

Valspar Championship

Wednesday, March 16, 2022

Palm Harbor, Florida, USA

Innisbrook Resort (Copperhead)

Sam Burns

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Sam Burns, defending champion, to the interview room here. You're first TOUR win here last year, largely with that second round 63. So just some thoughts on being back. You've since won, obviously, but just some thoughts on being back here to a place that's obviously very special to you.

SAM BURNS: Yeah. I'm thrilled to be back. It seems like that year has gone by really quick. But, yeah, I'm excited to be here, a golf course that I really love. I was able to play nine holes this morning and golf course is in great shape, so, yeah, I'm excited to get out there tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Pretty cool seeing your name and your face and everything --

SAM BURNS: Yeah, for sure. I guess it's obviously better than not. So, yeah, it's cool to go by and see that.

THE MODERATOR: Just some thoughts on how you're feeling coming into the week with your game. I know you had a top 10 at Arnold Palmer Invitational and a tough final round last week, but just overall how you're feeling with your game coming into the week.

SAM BURNS: Yeah. I feel like I made a lot of strides in the last couple weeks. Played a really good final round at Bay Hill. I think I was one of four scores under par on Sunday.

So it's nice to see your game stand up in tough conditions like that. And then I played a lot of quality golf last week, just didn't really get off to a very good start on Sunday or Monday or whatever day the final round was.

Yeah. Just a long week. I just ran out of a little steam there at the end. But, yeah, game feels like it's trending in the right direction.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

Q. As you look back, what did winning do for you here

last year confidence-wise?

SAM BURNS: Yeah. I think you go from hoping that you can win or thinking that you can win to believing it when it actually happens. So I think it kind of propelled me to a really good year last year. I was able to win again this season, this past fall, so definitely be able to kind of look back on those moments and draw upon them.

Q. You had had some close calls without the win and here you broke through. What was the difference?

SAM BURNS: I think it was kind of sticking more to my game plan coming down the stretch and for awhile there I thought I kind of needed to play perfect, but really just needed to kind of play steady and hit the correct shots and I was able to do that here last year and it worked out. So I think that was a big learning lesson for me.

Q. You remember here in '18 you were chasing your temporary membership and had a couple, a rough end, I guess, to it and then you end here last year with a trophy leaving. What's the variation there in just emotions leaving this place?

SAM BURNS: Yeah. That year in 2018 was obviously tough. I think I made triple on 16 to miss getting my card by a few spots. That was tough, but I think it was also a good thing to have a year on the Korn Ferry and just kind of get my feet under me out there.

And then to be able to come back this year and birdie that hole in the final round just gave me a, you know, a four-shot lead going into 18 was, it was a good feeling of just kind of one of those things where you know you have had past memories that weren't great on that hole and then to kind of rewrite the story there last year was really cool.

Q. Last couple weeks playing really nicely in Florida. What have you seen in your game that's kind of been a bit of an uptick?

SAM BURNS: Yeah. I think I'm starting to hit it a little bit better than I was a few weeks prior to that. So just getting some confidence there and kind of seeing my game trend



in the right direction.

Q. Did you do anything special with the trophy or a photo, do any significant memorabilia from this week in your home or elsewhere?

SAM BURNS: Yeah. The trophy is, it's in the house, so it's something I see often, whenever I'm home, and obviously kind of always puts a smile on my face just to look back on this week last year. And, yeah, I'm really excited to be back. I'm excited to play this event. It's an event that I love and will always cherish for sure.

Q. Where in the house is it?

SAM BURNS: It's kind of in our living room. It's a piece of furniture that my wife has all set up in the house.

Q. Is there a, when you step back on this property, is there a shot from the week or a moment from the celebration, anything that just kind of jumps into mind?

SAM BURNS: Yeah. I think the 7-iron I hit on the final round on 16 to kind of, Keegan and I were maybe two or three shot difference at that point, but to hit a really good shot in there and make birdie, that was kind of, I think kind of what propelled me forward to ultimately win.

Q. How big a deal is trying to become world No. 1 to you?

SAM BURNS: I mean, obviously I think it's a goal, but I think it's kind of something that I have a lot of other goals set in place before that. I think it's kind of a byproduct of a lot of other things, and so really just trying to focus on the smaller details, preparation, and trying to improve my game in certain ways.

Q. You were a guy that was probably so close to making the Ryder Cup team last year. How did you handle not making the team and where does the Presidents Cup rank in your goals?

SAM BURNS: Yeah. That was really tough. Obviously desired to be on the team. It's something that I've always dreamed of as a kid and a goal that I had in place for the year, and so not making it was definitely difficult.

But at the same time, it was cool to see those guys play really well and watch them win. Hopefully get to share that with them the next time.

And yeah, Presidents Cup is definitely a big goal of mine and something that I really hope that I'm on the team at the

end of the year.

Q. Did you end up getting a call from Stricker?

SAM BURNS: I did, yeah.

Q. Curious about the what the turnaround's been like for you over the past week. Obviously with PLAYERS running into Monday and getting back here, what's your travel schedule been like and how have you reset for tomorrow?

SAM BURNS: It's kind of been a blur. Playing Thursday, then not playing for two days, playing my second round on Saturday or Sunday, wow, Sunday. Man, I still can't even remember.

Yeah. It's been a crazy last five or six days and really, we drove over Monday night, got here late, and then yesterday I just kind of took a me day and relaxed and took a nap and just hung out just trying to get ready to, get my body prepared to play this week.

Q. Do you feel it was more mentally demanding than physically, and if so, when was the last time you had to go through that process?

SAM BURNS: I think it was sort of both, just because mentally not playing for two rounds, the golf course changes a lot, and then physically, I played 54 holes in a couple days and so I think that was really challenging.

Yeah, getting here, just it's always a place I love coming back to and I'm just really excited for tomorrow.

Q. A totally off-topic question. March Madness starts tomorrow. I think I know the answer to this question, but who wins and why? Who are you picking to win?

SAM BURNS: Yeah, to be honest, I haven't followed it as closely as I wish I could have. But hopefully LSU will give it a run. Obviously a lot's been going on with the program, but who knows, it could definitely happen. And obviously Gonzaga's, they're going to be a tough team to beat. I haven't filled out a bracket, but I'll be paying close attention.

Q. Are you like Justin in the fact that you'll root against teams so guys out here don't start chirping?

SAM BURNS: Not necessarily. Obviously you want your team to do well and you want your team to win, but at the same time, you obviously want the best team to ultimately win at the end, and so if that's LSU, that would be awesome. So we'll see.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thank you for your time.

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