

RBC Heritage

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Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, USA

Harbour Town Golf Links

Sudarshan Yellamaraju

Press Conference



RBC Heritage

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everybody. We'd like to welcome Sudarshan Yellamaraju here to the RBC Heritage. Sudarshan, you got in via the Aon Next 10. Congratulations on that. What are you looking forward to playing in your first Signature Event this week?

SUDARSHAN YELLAMARAJU: You know, I kind of obviously earned my way to be here, and to be honest I'm just going to treat it like another tournament, just go play and play the best golf I can. That's it.

Q. You just told me you played nine holes this morning. You played the other nine yesterday. First impressions of the golf course? It's a little different from most on TOUR. What can you tell us about that?

SUDARSHAN YELLAMARAJU: Yeah, I mean, it's a very good course in good condition. Weather looks like it's going to be pretty good all week. Yeah, it's a tight course, obviously, so you've got to shape your shots, find the right angles to be able to get the clean angle into the green. But yeah, it's a good course. You want to have a variety of courses all year long, so it's a nice one for sure.

Q. Do you feel like it suits your game? What is the strength of your game would you say?

SUDARSHAN YELLAMARAJU: To be honest, I wouldn't say I go to a course thinking, oh, this suits my game. I just kind of find a way to adjust no matter what the course is.

Q. Have you played a lot of Pete Dye golf courses in the past, and if so, do you remember which ones they were?

SUDARSHAN YELLAMARAJU: Well, obviously TPC Sawgrass for sure. That's probably the one that first comes up to my mind. Actually the Korn Ferry TOUR Championship at French Lick was a Pete Dye course. I've definitely played a few more Pete Dye courses, but those are the two I can think of right now.

Q. This one is different than Sawgrass by a bunch. I'm

not familiar with the French Lick one, but did you see any similarities and differences?

SUDARSHAN YELLAMARAJU: Actually, I would say this and TPC have some similar characteristics with the long bunkers and the kind of doglegs and windy fairways and a few of those pot bunkers for sure.

Yeah, it's a tough course for sure, regardless of who the designer is.

Q. Having grown partially in India as well as Canada, what made you fall in love with the game of golf?

SUDARSHAN YELLAMARAJU: I mean, the story is out there, but it was more just when I was a kid, I think I was around two or three years old, I just saw -- I was watching it on TV, and something kind of fascinated me, to be honest. I don't know what it is still to this day because I was two years old so I don't really remember too much. But it was kind of something fascinated me, and then I got a plastic set and I just loved it pretty much since then.

Q. You're a lefty, but you watched Tiger and Rory on film. How were you able to emulate their style and translate it over to left-handed play?

SUDARSHAN YELLAMARAJU: Well, sometimes I would just -- if you have the video on demand, I would just flip it over and kind of see -- or you just kind of see it and you just kind of feel it out yourself, that's kind of how I've done it.

I know obviously you see it as a right-hander, but you kind of see it as similar characteristics and you just try to do the same thing.

Q. You watched Rory last week. What was your thought about his performance?

SUDARSHAN YELLAMARAJU: Yeah, I mean, it's pretty cool. Obviously he played really good first two rounds, and obviously he did well enough that he needed to do on the weekend. I think it was probably a little bit different feeling for the win this year compared to last year, but it was pretty cool for sure.

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Q. You mentioned the Korn Ferry TOUR and playing the Pete Dye course there at French Lick. I imagine that was a pretty stressful week for you riding the bubble and trying to get your PGA TOUR card. Can you explain the pressure that week?

SUDARSHAN YELLAMARAJU: Yeah, I think I was No. 20 going into the week. Yeah, the pressure was there, but I had the experience of playing in Q-school where I think it's even more stressful because in a way your job is on the line out there. At least it wasn't feeling like my job was on the line at the TOUR Championship, but I kind of got to lean into that experience that Q-school was even more stressful and knowing this is the one week that I've got to play well to solidify and get my status for the upcoming year.

But I just was like, I'm just going to go play golf, and that's all it is. If I do well enough and get my card, great; if not, it's all right, I have next year. Thankfully I played well enough.

