

U.S. Open Championship 2024

Thursday, June 13, 2024

Village of Pinehurst, North Carolina, USA

Pinehurst Resort & C.C. (Course No. 2)

Jackson Suber

Flash Interview



THE MODERATOR: Welcome back to the interview area. We're here with Jackson Suber. Talk us through what you've been through. You obviously got into the field on Tuesday, and now you're 1-under at the U.S. Open. How does that all feel, and what's going through your mind?

JACKSON SUBER: Yeah, it's been a crazy couple weeks. Going into the qualifier, I had missed four cuts in a row, and I felt like I was playing good golf but just things weren't happening.

In that qualifier, I had like a six-footer on the last hole to get through and ended up missing that, to get to a playoff and missed that. Went into the playoff and was pretty bummed but ended up on the third hole making like a 50-foot putt for birdie when my opponent missed like a four- or five-footer, and I kind of thought I had lost it.

It was a very roller coaster week, just like this has been.

I've heard that I had a chance to get in, almost be last man in the field, and then ended up being first alternate with how things shook down at Memorial. It's just been a roller coaster.

Then to hear Jon Rahm was withdrawing, pulling out -- Tuesday I didn't sleep very well after getting the news. But I've kind of calmed down, and after the first couple holes I felt at ease and my caddie has helped out a lot, just stay very patient and calm, and it felt like a normal golf tournament after the first couple holes.

Q. Getting in the field the way you did, do you feel like you're playing with house money, or are you here to compete now that you're in contention?

JACKSON SUBER: I mean, just golf tournament is the same, if I'm playing in a mini-tour event or a Korn Ferry TOUR or a major. Just trying to play as good as I can and not really thinking about where it puts me or anything external.

Q. Can you tell us where you were and how you found out that you were going to play in the tournament?

JACKSON SUBER: Yeah, I was on No. 8, and I got a tip from someone. I'm not going to name them. But they said Rahm was pulling out. I wasn't sure yet, but I was pretty -- I was freaking out.

No. 8 and 9 didn't get much done in my practice round. When we were on 9 we started getting announcements and my phone started blowing up asking me if I was getting in, and then I called Reese from the USGA pretty quick and tried to figure out what was going on and if I was going to be playing.

That was just a really cool moment, especially to figure out I'm getting in the tournament out on the golf course and then be able to call my family and people the around me that help me out so much. It was a really special moment.

Q. You were replacing Jon Rahm. I don't know if you can tell us something about Jon or his game that you like.

JACKSON SUBER: He wins a lot. That's pretty good. He's one of the best players in the world. Yeah, it's cool to take someone's spot like that because I hope to be -- at that age have a career with a lot of the same accomplishments as him. So it's really cool.

Q. In a playoff for an alternate at the qualifier, what are those emotions like? It's kind of a weird spot.

JACKSON SUBER: Yeah, there wasn't really nerves honestly. I didn't think it mattered much, to be honest. Obviously it did. But I wasn't really familiar with how there's spots saved for the World Ranking and that alternates -- if you're first alternate you have a pretty solid chance depending on where you qualify.

It's been a roller coaster. That's the only way I can describe it.

Q. When did you get here, and what was the thought because you were still in the field for the Korn Ferry TOUR this week and what your contingency plan was for this week?

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JACKSON SUBER: Yeah, my caddie Ryan and I drove up here Sunday, and we played nine holes that day and played nine holes every day since. Honestly, when I was playing that practice round on No. 8, I was having a conversation with my caddie and my agent, and I had a flight booked to Wichita the next morning. It was just going to be a really tough decision to make, and there was going to be a conversation after that because the plan was to just play until Tuesday and then make a decision based on the facts we have. If it was a better chance that I wasn't going to be in, then I was going to go to Wichita, play the pro-am and try to do my best out there.

Q. How difficult was the travel actually getting here then? You said you were having to make the decision and then it's a matter of, okay, now you actually have to have logistics of getting here.

JACKSON SUBER: I was gracious enough that -- I had a friend, stayed at his father-in-law's house, and they were gracious to host me and my caddie for a couple days, and when we found out we got in, a lot of my family came up so we ended up renting a house and just staying with them now. But very thankful for them and the Country Club of North Carolina for having me for a couple days.

Q. It's crazy enough getting a spot in the U.S. Open but you're in a featured group with Jordan Spieth and Hideki Matsuyama. What was it like when you found out that's who you were playing with?

JACKSON SUBER: Yeah, that's pretty cool. When the tee times came out, I said, who is Rahm playing with, and kind of wanted to see because there's a good chance that's my group if I have one. Yeah, that's pretty cool.

Jordan probably after Tiger is the most popular golfer in the world. Like if you ask people who don't play golf, that's one name they know. Hideki is a global superstar. It was really cool to play with them and be up close with them and talk to them. It was just a great opportunity.

Q. Was there any chatter in the group? Did you have any conversations with either of them?

JACKSON SUBER: Yeah, for sure. I talked to Hideki and his caddie a little bit and talked to Jordan and Michael, as well, and my caddie talked to them, as well. There wasn't a ton of chatter but there was a couple conversations here and there, and it was good to talk to them. They're good people.

Q. With your round, you had to grind it out a lot of the time, a lot of amazing up-and-downs. Can you talk

about your emotions throughout the day when it comes to your game and how you were playing out there?

JACKSON SUBER: Yeah, I mean, it was -- I'm sure I'm pretty tired right now. I don't know if I feel it, but after the -- the first hole when I got up there, I was really nervous, and after the bogey on 2, I kind of settled in a little bit and then hit a great shot on 3, made birdie there, and then it started to feel like a normal golf tournament. I kind of hit a rough spot on -- made a birdie on 13, which was great after kind of a mis-hit iron shot off the tee, and then on 14, made bogey, caught a bad lie -- I caught a good lie in the native area, but mis-hit it and it went way over the green and had to salvage a bogey and avoid double. But it was fine after that. Felt good.

Then the next hole I missed like a three-footer for par, just kind of hit it a little too hard. But I stayed patient, took my time on the four and a half footer after that, and rolled it in. Kind of kept a good mindset, made a great birdie on 16 and finished with those two pars. There was good and bad moments, but I felt like I stayed pretty level and didn't let either emotion get the best of me.

Q. Have you ever been the last man in the field at any other tournaments?

JACKSON SUBER: No, I think a couple weeks ago, I said to one of my friends, I don't think I've ever been an alternate for a tournament. I've either been way out or -- never been like an alternate on-site, and sure enough, that's what happens. But I'm glad it worked out this time and didn't have to wait around all day.

Q. Describe your feelings to play your first major.

JACKSON SUBER: Yeah, it's incredible, and to play at a place like Pinehurst at a U.S. Open, I couldn't really -- it's incredible. That's the only way I can really put it. To come out of that tunnel and see all the people, all the way up and down the fairway, it's just really cool, especially at a golf course like this with the history it has and the difficulty of it.

Q. What's it like just in general this, having a press conference at the U.S. Open in a week where you're practicing and you don't really know -- you're here and it's got to be weird that you don't know if you're going to get to play even though you're here practicing? Is this surreal at all?

JACKSON SUBER: I mean, no. I always believed I could do this. You never know if you're actually going to do it, but always know that that's -- I feel like I always knew that was in me. Didn't know if it was going to happen for sure

because nothing in life is for sure, but for sure I was going to give it my best chance and worked hard to be here and feel like I have a good earning of this and just need to keep working hard and staying humble.

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