

Myrtle Beach Classic

Thursday, May 8, 2025

Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, USA

Dunes Golf and Beach Club

Nick Watney

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: 5 under for the day. What did you like about your opening round?

NICK WATNEY: I liked the start really. I've been kind of getting off to slow starts. Last week I played later -- I played late early, and the lead was at least 8 under and I was 1 over par it felt like for the first 14 holes. It was nice to get a few on the board early and just kind of carried that momentum.

THE MODERATOR: With getting these starts like last week and been playing a few, what's it like to get kind of back in that repetition?

NICK WATNEY: It's great. It's great to play a few in a row, kind of get some rounds with a score card logged. I feel like my game has been improving for the first time in a while, so I'm really excited to play. Just trying to enjoy it.

THE MODERATOR: What areas are you really focused on for the improvement?

NICK WATNEY: You know, everything really (smiling), all across the board. I had gotten down pretty deep, fallen off pretty deep, so everything has been improving. I'm pretty excited.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. So last week I think two 69s, right? Just missed the cut.

NICK WATNEY: Yes.

Q. Because you're not out here as much, when you see somebody like Scottie shoot what he shot on the same golf course you're shooting at, what does that make you think?

NICK WATNEY: You know, it makes you think that you have a lot of room to improve for sure. Obviously he's the standard of golf, and he was also on for the week, so it was impressive.



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At the same time it's motivating because you kind of see what is possible. I don't know if I'll ever -- obviously my time is not -- I'm not on the front end of my career, but at the same time, I think I still have some good stuff left.

It was an amazing performance, and that's the standard of golf I guess.

Q. When you were in your low point, what was it that -- if there was a seminoe moment, maybe not, but what was it that kind of got you starting going back in the right direction?

NICK WATNEY: I think I've kind of been thinking about that, and there wasn't really an 'aha' moment, to be honest. Throughout my career I've been kind of like a gradual improver. I didn't really burst on the scene or anything.

That's been the same with this. It's been kind of like -- for a while my driving was a real -- it was impossible to play good golf the way I was driving it, so that was a focus. Now I've gotten to a point where I'm driving it well. Then last week or a few starts now in a row I haven't putted very well, so that's become a focus.

Just kind of, like I said, every part of the game has been gradually improving. It's nice to log a good round, but obviously it's only the first quarter of the game. We have a long way to go.

Q. Obviously you got in because Webb Simpson withdrew. What were your expectations coming in here? First you had to get in. Then once you got in, what were your expectations coming here?

NICK WATNEY: As far as like where I want to finish and stuff or...

Q. Are you building off of your two 69s last week? Did you find something last week that you said, I'm looking forward to trying to work with that this week? What was it you were thinking?

NICK WATNEY: Actually, as I said, it's kind of been a gradual thing. I've actually played counting the Korn Ferry TOUR, Puerto Rico, I think I've played the last 13 rounds

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have been par or better. It's kind of been a gradual climb.

I played the Dominican. I hit the ball really well. I didn't make anything on the greens. Missed the cut by a shot.

Then last week for the most part I played really well. It didn't hole much, and missed the cut by a shot. My expectations were I wanted to keep improving, but I thought with the trend of my game is I expect to shoot some decent scores.

Where I'll finish, I have no clue, but I just want to keep improving. That's my expectation.

Q. I don't want to be harsh, but it's been a while since you've contended, right? Is that a fair assessment?

NICK WATNEY: That's fair.

Q. You're at the point now where you have a good another couple of days you'll be in that situation. Do you feel like you can deal with that as well as you had in the past?

NICK WATNEY: Well, I think there will be a relearning thing, relearning phase, feeling things I haven't felt in a while, but at the same time I've done it before. You know, I don't think it will be completely foreign.

Not to say that I'll handle it perfectly, but I would be really looking forward to that whenever that comes because that's why I play golf.

Q. You made 300 cuts. That's awesome. Can you talk a bit about that and about what that was like?

NICK WATNEY: I wasn't aware that until my caddie told me after the fact. Obviously it means I've been around for a little while I guess. It's definitely an honor.

I actually played a practice round with Bill Haas and his dad, Jay, who is caddying for him, and I think he's made 500 cuts, which blows my mind.

Yeah, it's cool. My dream since I was little was to play on the PGA TOUR, so I take pride in the fact that I've been out for a little while.

Q. Has there been anything that's helped you in between your personal life and your tour career and the game that has helped you to get to that point, do you think?

NICK WATNEY: Yeah, my parents and my wife have been -- obviously my parents early and then my wife in the later

stage have been incredibly supportive. I have four children, so it's kind of definitely a different perspective from when I was in my 20s.

I would say golf has a little different part of my life now, but I still love it, and my wife and parents have been incredibly supportive of me playing.

Q. Can you talk a bit about the in between from the tour to the KFT and back and forth and how that has been?

NICK WATNEY: Yeah. I'm trying not to pay attention to the letters in front of the tournament that I'm playing in. Ultimately I do want to be out here, but I think the Korn Ferry TOUR is a great place to play, and I just want to play in competition right now.

I'm excited whenever I get to play.

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