

U.S. Open Championship 2021

Tuesday, June 15, 2021

San Diego, California, USA

Torrey Pines Golf Course

Sahith Theegala

Flash Interview



THE MODERATOR: We're with Sahith Theegala. Talk about the qualifying journey. We like to say from many, one here that you were one of the many who tried to qualify and you're here now.

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, it was a little bit different this year than past years, obviously being pro, but I actually was playing a string of Korn Ferry events so it kind of conflicted with local qualifying. I would have loved to do it back home in California, but I signed up a little bit late, ended up doing it in Houston on a course I had never seen before. Luckily I had a couple friends down there, so that's where I did my locals.

It was a long day. It was a rain delay after 12 holes, and it was a two-day thing, but got through that and then did my sectionals in Ohio. Actually didn't get my first pick, which was Rolling Hills, because I signed up late for locals. Didn't see the golf course there at Springfield, kind of fought back in my second 18 and made it a three-for-one playoff. It was not stress free, that's for sure, but obviously really excited I got here. Long qualifying process.

Q. Talk about your experience at Torrey Pines and how the course is set up this week.

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, played three Junior Worlds at Torrey Pines from when I was 15 through 17. I remember when I first got here when I was 15, I thought it was the hardest golf course I had ever played. I shot like 78-85. I missed the cut, but the third round I shot even, and I was like, let's go. After that, it gave me confidence.

In a couple years, got a little more comfortable, and had a couple of good finishes. Good memories for sure. I love the grasses, kikuyu and poa, but I probably played 20 rounds out here, and this is definitely the firmest I've seen the greens, and the rough is thick. Standard U.S. Open stuff, but yeah.

Q. A lot of questions about the rough today. Can you explain it a little bit, especially the rough around the greens?

SAHITH THEEGALA: The rough around the greens, it's the most I've seen all year, maybe the most I've seen ever. The only other course I could think of that had rough this bad was Erin Hills in 2017. The rough around the greens is really thick. It's kind of a mixture, I feel like, of some sort of kikuyu and I don't know what -- some sort of rye overseed grass, but the club gets stuck so easily.

The fairway actually isn't terrible, the rough around the fairways. It's a little bit spotty I would say. There's some lies where you can advance it on the green pretty easily and then other lies you're kind of chipping out. You do not want to hit out of the rough this week.

Q. Pairings were released this morning. Talk a little bit about your reaction when you saw that.

SAHITH THEEGALA: I was so pumped. Are you kidding me, hitting the first shot at a major championship? That's something that me and my family will obviously never forget. I do enjoy going off that early because, first of all, it doesn't really get that cold out here, so I think it will warm up pretty quickly and then obviously super fresh greens on poa. I think that is kind of important because no matter -- even though they're super pure and fast, in the afternoon they're going to get bumpy, so I'm pretty excited going off first.

Q. You're pretty close to where you grew up. Who's out here with you this week? And talk about having fans back.

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, it's going to be awesome. I've had my swing coach Rick Connor out here the last few days and it's been great spending time with him. Had my college coaches Blaine and Beardo out here yesterday, walked 18 with me, so that was really cool. I can't wait for the rest of my family to get here Thursday. I think we're going to have a pretty decent-sized crew out. I'm so excited to have my whole family out there to see a local event.

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