

Valspar Championship

Thursday, March 20, 2025

Palm Harbor, Florida, USA

Innisbrook Resort (Copperhead)

Andre Chi

Quick Quotes

Q. First day on the PGA TOUR today, how did it feel just to be out there and compete on this tour on this stage?

ANDRE CHI: Unbelievable. It was a lot of fun, even though I didn't play my best. I lost a lot of strokes on the green, but just being out there the environment here and the crowds, it's a lot better playing it than watching it on TV for sure.

Q. What were you thinking about on the first tee just getting ready to go?

ANDRE CHI: First tee? I mean I wasn't as nervous as I thought. A lot of people told me it's just another round of golf, so I stepped up with that attitude and I hit a good one, just the wind caught it a little bit and to start my PGA TOUR career or first round with a par felt great.

Q. Way back in a couple that go way back to the roots but could you describe your golf journey in terms of how you got in the game, what made you decide to want to be in this profession?

ANDRE CHI: So my dad, actually my dad's 61st birthday today, but he's the one that introduced me to the game at a young age and taught me through scrapbooks that he made, ripping pages off magazines and that's how he taught me the game. Once I grew out of his shoes he, it was just YouTube, YouTube and trying to learn from the best players in the world and copying their swings. I copied, I tried to copy Tiger's swing my whole life and Adam Scott as well. And I told him that when I played a practice round with him, which was funny. But, yeah, I just always wanted to do this. I never gave up. I just had a hot week on this past Monday and to be here feels great, but this is so many people along the way I think more importantly that has helped me get here. Yeah, the golf game helps, but the amount of support and the special teams in my circle who have supported me throughout the years is why I'm here, I believe.

Q. The practice round with Adam Scott, how did that



come about?

ANDRE CHI: So actually I actually caddied for Ben An at the Seminole Pro-Member I got the opportunity and I said yes because I wanted to see those guys up close and learn. And I told him I might have a chance to qualify for the PGA Championship in May through the PPC, and I told him if I do get in it would be an honor to play a practice round with him and so it was just me and Ben An, I reached out to him and he gladly welcomed me and Adam Scott kind of just walked up to the tee and he said, do you guys mind if I join and I wasn't going to say no to that. So, yeah, it was a great time, he's super generous, super nice, he was trying to give me a lot of advice on this golf course and how to tackle this golf course and it was awesome. It was awesome.

Q. Is that moment almost a little surreal when he just comes up and he's like, want to play together?

ANDRE CHI: Yeah, these guys are guys you only see on TV so it's surreal watching them in person. But at the same time they're here just as a competitor as me and you got to put that aside.

Q. Could you go through where -- you're assistant pro?

ANDRE CHI: I'm assistant pro at Deepdale Golf Club up in Manhasset, New York.

Q. Then being in Florida for the winter do you kind of like --

ANDRE CHI: I took a gamble on myself this winter. I knew, I tried all year to save as much money and Q-School, through Q-School and stuff, I fell short of Q-School, so I'm stationed over in Port St. Lucie right now and grabbed a place there and spending the winter just focusing on my game. I will be going back up to Deepdale this spring, so looking forward to that as well.

Q. How many Monday qualifiers have you tried this year?



ANDRE CHI: This year was my third. I did the Cognizant pre and the Puerto Rico pre and just had one bad hole on each round and cost me to get into the Monday, but I think the last three years I've done a handful here and there and I wasn't chasing Mondays, by no means, but any time it fit the schedule and I was in the right location I did sign up.

Q. Then going, could you go through when the pre Q was when you shot and then the process of getting into this tournament.

ANDRE CHI: Yeah, so the pre was at Southern Hills Plantation Club on Thursday and the winds were down and I shot a bogey free 66 to move on. And so this past Monday I shot a 67 in winds similar to today, 15 to 30, so it was a tough challenge but it was fun and I'm glad I made it through.

Q. What was the feeling of making it through realizing you made it through and then what was -- what was going through your mind in terms of that emotion?

ANDRE CHI: I'm not sure if it's set in yet. I'm just trying to put one foot in front of the other right now and trying to soak everything in. I think once this week's over I think it will kind of hit that I did play in a PGA TOUR event, but right now I'm just trying to figure out my putting. I'm trying to get ready for tomorrow and maybe try to post a good number.

Q. Port St. Lucie, do you live -- like what's your living situation like there?

ANDRE CHI: So there's an assistant up at Ardsley that spends the winter down here by the name of Kyle Dobbs, and I'm extremely grateful for him, he, at that time I was looking for housing and it was very tough to find housing last minute, especially down in that area, it fills up pretty quick. So he reached out to a realtor that he knew and finally found a place right on that property on PGA Golf Club that I have my seasonal membership there and I'm practicing out of, so a huge shout out to him, I mean that saved a lot of stress and but, yeah.

Q. There's a story that your bank account was pretty tight.

ANDRE CHI: Yeah, I'm not working and I'm playing Mondays, and so there's -- there's money going out, no money coming in. I did play one minor league event when you can make some money but break even at most. I knew that coming down to Florida this winter, but like I said, I put that gamble on myself and, but I thought if I just did everything I could to get better I think the golf game will speak for itself and the support will come and so I didn't

lose sight of that belief and here we are and I'm extremely grateful.

Q. What would you think about as a kid just getting to play with Adam Scott this week and play in a PGA TOUR event?

ANDRE CHI: The funny thing is I've pictured this my whole life and I've, when I practice shots I envision a gallery around, the nerves and all that stuff, so it was surprisingly comfortable, it was, you know, it felt like I've been here, but at the same time I know it's my first time, so it was just a good feeling.

Q. What family and friends were following you around today?

ANDRE CHI: My mom couldn't make it, but my father and my sister, older sister is here today. My younger of the two older sisters is coming tonight, I believe. I saw a high school friend of mine that was also here, we grew up playing Junior golf and we haven't kept in touch much, but he was always one of those solid friends of mine and to see him, I was warming up and I heard a voice and I saw that it was him, Joe Tomoro (phonetic) and it was great seeing some familiar faces.

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