

Travelers Championship

Friday, June 21, 2019

Zach Sucher

Quick Quotes

Q. 64, 65. You must be delighted.

ZACH SUCHER: Oh, yeah, feeling pretty good right now.

Q. What's been the key to it?

ZACH SUCHER: Yesterday I drove it really well. Today my driver struggled a bit on the front nine, which was the back nine. After that, kind of fixed it. But front nine I putted really well and made a few good saves. Yeah, putter was definitely really good today.

Q. Two previous appearances here where you've missed the cut. Has something suddenly clicked?

ZACH SUCHER: I just feel a lot better in my game right now. After being out a year and a half on injury, just this year in general I've felt a whole lot better. So it's been nice to get a few good rounds in and have some success early in the year on the Web.com (Korn Ferry).

Q. And just your fourth appearance on the PGA TOUR this season. What does this do for ambitions through the weekend now you've done that through the first two days?

ZACH SUCHER: Yeah, absolutely. I've tried it refocus -- I heard Brooks say earlier this year, earlier week, I think, and I actually tried to do it earlier in the year. Say, I got to make my focus more on competing in the event instead of just making the cut.

Felt like I've got off to bad starts, and the whole rest of the year has been just focused so much on this cut line. Just tried to reset my focus on contending in the week.

Q. Yeah, I guess it proves how much people like Brooks can be an inspiration to fellow pros like yourself.

ZACH SUCHER: Exactly right.

Q. Do you take conversations from other players in terms of their approach for things that can help you in your game?

ZACH SUCHER: Absolutely. Guys have that have had success, I always see if I can get some (indiscernible.)

Q. Was that a knee?

ZACH SUCHER: The knee was the initial problem. I had the ankle surgery -- came from the ankle up. So the knee was giving me the most issues, but the ankle



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took forever to heal.

Q. Okay.

ZACH SUCHER: I took 13 months without hitting a golf shot because of the ankle. The lady was right who did the surgery. She said, After six months you'll be running, but you're not going to be able to twist on it very much. So it took forever.

Q. Congratulations on a great start. You have to be very proud of today because the conditions were very tough out there.

ZACH SUCHER: Yeah, my back nine when the rain started, again, I guess, and the wind picked up, it was extremely tough.

Yeah, I'm feeling really good.

Q. I knew of your game when you played at UAB. You were a great college player and you got off to a nice start in your professional career, but then you got injured. Last couple years have been tough on you, haven't they?

ZACH SUCHER: Exactly right. The last few years I had on the Web.com (Korn Ferry) at the time were a bit of a struggle. Every time I made it out here, it seemed like the harder I worked the more the left leg would hurt.

It's nice. First year I can remember in a long time where I'm pain-free and it's feeling really good. It's nice to be out here.

Q. Yeah, so you're healthy; you have a good attitude. What about tomorrow? You have an opportunity to accomplish some good things this weekend.

ZACH SUCHER: Exactly right. Just focusing on more of the same stuff: being aggressive off the tee and then trying to place my irons to give myself some uphill putts.

Q. People don't realize you were a great high school basketball player at St. Paul's down in Mobile, which is like a powerhouse program in the state of Alabama. Gary Woodland won last week. Is something to you guys that play multiple sports?

ZACH SUCHER: Man, I sure hope so.

Q. Gary is a proud of his basketball career; are you?

ZACH SUCHER: Absolutely. If I would've been about a foot taller I might be doing that.

Q. But you're not a bad golfer. So what's the strategy heading into tomorrow?

ZACH SUCHER: Just to give myself more looks, play aggressive off the tee, and if you get uphill putts out here you can roll in a lot. If you get on the wrong side they break a lot, so it's about giving yourself the right putts.

Q. Obviously got to be feeling good after the first couple days heading into the weekend. Just get some comments recapping the first couple days.

ZACH SUCHER: Yeah, absolutely. Came in feeling pretty good about my golf game. Drove it great yesterday. It was very easy, stress-free round.

