

RBC Canadian Open

Friday, June 10, 2022

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

St. George's Golf & Country Club

Alex Smalley

Quick Quotes

Q. Good playing. Probably not the finish but back-to-back 67s, must feel pretty good going into the weekend.

ALEX SMALLEY: Absolutely. Yeah, I felt like I've been hitting the ball really well the last couple of days. Drove it really well yesterday, only missed one fairway and I was in the first cut of rough. The rough's pretty juicy here, so it's nice to be able to stay out of that.

I didn't drive it as well today, but I scrambled a little bit. The fairways I did miss I felt like I missed it on a side where I was shooting kind of up the green instead of across the bunker or something. So I was able to make a score out of it.

But, yeah, probably shouldn't have bogeyed those two par-3s that I did on my second nine, but, yeah, very pleased overall.

Q. You mentioned the rough being difficult this week. A lot of guys were talking about that. How does this course kind of fit your eye?

ALEX SMALLEY: It's good. I feel like most of the fairways are fairly generous and it's not super firm. I can't imagine what this course would be like if it's, if the ball was running 30 or 40 yards in the fairway. Yeah, I like it. I like grass, this type of grass.

The views are nice. I feel like I do pretty well on courses that have some elevation changes. So I like that aspect of it as well.

Q. You had a couple top 10s this season. Curious what you learned from those experiences that will help you prepare for this weekend.

ALEX SMALLEY: Probably the biggest thing was that I can compete out here. That was just validation for me that I can compete at the highest level and play with the guys out here. And then just realizing that not everybody hits a shot where they're looking exactly every single time. You



don't have to be perfect, there's no one right way to play golf, you just have to make a score out of what you do. So that was probably the two things that I learned the most.

Q. You played on the Mackenzie Tour. Curious what memories you have of that and playing in Canada.

ALEX SMALLEY: Sure. So I got on the Mackenzie Tour at a weird time. So I got my card in 2020, the week before COVID hit and everything shut down. So in the summer of 2020 we played the LocalIQ Series and that was in the U.S.

And then last year we were on the Forme Tour and that was in the U.S. So I had a card for two years but never played up here in Canada.

Q. What about that experience, did that prepare you for now? Just, you know, all this change and, you know, jumping place to place?

ALEX SMALLEY: I think the biggest thing is just that playing four rounds of golf -- in college most of our tournaments are only three rounds and four rounds is a lot different than three.

Then just trying to figure out travel. We didn't play back-to-back weeks every single week on the Forme Tour or the Mackenzie Tour, so the travel was certainly something that you have to get used to and just trying to manage your time. That's what I would say.

Q. You mentioned your college career, being a Duke alum, one of the best collegiate players from Duke. How did that experience shape you into the golfer you are now? What did you learn from that experience?

ALEX SMALLEY: I wasn't by any means one of the top-ranked guys coming out of college. The first couple of years of college I wasn't doing anything crazy. But I just kind of felt like I got incrementally better every single year. I feel like if I can keep doing that then I'll fare pretty well.

And, yeah, I just felt like I developed really well as a player and the coaches and facilities at Duke allowed me to do that really well. Just kept gaining self belief and that



served me really well.

Q. Playing with Sahith today, I know a good pairing for you. If you can talk a little bit about that.

ALEX SMALLEY: Yeah, so I've known Sahith for probably five or six years at this point. I don't know if I played any junior golf with him, just because he was from California and I'm from North Carolina, so we never really crossed paths then.

But, yeah, I played with Sahith a decent amount in college, mostly amateur events in the summer. I remember playing the Sunnehanna with him a couple of times. We got our TOUR card the same way.

It's nice to see him, I've been cheering him on. He had a really good week last week and it's nice to see him have a lot of success out here as well. But I haven't played with him in a long time. I think the last time we played together was the Korn Ferry Finals last year, so it was nice seeing him again.

He's a really, really nice guy, I wish I could play every round with him.

Q. You mentioned you had to scramble a little bit today. I know you found the rough more today than yesterday. Did you learn from that and what kind of strategy do you have hitting out of some of that thick rough out there, how do you do it?

ALEX SMALLEY: Most of the time it's lie dependent. There are some lies where the ball nestles down, all the way down to the bottom to the ground. But I think there's so much grass that the ball actually doesn't make it to the bottom, it kind of sits up on top. And if you have a shorter iron in you can advance something up there pretty far. If you're trying to hit a 5- or 6-iron out of there it's a little more difficult. But, yeah, you just have to read the lie. If the grass is laying with you, if the grass is going towards the hole it's certainly a lot easier. If it's back into you it doesn't come out at all. So I'm going to try and stay out of it the rest of the week.

Q. Tough to control the ball spin a little bit on some of those flier lies?

ALEX SMALLEY: Absolutely. Yeah, you have to -- I had one on 1, I landed it 20 yards short of the hole and it finished pin high. So you get 15 to 20 yards of bounce and roll. So it's certainly tough to judge.

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