

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW: MAVERICK McNEALY
Thursday, July 16, 2015



Q. Your group had it going today. What specifically did you find about the course that you were liking?

MAVERICK McNEALY: Well, I thought for me the biggest challenge was going to be to the Bermudagrass because coming from California, that's not something we have a lot of. But I think I did a really good job in the practice round of getting a feel for chipping around the greens and the rough and figuring out how the rough reacted into the greens, and then spending a lot of time on the putting green just getting a feel for grain because that's also something we don't really have back home. But I got out here and I felt comfortable. My driving was okay, but I was really good into the greens and putted -- well, I had one of my better putting rounds of the year today so that was really helpful.

Q. Sam just mentioned of how impressed he was of your ability to sort of stay even keel throughout today. What do you attribute that to?

MAVERICK McNEALY: Well, I hear that a couple times, I love to hear that. For me, our coach always preaches at us take it one shot at a time. It's very cliché but that's what you've got to do. My game plan going into every tournament is to stay patient and press my advantage when I'm feeling it, and if I start rolling the ball, just keep making birdies out there. Bad shots are going to happen, bad breaks are going to happen, but good breaks like the one I had on 18 are going to happen, too.

For me, when I find myself getting upset, I often attribute it to just not having confidence in the fact that I can get it back, so that was a breakthrough for me. I make a bogey and think okay, I'm playing well, I'm fine, I can get it back in a hole or two.

Q. You mentioned that bogey. What was the key for bouncing back, getting the eagle and then the birdie after that?

MAVERICK McNEALY: I actually didn't hit a great tee shot on the par 5, I kind of heeled it, but I got a good kick, came back into the fairway and I had 238 to the pin and hit probably the best shot of the day, a 4-iron that landed just short and went to five feet and put a good roll on it. Yeah, I had one tee shot that cost me, just I couldn't advance it very far out of the rough left on 14, and three-putt on 4. Other than that, I was very happy with how I played today.

Q. Kind of help having Sam going pretty low, kind of driving you?

MAVERICK McNEALY: Oh, it was fun. We were all there. I mean, walking up the 18th green, our group was 15-under total and that was pretty fun. It's always helpful to see putts going in. Those guys were hitting it good. Sam hits it a long way, so it was fun trying to chase him off the tee. But yeah, it's always fun when your group plays well. They're really

great guys and I enjoyed getting to know them, too.

Q. Appreciate the help he gave you over on 18?

MAVERICK McNEALY: Oh, definitely. I'm not used to having stakes and ropes and wires and stuff at the college events, so that's something new to me that they have out here. It was nice just figuring out where to put my ball and got a decent lie out of it and was able to get up and down.

Q. Arnold Palmer won his first event 60 years ago next month. Did you guys talk about any Arnie stories or anything? Did you go there?

MAVERICK McNEALY: Not really. I did get to meet him a couple weeks ago at the Palmer Cup and that was a pretty cool experience just to learn more about the legacy he's left off the course, which is almost something I find more impressive than what he did on the course and the way people view him like that. He set a great precedent for us with how he treated the fans, the media and everybody else.

Q. When you're an amateur coming into events like this and obviously you know you can't come away with the big check to stuff in your suitcase, but what are your goals? Obviously to finish the best you can, but what are you really looking to do at events like this?

MAVERICK McNEALY: I'm pretty lucky my parents are paying for all of it right now. I don't have the budget to come do these things. But this is so much fun for me. I love to play and I love to compete, and to compete against the best in the world and on a golf course like this that's in perfect condition and do all that, that's what every kid dreams of, playing on the PGA TOUR. So I've just had a blast, it's all fun for me.

Q. You had the Tweet of the week, I think, getting the Barbasol shaving cream and the peach fuzz comment on Twitter, that was great. What's it mean for Barbasol to do so much for young golfers and giving people like yourself a spot in the field this week?

MAVERICK McNEALY: The way I got the spot is from the Jack Nicklaus Award and that's awarded to one player from every division of golf, Division 1, 2, 3, junior college and NAIA. So the five of us had a shootout at Scioto Golf Club, which is Jack's home course, during the Memorial tournament. I was fortunate to win that, but the other four players are great players, too, and the player who was going to get the spot was going to be a quality player whoever it was. I'm just really thankful for giving us that opportunity. It was fun to compete against those guys and it's even more fun to come out here and compete. I'm just having a blast.

Q. I read somewhere that you write down or that you record how you fared during your tournaments at school. Is that true?

MAVERICK McNEALY: It is. I've written down every shot I've hit in competition since my freshman year.

Q. Are you writing about this?

MAVERICK McNEALY: Of course. It will be about a page and a half is my guess.

Q. What's on deck?

MAVERICK McNEALY: So I have stats, I calculate my strokes gained putting, which it's nice they do it here for you, but just kind of fairways, greens, impeded shots, stuff like that. And then kind of what worked for me today, what went well, what I learned and kind of what made me play well. So I find doing that really gives me a better idea of what helps me play well and what I need to do to perform my best.

Q. I imagine it will be a positive report today?

MAVERICK McNEALY: It will, it will. I learned a lot out there, especially for me playing on Bermuda and stuff like this with great players, you learn a lot. In the practice rounds, too, I was writing down some of the stuff I learned there from some of the older guys, Brent Jobe and Scott McCarron and guys like that. It's definitely a learning experience, too.