

Valspar Championship

Thursday, March 16, 2023

Palm Harbor, Florida, USA

Innisbrook Resort (Copperhead)

Stephan Jaeger

Quick Quotes

Q. 5-under opening round. What was working well for you out there today?

STEPHAN JAEGER: I hit some good putts, drove it really nice on the back nine, gave myself a lot of chances to hit it on the greens. These greens are pretty small, so if you've hit 'em in the right spots, you've got a lot of short putts in, and just kind of made the right putts and scored on the par-5s, which was nice. I didn't do a good job with that last week, so I'm happy I did that this week.

Q. You mentioned earlier that you picked up momentum on the back nine. Was there any hole in particular that kind of catapulted you?

STEPHAN JAEGER: It started on 8. It was like 243 and I hit a 7-wood to about 4 feet and made it. I think I was 1-over at the time. So it just kind of gave me some momentum.

I know this is a golf course, you shoot a couple under, you're normally in a pretty good spot. I ended up birdieing 9 to get to 1-under and birdied 11, so just kind of kept on building. Birdied another par-5 on the back. So really solid, kind of kept it in front of me and made some putts.

Q. Ryan was talking about this golf course does a great job of keeping you feeling uncomfortable. When you have a really solid ball-striking round, what's the night-and-day difference of that instead of battling this place?

STEPHAN JAEGER: Yeah, if you're not hitting it good, you're going to be in for a long day, especially some holes here you're kind of handcuffed on where you can hit it. You can't just send driver on every hole. 2 and 3, you're going to have 8- to 5-irons in a lot of times, even on 16. I hit a good drive and I had 5-iron in.

So I feel like I wore those clubs out today. But I ended up hitting a couple close and making a couple long putts and obviously that's why it came to a good score. So if you don't hit the fairways and you're in the rough and you're



kind of scrambling all day long, it's going to be a long day. So I'm happy I kind of got an easy one today, and I've got three more long days, so you never know.

Q. Your buddy on the bag first time?

STEPHAN JAEGER: No, actually he's caddied for me three or four times. A couple good finishes last year actually with him. He knows what he's doing. He's played professional golf for a long time. He's not a first-timer. He knows what he's doing. So that makes it even funnier that he lost it.

Q. What's the name?

STEPHAN JAEGER: Kent Bulle.

Q. Kent Bulle? Oh, he was at the --

STEPHAN JAEGER: He went to the Argentina Open a couple times. Actually played the British a few times that way. Kind of gave it up a couple years ago and still kind of lives close to Nashville, in Kentucky, and he comes out every once in a while. He's got two kids, so we kind of keep it every three or four months. But I like to have him on the bag.

Q. I'm guessing you don't have the old man stickers with your name and address on your clubs?

STEPHAN JAEGER: No, I don't. Exactly.

Q. Can you talk about losing the club and all that?

STEPHAN JAEGER: Oh, the -- when he was -- okay, yeah. Yeah, I told my caddie on 18, I was like, Hey, good job. And he's like, Hey, wait a minute on that one, you know, we finished the round with 13 clubs. So I, I was like, What? He's like, Yeah, I forgot your 58- on 15 at the par-3. I hit it in the bunker and I needed it. So thank God I didn't need it for the rest of the round. And it kind of gave us a good laugh on 18, everybody in the group.

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