

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW
May 3, 2018



PETER MALNATI (-4)

Q. Peter, you made six birdies on the day, first round of the Wells Fargo Championship, but was any one of them sweeter than what you made on 18?

PETER MALNATI: No, it's pretty cool to play that hole -- I really hit three perfect shots. My caddie and I were joking that I got -- we said I got screwed on the 7-iron because I hit it just absolutely perfect, but it carried a couple yards farther so it missed the little up-slope. But it was really a perfect shot. And then to roll the putt in was just a really sweet feeling to cap off a good round.

Q. Tell us about those scoring conditions. Pretty nice out here at Quail Hollow Club.

PETER MALNATI: I mean, the golf course is amazing, but it's really difficult. I'm not known for my distance off the tee, and this is a long course, so I had to show off my hybrid prowess today. I was hitting a lot of long shots into the par 4s and even some on the par 3s. It was perfect scoring conditions, like you said, but still a tough test, really tough test.

Q. Just for the record, your tee shot on 18, 313 yards. Your reaction?

PETER MALNATI: I don't know if this comes across on radio very well, but I'm going to flex.

Q. The muscle flex from Peter Malnati, and he flexed it on the scoreboard as well. Thank you.

Q. Peter, nice round, you get in with a 4-under 68. How would you describe your day?

PETER MALNATI: Really satisfying. It was fun. My game's been feeling really good and haven't really got the results in quite a while. So to go out and play a good round -- obviously it's just one -- it felt really nice, especially on a tough test like this.

Q. Tee to green, you were striking the ball great. Could you tell coming into the week that it was starting to reach that point?

PETER MALNATI: Yeah, I really worked hard over the last several years, two or three years to become a better ball-striker and I've really improved my strike. I hit in the middle, but I used to hit it unsolid but straight. Now I hit it solid and not always straight. So I've been trying to rein it back in. Today was the first day getting some really nice results, but it's been feeling close for a long time.

Q. Peter, what was clicking for you today?

PETER MALNATI: You know, I did everything pretty well. I think mostly it's just I felt good, I had a good attitude. I've been a little struggling with that lately. I've been hard on myself and negative and putting a lot of pressure on myself. So today I was just pretty relaxed. Seemed like my game's been pretty good for a while, but today I actually let it happen, so it was fun.

Q. Best shot you hit today?

PETER MALNATI: I definitely -- my drive and second shot and putt on 18 were three really -- honestly, they were exactly the way I pictured them. So to finish with three shots like that, pretty cool.

Q. Driver and --

PETER MALNATI: Driver, 7-iron and then probably a 20-foot putt.

Q. What a --

PETER MALNATI: Thanks for keeping this interesting here.

Q. What's the hardest part about this golf course, and what do you like most about the challenge?

PETER MALNATI: For me, the hardest part is simply the length. I hit a lot of long shots out here. I don't think anyone in the world would tell you it's easier to hit a 4-iron than a 7-iron. So the length is the challenge for me. But I think this time of year with the course, not having bermuda rough, having this overseeded rye, the greens are where the challenge is. I wasn't here for the PGA, but I'm guessing in August the rough had to have been quite a challenge. This rye, it's pretty friendly. But the greens are still really firm, really fast, have a lot of slope, so the greens are a strong defense for everyone, but the length is a big defense for a lot of guys.

Q. Do you like putting these better or the old greens?

PETER MALNATI: Oh, I mean, the thing about these greens is they're perfect all the time. The other greens, if it was a wet day, they could get spiked up. These greens are perfect from the first tee time to the last. I think these greens are a better playing surface, for sure.

Q. Do the greens help you out then?

PETER MALNATI: Yeah, I think any time you're seeing good putts roll well and go where they should, that helps me. I think at the same time, if you play on lousy greens and you've got a really good attitude, that helps me, too. But I like pure greens, for sure.

Q. Is there a hard part to winning so early and then having to wait for another one?

PETER MALNATI: Well, I mean --

Q. You always want to win, right?

PETER MALNATI: You always want to win, no question. The hard part for me about winning early is just kind of what it did to my expectations. I came at this from the angle of like from the time I was in college where I was always, always, always just short of kind of good enough to think maybe I could turn pro. And then I played mini tours and I'm just thinking maybe, kind of, I'm almost good enough, I might be able to make it. And then same deal on the Web.com Tour. Well, I kind of skipped that step.

But then all of a sudden I win on the PGA TOUR and I'm like oh, well, here I am, I need to get really good now. It's like, well, no, the same mindset I had all along probably would have helped. But when you win, the expectations sort of go through the roof and you try to work on things, get it -- just change the things that helped me get there.

I think a lot of people tell that story, and I tried to learn from it but I didn't. I won early and I'm like, well, now here I am and I've just got to keep going, put the pedal down, and I struggled.

Q. Did you try to pick up distance, or what did you do?

PETER MALNATI: No, just I felt like to be a successful, the player I wanted to be on the PGA TOUR, I had to become more like -- like Furyk is someone I've looked up to. Furyk is one of the best long iron players I've ever seen, and I'm a lousy long iron player.

What I've always done in the past with my long irons, I hit them unsolid, low, just poor strike shots, but they go straight. So I run them up, either run them up on the green or just right in front of the green and make a lot of pars, occasionally a birdie.

I just thought that's not going to work on Tour, you've got to really get after these. So I tried to change some things and work hard on my strike and get better. And I have gotten better, but it's kind of, you know, been -- maybe the strike's a little better, but the accuracy that I used to have isn't always there. So I'm really encouraged. My work's been great lately, and to see it turn into a good round is nice.

Q. Would you reference the finish on 18, what does that do for you momentum wise?

PETER MALNATI: I don't think a ton about momentum at this point. I mean, it's Thursday. I feel great about hitting some good shots, that's awesome and I'll certainly try to build on that going into tomorrow. Always rather finish with three good ones than a lousy one, I'll tell you that.