

Cognizant Classic

Saturday, February 28, 2026
Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, USA
PGA National Champion Course

Austin Smotherman

Quick Quotes

Q. Austin, tied for the lead into Sunday on the PGA TOUR. How does that feel, and what are you looking forward to tomorrow?

AUSTIN SMOTHERMAN: Yeah, I mean, a bit of chills still hearing that. Most excited for tomorrow. Hitting golf shots in front of all these fans and hearing people yelling your name and refocusing and trying to do it again the next shot, I think it's a fun challenge. Start of the week, this is what you kind of prep and play for. Not that you expect to be there, but when you are there, you know you're ready, and I feel like I am ready.

A little shaky first nine holes today. So be it. Yeah, it's tough. Sleep on a three-shot lead, early tee time, quick turnaround. Slept okay last night. We're out here playing golf; not much to be stressing about besides maybe a couple 10-footers.

Q. The day today, was there anything that surprised you about how it felt being in the final group in that environment?

AUSTIN SMOTHERMAN: I think the group I had today, too, with caddies and players -- Taylor is a great dude. I've played with him a bunch. He used to live in Dallas. We'd play some there. A.J., met him a little bit this year. Haven't played with him until today. Just good vibes in the group.

Uncharacteristic swings here and there. Hanging a wedge out 30 feet on 8 from 116 or 117, that's just kind of, I felt like, maybe a nervy, overly protective kind of swing. Maybe not keeping the gas pedal down. But also, one little mistake here can kind of compound itself. Just those little things.

I felt some nerves probably with the first tee ball on 1, just a little skinny 4-iron, but hit a good second shot in there, hit a decent putt.

Missed a six-footer on 2. But two awesome shots to get a six-foot look right there.



Then a sick little driver, 5-iron on the next.

Yeah, just keep plotting along.

Q. Have you talked with your grandpa Bill at all this week?

AUSTIN SMOTHERMAN: Yeah, we talk every night. He's probably waiting to call me right now. I told him I'm going to be a little bit longer after the rounds having to talk to you guys. He's watching. All of his buddies are watching. His neighbors are calling him. Yeah, I'm sure he's pretty occupied these last few days.

Q. In the context of the journey you've been on, losing your card, back to the KFT, do you think your journey has given you a little more appreciation for this moment than you might have had if you were a rookie in this spot?

AUSTIN SMOTHERMAN: Yeah, I think it's just acknowledging that all of us out here have our own path in our careers, however it is, and comparison is kind of a thief of joy, so I'm going to follow in my career, the things I've done, the joyous moments we've had, which are more than I can count really. Just little things daily even.

Yeah, appreciative of playing on the PGA TOUR every single day. It's pretty awesome.

Q. Expecting your third kid --

AUSTIN SMOTHERMAN: Yeah, it makes this all a little bit sweeter. Job is not done. I have some friends out here watching who were telling me that my wife was sending them pictures and videos that I haven't even gotten to look at yet - I haven't turned on my phone - where my daughter is pointing at dada on the TV, over and over and over again. I wonder if they took naps today, or they might have stayed up to watch me. We'll see.

Q. When is Jess expecting?

AUSTIN SMOTHERMAN: March 23rd is our due date. Kind of in that crunch time. But no pressure on you, baby; you'll be all right.



Q. What's your plan for next week? Are you playing?

AUSTIN SMOTHERMAN: Yeah, playing regardless, whether it's Puerto Rico, API, whatever it is. I'm focused on this week. Let's go have some fun tomorrow.

Q. Looks like we're in twosomes tomorrow. You'll be with Shane Lowry, major champion. He's got a great record around here. Have you played with him before, and what are you looking forward to most?

AUSTIN SMOTHERMAN: Yeah, I remember playing with him in Hilton Head one time. I don't know if it was -- I think it was a weekend round because it was just one day. It wasn't Thursday-Friday by any means because he's obviously in a little better pairing than I would have been in.

I think it's going to be just good energy having a name like that in the final group, especially for Cognizant and everybody here. Palm Beach native, here we are in the heart of it at PGA National. I get to put my name next to his and go battle him all day.

That's probably the thing right there that I need to probably step back and realize is that it's not me versus him or anything like that. Looking at the leaderboard, it's so jam packed, and yeah, him and I kind of got to 13, but the number of guys today that I saw on the board that was like 11, 11, 11, 11, 10, 10, 9, it's like, this golf course, you stay patient, you make your pars, putts will go in. Take care of the par-5s like I'm doing, which has kind of given me some freedom on some of these other out-of-position shots, and I'm sure Shane has done the same exact thing just in his own way and had a great round today. I don't know what he started at. Did he shoot like 64? Yeah, it was definitely out there today.

I had my kind of mistakes and held on and felt like I had to figure some things out, and did, just to get my 2-under par. He was feeling it. Everything is even tomorrow. Go play some golf.

Q. What's it like being a dad?

AUSTIN SMOTHERMAN: Oh, it's pretty cool. Right now my daughter is wearing her princess dresses and that music. I know my wife better not send any or show any of my embarrassing dance videos I have with the girls. But just getting to raise them is pretty cool.

Q. It's on your bio, you're a martial arts enthusiast. What's the backstory to that?

AUSTIN SMOTHERMAN: Just growing up it was just

something my parents had put me in. The discipline, what martial arts teaches you, and then my Uncle Tom is a black belt as well, and he trains with some crazy people and weapons and things like that.

But it's just understanding you've got a lot more within you and kind of that discipline that martial arts teaches you, controlling yourself, controlling your breathing, controlling your body, which what better translates out here to golf, as well.

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