

Valspar Championship

Friday, March 18, 2022

Palm Harbor, Florida, USA

Innisbrook Resort (Copperhead)

Matthew NeSmith

Quick Quotes

Q. Talk about today's round, 31-30. Your career best 61 on the PGA TOUR. Can you describe the emotions? Because you looked pretty calm, cool, and collected out there.

MATTHEW NESMITH: Yeah. It's something I've been working on, something I've been really going through in my life, is just trying to relax a little bit, take everything as it comes. If I play great, awesome. If I don't play great, awesome. It's just kind of where I've been at in my life and I'm excited to play great and it was really fun to play great, but everything's going to be all right.

Q. Missed only one fairway, only two greens, hit over 120 feet of putts, No. 1 strokes gained off the tee, tee to green. This had to be the best round you've ever played on the the PGA TOUR.

MATTHEW NESMITH: Yeah. I mean, I've been doing the right things. I've just been getting in my own way for a long time. So this is the first kind of week that I've kind of let the chips fall where they may, so to speak, whether it be playing not so great or playing awesome, and it's just been nice to be very free and very kind of carefree and just trying to do the best I can. That's all I can do.

Q. Nice stretch there when at No. 3 a really hard par-4 you hit it up there two and a half feet. Next hole you roll in a 40-footer. And then you go on a birdie tear, some really tough holes. That had to feel great because you're knocking in birdies other guys are not.

MATTHEW NESMITH: Yeah. Yeah. It felt great. I mean, I was just doing exactly what you were supposed to, hitting the ball in the fairway, hitting it on the greens. And I've been working really, really hard. I've been working on my game for a long time and finally started to see a little bit of, I don't know, just some trajectory, I've been playing great and I just been kind of getting in my own way for, I mean, gosh, for awhile.

So it's something we're going to keep working on, it's fairly new, it's quite uncomfortable, to be honest with you, but I'm



excited to go through this weekend and try it and see what happens.

Q. Tell me, on the last hole, because I was rooting for that to go in, 60. I know you backed off, you heard some noise I guess there.

MATTHEW NESMITH: Yeah, someone in the grandstands was pouring out a bucket of water or ice or something, so it just kind of. And it was probably 25, 30 feet from me, so I just wasn't expecting it. That was all.

Q. So that threw you off a little bit, but it still almost went in, you felt that was going in, didn't you?

MATTHEW NESMITH: Yeah, I thought it was going in in. It was funny, my caddie, he said, I think it's going to go just a hair right at the end. And I was like, I don't know, I'm just going to hit a good putt and see what happens. And I guess it just didn't quite have enough speed because it just started to wiggle over to the right. But it was a great round, it was fun.

Q. Where does this new mantra come from?

MATTHEW NESMITH: Just been getting in my own way. I've done, I've been doing everything right. My game's been great. I've really worked on the driver. I've really worked on putting it better. I've really worked on chipping it better. And I've gotten better in all those areas but I haven't played any better.

So at some point in time that falls on me and that falls on how I act and how I think and how I want to feel. And so I'm done getting in my own way. And if it affects the way I play in a bad way, that's fine, but I'm done with the anxiety. I'm done with trying to, trying so hard.

And it's been working out great the last two days, but it may not work out this weekend. It may work out awesome. I don't know. But I'm going to keep going that way.

Q. Did you come up with this yourself? Your wife? A mental coach?



MATTHEW NESMITH: Yeah. I mean, I've got a full team and we've been talking about it for a long time. And so it's just finally started to sink in. It's just, we've just finally got a little bit of a grasp on it. I mean, it's uncomfortable. I'll tell you that right now. It's uncomfortable to give up all that control and give up kind of both hands on the steering wheel, so to speak.

But it's amazing what happens. It just shows you that the work I've been doing has been some really, really great work and I've got a great team around me and it was, I was able to follow it around today and just let things happen the way they do and I haven't been doing that the last 18 months.

Q. Give me an example of when it felt uncomfortable.

MATTHEW NESMITH: The first tee, yesterday. The second tee. The fairway. The putt. I mean, all of it. It's felt uncomfortable -- it's just, it's so weird not to try and hit fairways and not try and hit the green and not try and make putts and just do the best I can. That's a hard thing for me to do.

I mean, I'm just like everybody else. We like control and we like to be able to kind of try and steer things in the right direction, but I've been holding on for too long, so I'm done with it.

Q. And what was the breaking point to try this out this week?

MATTHEW NESMITH: I don't know. It's just been kind of heading that way for a long time. It's been heading that way for a long time. We've been talking about it. I think I just got fed up. I just got fed up with where I've been. And it's cool to see, because I haven't been playing some great golf this year, but I haven't played bad. I've kind of done some this stuff in spite of myself, which is incredible, and it just shows you that my game's going in the right direction and I'm excited for where that direction is and whether it be great this week or whether it doesn't work out this week, we don't know if it will be this week, two years, five years. I don't know. But I like how it felt today a hell of a lot more than any other day.

Q. You step up to the shot. You got to think about something. What's going through your head?

MATTHEW NESMITH: To be honest with you, the anxiety is much worse than the outcome, in my mind. So it's okay. It's fine. It's what, I'm just, I'm getting over the shots and I'm doing exactly what I've always done and picking out shots and just going to be all right with where they go. I'm going to accept standing over the tee ball. If I top it two

feet off the fairway or if I hit a 320 yard stripe down the middle of the fairway, I'm going to let both of them be what they may.

Q. The putting, have you always done this?

MATTHEW NESMITH: I switched at John Deere last year, and it's been a little bit up-and-down, but I've been working hard on it and we've definitely gotten better. So I'm excited to see where it goes. And these are my type of greens I've always putted. I'm a South Carolina boy, so Bermuda and, a little bit of overseeded Bermuda is right up my alley.

Q. What was your experience like playing in this as a junior?

MATTHEW NESMITH: Never played in this one as a junior. No, I never played in this one. I played in the Wyndham and Memphis. So those were two that I played in. And, I mean, playing on the PGA TOUR is all I ever dreamed of as a kid, so they're all amazing.

Q. I got to imagine growing up in Aiken you probably dreamed of playing in the Masters. How do you put that out of your mind, the possibility?

MATTHEW NESMITH: It's the same mantra we've had all week. It's going to be all right. I'm going to, depending upon whether I get to drive 25 minutes and play in Augusta or whether I'm just going to be at home with my wife and my dog and hanging out with some friends, it's going to be the same either way. So it's going to happen if it's going to happen. If it's not, I'm okay with it.

Q. Second into 14, what did you have left and what did you see when it left the club?

MATTHEW NESMITH: 14? The par-5, right? Yeah, I had 250 front, and honestly, I didn't even, now that I think about it I didn't even walk up and see where the flag was. I just kind of know where the middle that have greens is and where it needs to be and it was a decent number and me and Mick thought we had some just out of the left, but it was actually down and out of the left, which is why it flew so far.

Because when I hit it, I didn't think it was going fly to the middle of the green. I thought it was just going to fly front edge and just kind of be there. So when I came around that corner to see where it was I was pleasantly surprised. So it was good.

Q. You said you weren't here for juniors. What this your history with this course and what do you think of it?

MATTHEW NESMITH: I played last year for the first time and it was in May, so this is the first time I've been here in March, and I really like it. I like everything about it. It's tough in areas. You got to hit some good shots. It plays right into my strength. My iron play has always been kind of everything I can lay my head on, so it works out.

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