

Myrtle Beach Classic

Thursday, May 7, 2026

Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, USA

Dunes Golf and Beach Club

Aaron Rai

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: First try on 65 with nine birdies, including first four. How do you feel about your opening round?

AARON RAI: Yeah, a really good start. Obviously started the round great with birdieing the first four holes, and then just kept creating a lot of chances. Hit some good tee shots, got it in the fairway. Wedge play felt really strong. Kept making some nice midrange putts as well.

It flowed along really well. So, yeah, really pleased with this start.

THE MODERATOR: Any favorite shot or birdie in particular from the day or even par save?

AARON RAI: I made a really nice birdie on hole number three. Drove it left into the bunker. Slightly pulled the approach out to about 45 feet and then made the putt, which was a nice little bonus. Again, just continued the momentum from birdieing the first two holes.

Yeah, that felt like -- yeah, that felt like a real bonus to get.

THE MODERATOR: Making your tournament debut here. What are you seeing, or what are you liking from the course?

AARON RAI: Yeah, it's a really good course. It's quite rare to be so close to the coast but have a course that is so green and so lush. We're quite fortunate today with the wind. Didn't really pick up a huge amount. Picked up a little bit for us on the last six holes, but I think the course plays great with a little bit of wind.

I'm sure we'll get it over the next few days, but it's in great shape. The rough is healthy. You've got to drive it well. Greens are rolling well. So, yeah, it's a really good course, really good test.

THE MODERATOR: You will be playing next week. What went into your decision of adding this to your schedule, or when did you add it?



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AARON RAI: I heard a lot of really good things the last two years. I watched the highlights when Chris Gotterup won the first year and just really liked the way that it looked.

Yeah, it fits the schedule really well with playing ahead of the PGA Championship next week, so it was a really simple decision to play.

THE MODERATOR: Are you typically someone who plays the week before a major or you like to?

AARON RAI: It varies a little bit. I think some of it also depends on how the season is going, how the previous few weeks have looked leading into the events. For me I've not played a huge amount over the last three weeks. So, again, with really liking the way the course looks, not playing a huge amount, it was a very simple decision to play this week and the next three weeks following.

But if I've played a lot of golf leading up into a major, I'll usually take one week off just before it.

Q. Aaron, you had a big 2024 and a decent '25, I think. Has this year been a bit frustrating for you with the position you would kind of put yourself in coming into the season?

AARON RAI: Yeah, it's been a difficult start to the season. I had a couple of injuries as well, which touch wood, I haven't really struggled with so far in my career. A couple of things have come up over the last few months.

So that's definitely affected the amount of tournaments, affected the amount of prep going into them, but feeling healthy, able to practice as normal now. So, yeah, it's nice to just get into some normal routines and hopefully play a run of tournaments now.

Q. I guess, if you don't mind, mentioning what the injuries might have been and how long it's been that you now have felt, you know, better and at full strength?

AARON RAI: Yeah, so initially in January started off with lower right back. Then in February neck. Yeah, that wasn't great, but it started to feel really good pretty much

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since just before the Masters, and just tried to slowly increase practice, increase training over the last three or four weeks.

Yeah, feels really positive overall. Yeah, just looking forward to playing a good stretch of events now over the next four weeks, but looking ahead to the rest of the season. It will be nice just to play some consistent golf.

Q. You played all around the world. Does this course kind of remind you of anywhere else you've been?

AARON RAI: Yeah, I feel like it has shades of Canada. I feel like it has a little bit of the U.K. in there as well. Very lush, very green. Quite tree-lined as well at times.

Obviously a lot more grain on the greens compared to the U.K. for sure, but yeah, I really enjoy it. Very well-defined. Really good layout.

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