

U.S. Open Championship 2024

Friday, June 14, 2024

Village of Pinehurst, North Carolina, USA

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

Tony Finau

Flash Interview



THE MODERATOR: Tony Finau, 1-under 69. Talk us through your round a bit.

TONY FINAU: Yeah, I thought overall it was a nice round. I hit a lot of fairways over the last couple days, so this is a golf course you can only score if you're hitting from the fairway, so I was happy with that.

I did hit a couple more loose drives today than I did yesterday, but overall was happy with the way I struck the golf ball. Two solid days so far.

Q. How did the course play different from yesterday?

TONY FINAU: Yeah, it's definitely starting to firm out. There's no question. The wind got a little swirly on the back nine. I thought it was really hard to hit it close on any hole. Light and variable, a caddie's nightmare. It was only blowing three to five miles an hour, but it seemed to be swirling so you just kind of just hit when you felt like you were ready.

Overall, it was two solid days I put together.

Q. When you visited the ice cream stand at 12, did you think birdie was an option?

TONY FINAU: Ice cream stand on 12?

Q. When you were right in front of the ice cream shop there --

TONY FINAU: Oh, yeah, that. I hit a provisional. I didn't know it was that far left. I hit a pretty big hook.

Luckily I had a shot. I hooked it over by the green and was just looking to make 4 somehow, and sometimes it's just crazy. I hit the putt off the green, and it got on the green and got within six feet, and I was like, wow, I think I just made it. I didn't think I was going to make birdie there, but that was a nice bonus.

Q. It felt like you were trying to play somewhat aggressive out there despite how hard it was. Is that a

fair assessment?

TONY FINAU: Yeah, there were some pins today that I thought the short side was actually where the green was. So for that reason, I thought there were some holes that I could hit at. I was okay being short-sided because it was an uphill shot. I will agree with that as far as being aggressive. I thought because I was playing from the fairway, there were some pins that I was like, okay, we talked about it before the round and said, these are pins that are pretty much green lights. The short side is actually missing to the opposite side because that shot was going to bring in the other side and the other miss.

I thought my caddie and I have done a good job so far just preparing and knowing when to hit at flags and when not to.

Q. A lot was made coming into the week about the wire grass and the variability of hitting a ball in there, whether you have a good lie or not a good lie or whatnot. Compared to what you play on the PGA TOUR where it's the thick rough, do you have a preference one or the other in terms of what you'd rather be playing and testing yourself in?

TONY FINAU: Yeah, well, I think if you hit it in the rough enough out here, the rough is the sand and the bushes, you're going to get some bad breaks. You're going to get some good breaks. I guess it might play in your favor if you only hit it in a couple times like I did today. I was fortunate to have a lie to get it up on the green. Most of the time when you're hitting out of the rough, you're probably not going to hit the rough. So I guess maybe your chances are a little higher here of having a shot.

But I wouldn't recommend hitting it in. I like hitting from the fairway, so that's the goal every time I tee off.

Q. On the greens, do you feel like you can be aggressive putting to the holes, or is it more of a defensive position the way they're cut and how they're rolling?

TONY FINAU: Yeah, definitely not as aggressive as I'm

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used to being when I'm hitting putts for sure. Even the uphill putts, they're up until about three feet past the hole, then it's back down. I don't think you're ever really super comfortable being aggressive on any putt.

But when they say it's the toughest test of golf, I think that's what you can expect. You know it's going to be grueling every day. It doesn't matter what hole it is, it's going to be tough out here. So far I've been up for the challenge.

Q. Both you and Ludvig today have had pretty solid rounds for this week. How do you maintain focus if you hit it in the native area and you're coming up against a clump of wire grass, and have you noticed how Ludvig has been playing and his focus and how he recovered?

TONY FINAU: Yeah, it's the first time I've ever played with him. The guy is like a machine, from what I saw. I obviously am focused on what I'm doing and playing my game, but he hit a lot of fairways and a lot of greens. He sure makes it look pretty easy.

As far as me, I think, again, we had a game plan going in. You've got to hit fairways out here. I've done a good job of that so far, and that's what I'll be looking to do over the next couple days to give myself a chance to win.

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