Q. You've made eight cuts in nine starts this season. As a rookie that's pretty impressive, but the top 5 at THE PLAYERS was where you got the most noticed. What sort of reaction have you had from other players and fans since that tournament?

SUDARSHAN YELLAMARAJU: Yeah, I've obviously had a lot of players and "good work" and some kids who are inspired by it, which is pretty cool. To be honest, I'm so focused on just doing my thing that I don't realize what I do, and I don't realize how big the PGA TOUR is until I've kind of seen it.

Yeah, it was a great tournament, obviously, but I wanted to kind of say, okay, I need to keep it going because it's just one tournament. I need to keep going because I know I want to play out here. I eventually want to contend and compete and have a chance to win in more tournaments. That's the next thing for sure.

Q. Could you talk about the importance of the Aon Next 10 and how that was able to get you here.

SUDARSHAN YELLAMARAJU: Yeah, obviously it gives kind of an opportunity to, through your good play, you get something that you can earn from it. Yeah, I know, okay, the Aon Next 10 and Swing 5 have been there but I'm just trying to play the best golf I can, and if I get into an event like this, great, and if not, I'll just see what other tournament I can get into.

Q. Is there anything in your routine that you feel like

has helped you to get here?

SUDARSHAN YELLAMARAJU: I would say just -- I'm saying it for maybe the third time, just the mindset of focusing on playing good shots because eventually that's all you can do. You play the best you can, see what you get. If not, you figure out what you need to do better, and that's it. You just keep going from there.

Q. We all are aware of golf being a very popular sport in Canada. How popular is it in India? Do you have any idea? Do you follow or have friends and relatives that follow golf in India?

SUDARSHAN YELLAMARAJU: No, I mean, I don't really have many -- well, grandparents are still there, but I don't really have too many family members there that are in golf. I'm really the only person in my family that plays golf.

I know it's definitely growing for sure, but like I said, I'm so focused on what I'm doing, I maybe don't think too much about where it's going on in other parts.

Q. You said you're so focused on what's going on in the present, but looking ahead, it's a Presidents Cup year, and you're from Canada; there's an opportunity for you to perhaps make the International Team. Is that something that's been on your mind? Have you met with any of the other players or the captain Geoff Ogilvie?

SUDARSHAN YELLAMARAJU: Well, I've played with a couple other international players. I have not met with the captain, but that's something that will just come with good play. I know I still probably need to do a lot better to even get a chance to be on that.

But yeah, that would be definitely a pretty cool thing to do if that happens. But like I said, I'm just kind of focusing on what I can do, and if I get into that, into the Presidents Cup, then that's great.

Q. I believe you're right-handed with a lot of things that you do, but you play left-handed, which is a little bit unusual. Is there any sort of specific holes on this golf course that you feel being left-handed is an advantage perhaps?

SUDARSHAN YELLAMARAJU: I mean, I know how to work it both ways, to be honest, so even if it's a dogleg right, I know I can play the draw, and then as a dogleg left, I can play the fade. I would say I can kind of work it both ways, so I wouldn't say, oh, this hole favors me more than others. It just depends on how you play it really.



Q. How did you spend last week on your week off, and what are you looking forward to most this week?

SUDARSHAN YELLAMARAJU: I mean, I just kind of took a couple days off and then just did the usual, just a little practice and getting ready, watched the Masters, of course, and yeah, that's about it.

Q. I was wondering if you've received any advice from any of the veteran players at all.

SUDARSHAN YELLAMARAJU: I wouldn't say -- I have not really kind of gone out of my way to ask. I've been trying to kind of do my thing, to be honest. Obviously they're working on trying to improve and work on their games. If it's kind of just happened through playing or through just a small interaction, I've received a little bit, but yeah, I've just been trying to do my thing really.

Q. Is there anything specifically?

SUDARSHAN YELLAMARAJU: I think one of the small things I've just kind of -- you just stay patient and you know -- obviously Korn Ferry TOUR you're having to shoot mid to high 20s every week. Here that's not really the case. It's not like you have to shoot 5- or 6-under every day out here to have a chance to win. Sometimes it's just about staying patient, just making pars and then add a couple birdies and that is enough to compete and have a chance to finish up in the top 10, top 5 or have a chance to win.

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