

Cognizant Classic

Thursday, February 26, 2026

Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, USA

PGA National Champion Course

Austin Smotherman

Quick Quotes

Q. Talk us through what you were feeling out there?

AUSTIN SMOTHERMAN: Yeah, two weeks off, I come out here today excited to play. I'm glad I was an early tee time today, too, not having to wait around and maybe see other guys doing what they're doing. But I just wanted to get on the golf course.

Felt like the game was in a good spot. To be honest, I didn't play a ton when I was home, just took the rest when I could knowing I'm about to play as many weeks as I can until my wife is due with our third child here March 23rd.

Figuring things out on the road solo this week, and the game kind of followed. It was a pretty easy round on a golf course that shouldn't be this easy. It felt pretty good.

Q. 132 feet of putts made today. Talk us through what you were feeling on the greens.

AUSTIN SMOTHERMAN: I felt like I just wanted to hit good putts on the high line all day and just very freeing. I'm using no line on the golf ball this week for the first time in a while, but I felt like it kind of just helps with these greens. There's so much movement and the pace that they are, and then with the wind, not to be adjusting and so conscientious of that line, so I felt like that was pretty freeing.

The length of putts that I was making was nice to see, but I also felt like I hit a lot of good putts. The par save on 15 to kind of keep things going, a par save as well on 6 after a bad lag putt, that kind of kept things going.

So having those things happen and then a long putt goes in, you're stealing them, and then you hit one close, and you just keep building those holes. Before you know it, you're finished, and here we are.

Q. Are you glad to get to the East Coast on the Bermuda greens?

AUSTIN SMOTHERMAN: I do. I like them. They're so



pure. They know what they're doing here. Putted Bermuda a lot. Grew up in California, but Texas and whatnot, we've got some bent but mostly Bermuda in there. Our home course as well. Felt like it's a good mix, and these greens are perfect.

Q. Have you made the switch to go without the line on the ball before? What made you go with that?

AUSTIN SMOTHERMAN: Yeah, trying to just be a little bit more freeing with the stroke, be an artist on the greens, see the line, kind of let it just be external, look at the hole, see where I want it to go in and just trust that I'm pretty good at just aiming in the general vicinity that needs to happen, and then from there, just letting good speed take over, and hopefully the hole gets in the way. That's what went on today.

Obviously 135 feet of putts is a lot. If those putts are even just on the edges and they're not going in, I felt like they were good putts anyway.

Q. You mentioned you have a baby on the way. Is there anything to be said about maybe your mind being freed up from the game and focusing on other things that led to some good play?

AUSTIN SMOTHERMAN: Yeah, definitely something to be said. There's so many what-if scenarios that we've discussed over the last two weeks. Her due date is Monday of Houston, so hopefully I'm flying from Valspar through Dallas to go meet a new child, or who knows what, or have a baby that week and then hopefully still play. That's kind of our goal. We know this is a crazy time, crazy year, where I kind of need to play everything.

I'm hoping the baby doesn't come PLAYERS week and I've got to make a really hard choice there. But mind is free. I just want to go play golf, and the baby is going to come when babies come, I guess.

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