

ROUND 2 INTERVIEW
March 2, 2018

SHUBHANKAR SHARMA (-`11)



Q. 65-66, beating some of the best players in the world. How pleased are you with this performance?

SHUBHANKAR SHARMA: I'm really happy. I couldn't be in a better situation. Played so well, and the bogeys that I made today were just three-putts. Otherwise I just get the ball in play all day and it was great to finish with three birdies in a row.

Q. Well, it's great to finish with three birdies in a row, but we all know the importance of a fast start. Just talk us through this opening tee shot and subsequent eagle?

SHUBHANKAR SHARMA: Yeah, the tee shot was fantastic. It was playing slightly into the wind just like yesterday, and I knew I hit a great shot to get it to the green and hit a slight draw and never left the pin. Best way to start.

Q. How important is the putter around this golf course to be working well to shoot the sort of numbers that you are?

SHUBHANKAR SHARMA: It's very important, especially I think in the afternoon, the greens get really bumpy. The spike marks are there and you have to strike the putt -- you have to get the ball rolling as soon as it hits the putter face. So putting's very important. I made two three-putts today so I've got to go to the practice green a little bit. Yeah, putting is very important as is keeping the ball in play off the tee.

Q. Such an amazing year you've had so far, a couple of wins you've had already, of course leading the Race to Dubai at the moment. The Masters is something that's attainable for you. Have you got an eye on that?

SHUBHANKAR SHARMA: Yeah, that will be a dream come true if I get into the Masters. I know I need a good finish this week, so I'm just trying to keep my eye on the ball and try to do my best.

Q. (No microphone.)

SHUBHANKAR SHARMA: It's nice to be here. Not a bad position.

Q. (No microphone.)

SHUBHANKAR SHARMA: Actually, I thought about nothing, I just wanted to have fun. It's my first WGC and I was happy that I'll play four days because I missed the cut in the last two

events that I played. Even though I missed the cuts, but I knew I was playing well. So I just wanted to have fun, and yeah, I've had a lot of fun.

Q. You said that you weren't ready to be full time on the PGA TOUR, that you wanted to do more European and Asia. Are you still thinking like that?

SHUBHANKAR SHARMA: Come again?

Q. You said before that you wanted to do a little bit more European and Asian Tour before doing PGA TOUR entirely. Are you still thinking that?

SHUBHANKAR SHARMA: No. The thing is everything has happened so fast for me. In the past four months, my life has totally changed. Obviously I want to get to the PGA TOUR and (inaudible) play in Asia for three years before getting my card last year after winning Joburg. So everything is happening so fast, it's just taking time to sink in. Obviously the final destination for me is the PGA TOUR, that's always been my dream. Just playing well here this week will get me closer to my dream and just looking forward to it.

Q. You talked yesterday about being a little nervous before you teed off. How were you today?

SHUBHANKAR SHARMA: Yeah, I was nervous. I think being a little bit nervous is good for you, just have a little feeling in your stomach is not too bad sometimes. It's going to be the same for the next few days. But after I teed off and after that first hole, I was calm. I was really calm on the back nine. I was in control of my game and just made great birdies.

Q. What club did you hit off the first tee?

SHUBHANKAR SHARMA: 3-wood.

Q. Did you see it all the way? You missed it?

SHUBHANKAR SHARMA: I saw it all the way. I saw it and then I think there was some shadow with the trees and I couldn't see it go, but then I saw it was very, very close. (Inaudible) But it was a great shot, it never left the pin, slight draw into the wind and couldn't have asked for a better start.

Q. Considering the field of players, how do you feel about the last two days?

SHUBHANKAR SHARMA: Really happy. It's the biggest tournament in the world right now, the best players in the world. So really happy I am competing and leading after two days. I'm just having a lot of fun right now and just looking forward to the next two days.

Q. Were you surprised at all to be in this position given your nerves?

SHUBHANKAR SHARMA: I wouldn't say I'm surprised. I'm very happy with the way things have been. I worked all my life to come and play at a high stage like this. You have to expect great things from yourself if you want to play at a high stage. You know, I just try and not think of anything before I started, I just try and concentrate on the success and just let things go.

Q. Did you have a surreal moment this week hitting golf balls next to Dustin Johnson, Jordan Spieth?

SHUBHANKAR SHARMA: Every day. Even in the hotel, the gym, we see so many of these guys in the gym. Some of them say hi to me, which is very nice. Just a few months ago I remember watching the PGA TOUR back home after midnight because that's when it's on back home. So I'm really happy, it's a total dream come true. Practicing with all these good players on the range, Spieth was right behind me, and after a couple shots just come back and watch and then Dustin replaced him, so it's like I couldn't ask for anything better.

Q. Do you feel like you're in their league?

SHUBHANKAR SHARMA: Yeah, I think, I think it's finally sinking in. Jordan, Dustin, all these guys, they're great players and they've won majors, they're in a different league altogether. Really, I think I belong here and that I can be on the PGA TOUR, and that gives me a lot of faith and a lot of confidence going forward.

Q. What did you hit into 18 for your second?

SHUBHANKAR SHARMA: I hit a gap wedge, a hard gap wedge.

Q. To make that putt and to hear the cheers, what's the feeling inside?

SHUBHANKAR SHARMA: It's a great feeling. I've had so much support here, which surprises me a lot, even on Monday. I didn't think a lot of people would know me, but there was a lot of support, a lot of kids coming up to me and asking for autographs. That happens back home in Asia, even in Europe. This is very, very different. Just to get that reaction was fantastic. It was a great feeling.

Q. What happened on the two three-putts, and when you made the second three-putt, was there any anxiety going to the next tee, frustration?

SHUBHANKAR SHARMA: The first three-putt shouldn't have happened because it was a very easy putt, just hit it too hard. And the second putt, just misread it. That's the only thing. It just broke right at the start. I feel like the greens are a little bit faster today compared to yesterday, and I think (inaudible) on the first, with second and third give me good pace on the greens. And third was obviously a tough putt but I think I just misread the second putts on both of the greens. I spoke to my caddie, Buzz, who's with me on the bag and just try to

get the speed right and just get the stroke right and it finally sunk in on the back nine.

Q. Have you ever had a case where things are going wrong, even briefly, and it stays with you, or are you very good at moving on?

SHUBHANKAR SHARMA: I think it happens to everyone. It's just my experience having days where I've not played well even after a good start, and I think it's just a memory bank that builds in your head and it just makes you a better player. It happens to everyone. Yeah, mostly I like to fight it out even though if I have a bad start, I push myself as much as possible and try to get back to (inaudible.)

Q. Are you good at forgetting things, bad things?

SHUBHANKAR SHARMA: Yeah, I would say so, I would say so. I'm pretty automatic with keeping my head on the ball and just forgetting what happened.

Q. I know your schedule changes dramatically depending on what happens this week, but what's your schedule going forward?

SHUBHANKAR SHARMA: I'm going to go back to India on Sunday, the Indian Open next week. So it's at my home course, I'm really looking forward to that. I really don't know what will happen after that because we have nothing on the European Tour. We have the Match Play here and obviously the Masters. All depending on what I do the next two days.

Q. What kind of flight schedule is that to New Delhi?

SHUBHANKAR SHARMA: From here to New York, New York to New Delhi.

Q. When do you get in?

SHUBHANKAR SHARMA: I get in Tuesday afternoon.

Q. The tournament starts Thursday?

SHUBHANKAR SHARMA: Yes. It's a long flight.

Q. But you're only 21, so you can do it.

SHUBHANKAR SHARMA: Yeah, I don't get jet lag.