Today wasn't quite as easy off the tee, but I putted really well, which is always nice. Missed a few, but made a lot more.

Going forward I'm just kind of doing the same stuff: trying to make birdies.

Q. Can you talk about what the injury was you had and how long it took you to get back from it and are you back now?

ZACH SUCHER: Yeah, absolutely. I feel awesome now. Feeling 100%. Playing basketball in high school I had ankle injuries. I pretty much knew I messed everything up in my ankle, but it was starting to come up the whole left side. My knee was giving me all kinds of trouble. I had a torn tendon in there, cartilage was damaged, and it was just all stress from repeatedly swinging and not being able to turn on the ankle, which was causing the knee to hurt and wearing it down.

Fixed two ligaments and a tendon in the ankle which took forever to heal. Solid 13 months I wasn't able to hit a golf shot, which was kind of nice to be home with the family, but it was -- I missed golf a lot.

After that, the first probably three or four months were a bit of a struggle. Everything would hurt after I was done. Last four or five months have been great; pain-free and feeling really good.

I had some therapists and a trainer down in Birmingham that have been huge for me. It's been awesome.

Q. What year was the surgery?

ZACH SUCHER: Had it in 2017, I guess.

Q. How much longer was that? Because your last PGA TOUR event was here, right, before the surgery?

ZACH SUCHER: Exactly right. This was my last -- the very last PGA event. I missed the cut and went and played in the off-site program that week. John Peterson, he said something about medical and I'm like, Man, I got all kinds of problems. He said, Well you're an idiot for playing. I had never thought of it. I had never thought about how a medical would look.

So I went and took a look at how it would work, how long I could stay out. I wasn't sure how anything worked with it. This was my last event I guess two full years ago now.

Q. You were in a Back Street Boys cover band. Tell to us about that, and how does that compare to leading the Travelers?

ZACH SUCHER: I don't know if that's true. That may be more of a dream. (Laughter.)

Q. It's in your bio.

ZACH SUCHER: Don know how that got there.

Q. So you haven't wrestled an alligator either?

ZACH SUCHER: I have done that actually. I'm a Southern Alabama guy, so all the swamp stuff is good.

Q. How pumped are you to be leading this thing going into the weekend? So many big names here, but here you are on top right now.

ZACH SUCHER: Absolutely. It feels great. It's really nice to have all the hard work pay off. So it's feeling really good so far. A lot of work to be done, but right now it's feeling great.

Q. When did you find out you were playing in this event?

ZACH SUCHER: It was close. I was three out last Friday morning, and so I moved to one out Friday night. I figured that would be good by the weekend.

So for a while it was close. I had double committed. I had signed up for the other event on the Web.com. (Korn Ferry).

Q. Is momentum a thing? It was almost the last stroke of the round yesterday that you tied for first place and then you come out on the front nine and just keep going.

ZACH SUCHER: It's definitely nice to get any birdies you can. At this stage that early I was just focused on making all I could.

Q. You won before but it's been a little bit. Just

how hard is it to put four rounds together and win a PGA event?

ZACH SUCHER: Absolutely. Yeah, this will be a little bit of a different feeling being the final group of a PGA event. Done it plenty on the -- I guess it's the Korn Ferry Tour now. I got to stop calling it the Web.com.

Been in the final group out there plenty of times out there. This will be my first time out here, so it'll be a new feeling. After the first few swings I'll settle in and be hopefully good to go.

Q. Are you guaranteed six events this year?

ZACH SUCHER: That's right, guaranteed six. So I'm signed up for next week and the John Deere will be -- well, hopefully have a lot more. (Laughter.)

Q. How big of a role did family and friends play when you were taking that 13 months?

ZACH SUCHER: Oh, it was actually kind of nice. I have a six year old and a two year old daughter, so it was kind of nice to be home every day playing with them. They travel with me year-round, but it was great to be home and obviously get to see them a lot more.