

# Cognizant Classic

Friday, February 27, 2026

Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, USA

PGA National Champion Course

## Austin Smotherman

### Quick Quotes

**Q. A couple solid rounds here, leader by three into the weekend. Obviously a long way to go, but how do you feel about your game and your position through 36 holes?**

AUSTIN SMOTHERMAN: How do I feel? Pretty ecstatic, pretty excited to be in this position. Yeah, I was just trying to be steady. Austin Smotherman golf out there today. Anything under par I thought would have been following up round like yesterday, which was a special one, and try not to get too far ahead of myself thinking I'm going to make every long putt I'm looking at like kind of was the feeling yesterday, and then today I still make a 55-footer on 17.

Kind of nice to see those go in and feel like you're stealing them on a course where you're just hoping to get down in two from that range, and you have that distance a lot if you get stuff on the wind going away, all these slopes, greens are fast.

Yeah, leading a PGA TOUR event, come on, pretty awesome.

**Q. You mentioned Austin Smotherman golf. How would you describe what that is?**

AUSTIN SMOTHERMAN: Yeah, as boring and simple as it can be. That's what I want to do out there. I feel like I ball strike it good enough to have that kind of boring golf, a bunch of fairways ideally. If not, in the rough, figuring out a way to get it in the proper spots to have some easy looks for up-and-downs and not force my short game too much, but I've had some nice short game shots this week, and then I've made some putts. I feel like I am still being external being an artist on the greens, and that's what I want to do. These greens are perfect for it with so much slope, how fast they are, in the wind.

Trying to just shake it out, stay loose, and keep doing that.

**Q. Talk about how you handled those two early bogeys and didn't seem to faze you that much. You were able to play well after that.**



AUSTIN SMOTHERMAN: I had a conversation with my caddie Zach today. We know we're going to have adversity, and we're not expecting to be bogey-free through 36 out of this golf course. I was proud of the way I accepted those bogeys because they weren't really -- the three-putt after kind of being out of position on 12 was a bit uncharacteristic, so I probably could have got mad at myself more on that one, and I really didn't, and I step up and hit what felt like two good swings, and then still have to make an eight-footer on the next hole to avoid three in a row. So that was kind of a big momentum putt on 14.

It was blowing so hard. Bogeys are going to be had the second you put an okay swing on something. Even good shots are going to get into bad spots out here, so just accepting that, which I kind of, like I said, talked to my caddie about beforehand. That's kind of how we prepped for what it was, and we kind of found our stride, made some birdies, took care of the par-5s, and that's just what I want to do out here. Hit the greens on the par-3s and just boring golf, like I said. Austin Smotherman golf to me is just a couple under, fairways, greens, two-putt, and then just keep on racking in pars and birdies will drop out here.

**Q. You mentioned about how the weather will be a little more even tomorrow with early tee times. Is there anything else about being able to get out there early, not just sitting around for four, five, six hours?**

AUSTIN SMOTHERMAN: Yeah, the sitting around is tricky. It's something I kind of would maybe also look forward to having that experience under my belt, more late tee times like that on the weekend. That's where we want to be going forward.

To not have to do that tomorrow so we're all in the even waves definitely helps me out this week. But I don't mind killing a few hours trying to sleep in in the morning as long as I can, have a late breakfast, early lunch and then snack on the course, so that was kind of my plan today.

Yeah, I think early morning wave is just going to make tonight's recovery a little bit quicker, quicker dinner, earlier bedtime, all that kind of stuff.



**Q. Is there anything you're doing differently now as opposed to your last couple stints on the PGA TOUR or anything you're not doing that you did then?**

AUSTIN SMOTHERMAN: Probably just falling more and more into my own routine of what I've got to do well to play good golf. We're always fine tuning, tweaking stuff. It's not like the formula is ever perfect, but at least believing in yourself, believing in that process, I think every round, every week, every year hopefully out here on the PGA TOUR is a little bit more of that, and that's kind of what I see in the best players that have these 15-, 20- year stints on the PGA TOUR. You ask them what they do, and they say, I do exactly what I need to do, not what someone else is doing that makes them great or this and that. It's just keep it simple, stupid, and golf is a stupid game anyways. We're out here just trying to chase a ball around in this wind and hopefully get it in the hole a little bit faster than other people.

**Q. Along those lines of just weird game, you missed your last two cuts. At the risk of sounding harsh, what's it like to miss a cut? What's the emotion like kind of those last two Fridays?**

AUSTIN SMOTHERMAN: They were not by any means like the game was in a bad spot missing the cut. So many good golf shots to draw on from those weeks, knowing that putts don't fall, a bad decision here or there, which are the things you try and fine tune every week and figure out how to not make those mental mistakes. Even just through two rounds right now, to be in the position I'm at, I still feel like I'd like to make better decisions on a couple shots out there. But I got them down in two, make pars, move on.

It's not like this is a big ol' birdie contest out here where guys are going to shoot 7-under. A big pack is going to shoot 5-, 6-, 7-under. Those are great rounds out here, and I saw a couple of them early this morning. I just wanted to get under par today and go see what we can do on the weekend.

**Q. A little bit off beat, but your playing partner Jordan, he had a putt to make the cut?**

AUSTIN SMOTHERMAN: Yeah, I was pulling for him. And Chandler, Chandler had a look, too. Jordan made his. So sick. Fist pump it, crowd goes wild. Great dude. Solid playing with him.

Yeah, I was like, Dude, birdieing the last. He's like, I wish I didn't have to make it that stressful. I was like, you hit it to six feet on the last; you've been putting good, go roll it in, and he did. It was pretty cool.

**Q. At that moment you kind of just become a fan?**

AUSTIN SMOTHERMAN: No doubt. Especially I stopped, I was done, hat off, got to enjoy the putt, and then enough people stick around on 9 today, too, to give him a little pump-up, too, which was awesome. I think you got a video of it.

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