

U.S. Senior Open Championship

Saturday, June 29, 2024
Newport, Rhode Island, USA
Newport Country Club

Rocco Mediate

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Please welcome Rocco Mediate to the interview room at the 44th U.S. Senior Open hosted by the Newport Country Club. Rocco, 4-under 67 for the second straight day.

ROCCO MEDIATE: Whoa, that was cool.

THE MODERATOR: Currently T-6.

ROCCO MEDIATE: This place is -- I loved it last week when I saw it, and I still love it. Set up perfect. You guys had some nice pins today. I liked them.

Q. How do you feel about the performance today?

ROCCO MEDIATE: I'm ecstatic. Yeah, I'm just playing. When you get around a golf course like this, or any course you guys set up, you've just got to play and deal with what you got to deal with.

We had a little wind but it wasn't stupid. I think tomorrow might be stupid wind-wise.

It's just fun to play and make a score. You can look pretty silly out there in some spots, as everybody knows. I love this place.

Like I said, I knew it would be fun when I saw it last week, but it will expose you.

Q. With some of the crazier (indiscernible) on the course, is there any other course you've played in the world or in the States that kind of reminds you of it?

ROCCO MEDIATE: Not in the States. The other Open stuff is very similar. Obviously the bunkering is different, but the weather feels that way. It's cool. It's windy. It gets hot, it lies, it gets windy. Then the direction changed yesterday.

By the way, you guys called it a direction change at 1:00 it



was like 1:00 when the wind went, whoop. Do you have the power to do that? Wait a minute. Anyway, no, it's just wild.

I played it in both winds. The first day was down on 1 and the yesterday it was in on 1, so it's wild. So you walk by bunkers out here when you're playing in whatever wind it is and you're like, why is that bunker here? Then the wind turns, and you're like, oh, that's why it's here.

Like 18 -- it's just really good. It's really cool. It changes every minute.

Q. You had three straight birdies on the back nine. Could you just walk us through those.

ROCCO MEDIATE: Yeah, the par-3, you didn't make quite long enough for me. I hit -- it was 240-something. I hit a 3-wood about 20 feet and made it. It was so cool to make a birdie on that hole. Par is fine.

Then I hit a pretty good shot, a wedge into the next hole straight downwind, 10 feet maybe.

Then made a good 20, 25-footer on 15, hitting a 3-iron in. That turned -- it's the normal wood I played the other day. Trying to think what I hit yesterday. 7-iron yesterday.

It changes. I hit 3-wood to 18 yesterday. I didn't even get it to the bunker. I didn't hit it that solid, but still, it didn't get to the bunker. Today was a 6-iron that caught a little one of those waves.

But that's the beauty of it. You've got to figure out a way to get it up there. It's not perfect. I don't hit it far enough. Like Vij is hitting wedge in. I'm back here 185. Just you got to deal with it, and I did and made a par and left.

It's really good, though. It's really good. Like the 2nd hole, that little pin today, that's such a good pin because you're standing there with 70, 80 yards if you want, or drive in the bunker and it's great.

I've enjoyed the setup. I've enjoyed the place, all of it.

Q. You got through 13, 14, and 15. What would you say the biggest difference was today versus your previous rounds? Just the pin location, weather,



having fun. You referenced a lot of things. What do you think contributed?

ROCCO MEDIATE: First of all, it's my favorite event, whether it's the regular Open or our Open, the U.S. Open. So I love to try to see if I can do good on a place like this.

I'm getting older. It doesn't go as far. I've been fighting a little thing the last couple months, and now it's better. So this is my second week back in a month or two, almost a couple months. So I'm ecstatic.

I don't know. You're just trying to hit shots. Thomas Bjorn said something really cool yesterday. We're walking down 9, our last hole. He said, you know, Rocco, as we get older, you show people how you actually play the game. We don't really care what it looks like, like we used to, and he's got a point.

I'm hitting a little trap chip 6-iron 163 to the front of the green on 18 because I can't go up with it. I just couldn't. The lie wouldn't let me. I had to make it kind of go -- it went a little over the green, but it was fine.

But if you look at it, somebody like do you see how low he hit that and drew it off? That's what we're trying to do. Couldn't be pretty.

It's really interesting around this type of course -- other courses ask for more, or ask for this. This one, you can do both. That's what we're just trying to figure out, how to get the hell around this place.

It's so much fun trying. You know when you get to 10, you're going to be standing back there with a 3-iron or 3-wood. You've just got to deal with it and put it in the right place.

I don't know. It's just fun to be able to do this with -- I'm hitting so many long clubs. I've worn that 3-iron out this week so far. Probably tomorrow, same thing.

Q. Can you explain what Fujita is doing? It's almost like perfect golf in a way. I think he has one bogey so far.

ROCCO MEDIATE: Which is ridiculous. No, he's just -- the ball's in front of him, obviously, and he's not making any mistakes. I don't know how -- his greens in regulation has to be through the roof. Has to be, because it's hard to get it up-and-down from around here unless you're in a perfect spot.

If you get a little bit out of position, game's over. You have to make a big putt -- I got lucky as hell on 17. I hit it in the

left bunker. That was nice.

There was no room to the right. I had to hit it to the left bunker off the tee. It was pitiful. But I hit it up on top, and it just fell on there to about six, eight feet, and I made that, which I don't ever want to be in that bunker again.

What he's doing is ridiculous. He's won a million tournaments. Just because we never saw him, it's not like who's this guy? He won't last. Apparently he will. He's won a lot of golf tournaments; this is just another.

As straight as he obviously hits it, the fairways are generous, but you can still miss them.

Q. And it looks like he has his feet on the greens too?

ROCCO MEDIATE: He has to. It's genius. If he just keeps doing this, it's going to be hard to get him. It's going to be hard to get him.

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