

U.S. Senior Open Championship

Saturday, July 1, 2023

Stevens Point, Wisconsin, USA

SentryWorld

Rob Labritz

Flash Interview

THE MODERATOR: Rob Labritz, 5-under 66, even through three rounds and tied for sixth going into Sunday. What was working for you today?

ROB LABRITZ: I'm improving. I guess I'm improving. What was working for me today? I played pretty good yesterday. I had it going -- I had it 4-under at one point I believe yesterday. I made a couple doubles coming in because this place can grab you. So I'm playing some good golf. Had a great pairing with K.J. Choi.

I'm just improving. I'm not a legend out here. I am trying to make my way to legend status by maybe winning something here soon hopefully, but I'm improving.

I'm hitting the ball in the fairway. I've been striking my irons pretty solid, and I feel really comfortable out there, and I love the U.S. Senior Open. This is my second one. If you can kind of battle through and just kind of stay patient and hit the fairways and hit the greens, you'll get some opportunities, so that's kind of what I'm doing.

Q. It looked like you made a conscious effort off the tee today versus the last two days with your driving distance kind of going down a little bit. Can you talk us through that decision-making process?

ROB LABRITZ: Yeah, it was more, you know, I wanted to play out of the fairway today. The first day I shot 5-over and I was pretty aggressive. I tried to play aggressive. I'm longer than a lot of the guys out here. Not quite as long as Padraig, but I can hit it still pretty far, so I was trying to use that to my advantage, although I couldn't. It wouldn't work out here if you hit a little crooked.

Yeah, just tried to play a couple 3-woods, some hybrids. Titleist made me some nice new hybrids that I been kind of playing with. The one hybrid goes about 260, 270, so it's kind of nice.

Just been trying to stay in the fairways and make some



putts.

Q. I don't think too many people saw bogey-free 66 out there. Can you talk about some saves you might've had along the way? Also, looked like you might've had a couple good looks on 17 and 18?

ROB LABRITZ: Yeah, I did. I had more looks. You know, it's one of those things where you hit a lot of greens and you got to be patient. You can't say, oh, I'm not putting well sort of thing. I hit a lot of greens today. I made a great save on 9. I drove it in the left rough. Had to chip out. Wedged in there from 66 yards to about six feet and made it.

Then I made a nice save on 11. Hit it a little too far to the left. Had to punch out under a tree and two-putt from I think it was 80 some odd feet.

But those are probably the two saves that kept my round going. And I did have other looks. There were some putts that I misread which can happen out there, because all the greens have such little movement to them.

But super pleased. If I can do this again tomorrow -- yesterday I did it, had a couple of doubles, but today I did it and didn't have the doubles, which equals a lower score than when you keep the doubles off your scorecard.

Q. Seems like everybody out there is kind of focused on the Wisconsin connection, Stricker and Kelly. Do you like flying under the radar and doing what you did today?

ROB LABRITZ: I'm a total under the radar guy. I mean, nobody knows know Rob Labritz is, which is cool. I'm playing, again, out here with these guys, these guys been doing this for years. It's a year and a half I've been out here, so I'm truly just trying to improve. I work out every day. Work on my game every day. I meditate every day.

I do things -- try to do things very scheduled and regimented to improve because I know that I have the game to win out here.

But I just have to season myself. It's like a nice steak. Got to let that sucker season with the marinade. I'm marinating right now. Enjoying every second of it.



Q. Depending what happens at the top of the leaderboard, but do you think as it stands you have a chance going into tomorrow?

ROB LABRITZ: Today put me in a chance, yeah. You know, I guess Bernhard got it 5, so 2-under today. You know, it's out there. If you play stress-free golf and don't make mistakes and obviously if you make so the putts, sounds like a cliché thing to say, yeah, I can get out there and chase it.

I just want to play to the best of my ability. Let the chips fall and see what happens at the end of the day. For me it's a new learning experience being in this position. I was in this position last year. Padraig had a nice lead on me last year by I believe four, five shots. This year it's a little different. Going to go out there tomorrow and try to be patient, enjoy it. My caddie, Mark Shoenwald (phonetic) has been saying just look, walk slow, enjoy the walk, and I've been doing that it's been a lot of fun.

Q. Why do you think the U.S. Senior Open brings the best out in you?

ROB LABRITZ: You know, being a professional professional from the Met section, I've won three New York State Opens at Bethpage Black. Made the cut in the PGA Championship at Bethpage Black. We have a lot of hard golf courses up in the Northeast, which kind of prepares me for this sort of thing. I spent my late '90s as a teaching pro at Shinnecock. The courses don't scare me.

As long as you can hit it straight, and if you are it's fun. When you start going a little offline doesn't get so fun. Yeah, I think the Met section prepared me for this and all the stuff we played up there.

Q. Clearly you're enjoying your time playing senior golf. Why are you so joyful about playing the game right now?

ROB LABRITZ: I waited to do this my entire life. I was a director of golf for the past 23 years at Glen Arbor Golf Club, a PGA TOUR pro for 31 years, and I always dreamt about come out here and playing full time.

When I won Q-School in 2021 it gave me that opportunity. I told myself, you know, that when I won Q-School I was going to enjoy every second of it.

Now, five weeks prior though this I wasn't having so, much fun. Didn't have some great finishes out on the PGA TOUR Champions. Kind of lost my starting lines and was struggling. Worked out some things with my coach, Tom

Wilson online and Shauheen Nakhjavani. We did some work and swing is starting to feel good again, and I just enjoy being out there. Crowds are coming out to watch us play golf. This is really cool, right? We're ripping it in front of these people. It's really fun, I just enjoy playing golf.

Q. Who's here with you this week?

ROB LABRITZ: Nobody. They all came out last week. I'm flying alone. My wife, we just moved out of our house. We have a house rental literally two days ago. She moved all the stuff. I flew in from the Dick's Sporting Goods on Sunday. We moved a little bit. I caught an early flight Monday. I'm out here. She's taking care of the house, moving stuff. God bless her. She's may rock. Love you. We're right now kind of homeless. We're going to be moving to Florida in the next few weeks so trying to find a place. If we can find something down the east coast going to be pretty happy.

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