

Charles Schwab Challenge

Thursday, May 23, 2019

Tony Finau

Quick Quotes

Q. Tony, seven birdies, just one bogey on the card. Putted really well today. Thoughts on the round.

TONY FINAU: Yeah, I played nicely. It's nice when you're making putts. The game seems to come to you. Happy just the way I finished. I was able to save par there on 16. That was big to keep some momentum.

Had a couple decent looks: 18 about 30 feet; 35 feet on 17. Happy to just bring it in without a bogey.

Q. Horrible Horseshoe. Birdied 3, birdied 4, bogeyed 5, but to come through that stretch 1-under par and to knock it to two and a half feet on that par-3, that's pretty good stuff.

TONY FINAU: Yeah, it was a really nice shot. Perfect number for my 4-iron, about 255 yards with about 20 yards of help, so I hit a perfect 4-iron and hit it to a couple feet.

Got off to a nice start. Any time you can play Hogan Alley at even or better, and I was able to play it under par today, I think you're going to be able to play a decent round.

Q. Flat stick, anything that prompted this good putting round from you? Been working on it?

TONY FINAU: Yeah, I switched to a claw. Tried the claw today and seemed to work out. From about 25 feet in and in my touch is really good. Outside of that I don't 3-putt really. It's rare that I ever 3-putt. My touch is pretty good, but inside about 20 to 25 feet. I decided to switch it up a little bit, and obviously it was a nice start.

Q. I would say so. The winds today, how much did they play havoc with shot selection?

TONY FINAU: Yeah, about a two-club wind all day whether it was down or into. This golf course there are a lot of doglegs, so you never really felt like it's straight into. You've got to work the ball right to left, left to right into the wind.

Fortunate enough the greens are really soft, so I still think it's pretty scorable even though the winds are up. You got to hit it solid, but at least the greens are soft to kind of offset the wind.

Q. Great start to the week. What went well for you?



TONY FINAU: Putted nicely today. Made some putts. That got me going. Made a nice birdie on 3. Played Hogan Alley 1-under, which if you can do that, shoot even or better on Hogan Alley, I think you give yourself a chance on this golf course.

I was able to get off to that nice start and keep that momentum. Happy with the way I finished. Big save on 16 for me. I'll take a couple of those pars coming down the last couple holes.

Q. Talk about why you switched to the claw grip. (Indiscernible.)

TONY FINAU: Yeah, I practiced putting with the claw a lot just to put my left hand in a good position. I'm left hand dominate when I roll the stick. I used to putt cross-handed for about five years; been putting conventionally now for couple years.

But I just wanted to switch it up. I haven't been putting great I feel like, and standing over the ball the most important thing is do you feel like you're going to make the putt or not. Outside of everything else, do you believe you can make the putt.

You know, for me, I needed to switch something. Decided to try the claw today and it worked out.

Q. When did you actually make the decision?

TONY FINAU: It was after Sunday at Bethpage. I mean, the golf course played tough but I didn't put together my best putting week. It's something that I've kind of been thinking -- it's an itch I wanted to scratch I feel like for a little bit.

To me, it was just perfect time.

Q. (Regarding momentum from the Masters.)

TONY FINAU: Yeah, you know, I'm not one to -- if I feel like something is better I'm not afraid to change no matter the results.

I've been playing okay. I feel like it was just time. Like I said, I think it was just time to scratch that itch and see how it goes.

Again, it's not something that's foreign to me. I practiced the claw quite often like I said just to put my left hand in a good position, and then I end up just

putting both my fingers down the shaft. That's usually how I do it. I wanted to try something different, and it felt great out there today.

Q. (Regarding this being a ball striker's golf course.) Do you feel like you can be aggressive with your length?

TONY FINAU: Yeah, I do. I hit a lot of drivers. Only hit an iron off the tee once and 4-wood one time. I mostly hit drivers. I do think it's a golf course you have the opportunity to push it up if you want to, and I was able to take advantage of some of my length there today.

Q. You only hit three fairways. Feel like you were missing a lot fairways?

TONY FINAU: Yeah, I didn't know that I only hit three fairways. The bunkers are okay this week, meaning I hit it in the bunker I think quite often but drew a lot of good lies. Just with the moisture in the air the sand is pretty good to hit off.

I don't think the bunkers are terrible. Obviously it's hard to judge out of the bermuda rough, but for the most part when I missed the fairway it was the first cut or in the bunker.

I feel like you still have a chance from there more so than the rough.

Q. Yeah, you hit 16 greens.

TONY FINAU: I did. I hit a lot of greens. That's why it was surprising. I didn't know I only hit three fairways. I still felt like I could hit most of the greens from wherever position I was.

Q. Are there any clubs you're hitting out here this week that you might not hit at maybe a longer course?

TONY FINAU: No, I didn't change my setup this week for the golf course. You know, like putting a 1-iron in or a 2-iron to keep it in the fairway. I didn't change my setup.

Last week, I mean, I threw like a 7-wood in just for the rough out there. My shots that I was hitting from about 200 yards or more I would hack that out of the rough. No adjustments this week.

Q. Took the 7-wood out this week?

TONY FINAU: Yeah, I put the 3-iron in and took the 7-wood out this week.