was last year. It is a little bit longer. So that does help the -- does make it, I think, a little bit more of a challenge than what it's been in years past.

Q. With all that, Saturday could be squirrely. Does everything depend on the weather? Everybody knows what the course is playing like now when it's soft, but could everything change with the rain and wind on Saturday?

BILLY HORSCHEL: Yeah, listen, if we had perfect conditions, I think the way the course is right now and the way the greens are, we know they're going to get a little firmer. We know they're going to get a little faster. We know the course is going to dry out. I think the course this year -- like I said, I think this year was closer to maybe a 12-, 14-under par winning score, I think.

Now, it depends on how hard the wind blows. It's only saying 10 to 15. But if you get weather and you get rain and it starts softening up the golf course, that does change it because it does mean we can be a little bit more precise and are landing it close to the hole, knowing the ball is going to stop.

It's just one of those things that weather is always the predictor in how tough or how easy a course is going to play no matter how you set it up.

I remember playing Medinah in 2019 and it was 7,700 yards and it rained Tuesday night and Wednesday or something, and Justin Thomas went out and shot 62 and everyone was shocked by it. But it was no wind and soft as can be. If weather plays a factor, it does change how a course plays.

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