

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW
May 3, 2018



KEITH MITCHELL (-4)

Q. Seven fairways, but 15 greens, so obviously the iron play was part of it. Your thoughts on how you played today?

KEITH MITCHELL: I felt like I played awesome, except 16, 17 and 18, but those are such tough holes. Only playing those 1 over is really not losing a shot to the field. So other than that, I feel like I was really in control out there. And greens are just so perfect right now. If you hit a good putt, they're going to go in.

Q. If people aren't familiar with your game, you can bomb it off the tee. We had you 370 off of 15 and 354 on 16, and obviously I would think this golf course plays right into your alley.

KEITH MITCHELL: It's definitely my advantage if I can keep it in the fairway. So I did that decently enough today, gives me some advantages. And the fairways are running so pure right now that the ball's bouncing and rolling. If you can just -- I mean, it's tight out there, there are some big trees. So if you can just keep it in the fairway and keep the ball in front of you, you're going to make some birdies.

Q. Now, the play at 18, you're in the right pine straw. Tell us what was going through your mind there and then what happened.

KEITH MITCHELL: I honestly should have hit 3-wood off that tee. It was downwind, but I was hitting my driver so well that I just didn't feel like backing down. Unfortunately, it just went through the fairway, into the pine straw. Had a tough lie where I was trying to just knock it out over the rough and let it chase up, and there was a little bit of pine straw in front of my ball with a little mud. It kind of ramped off that and kind of shot it left a little bit just into the water. But making bogey from there, you're going to make that anyway, and I was very fortunate to get up and down after that drop. So I'm honestly happy with the bogey on 18.

Q. How would you assess your round out there today?

KEITH MITCHELL: It felt awesome out there, especially the first 15 holes. It feels just easy out there today, but the last three holes are so tough that when you get overconfident on those three holes, they can bite you. So pretty pleased to only be 1 over those last three, but pretty good overall.

Q. What made it feel so good out there today? Was there something that's just clicking with your swing?

KEITH MITCHELL: It's pretty cool when Tiger's a couple groups behind you, Rickie's two groups behind you and the crowds are awesome. This is SEC football territory kind of. But there's a lot of good golf fans out there. The golf course is perfect. It's just a lot of fun.

Q. For a long hitter, does this course suit your eye a little bit?

KEITH MITCHELL: Definitely, it's definitely long. I was fortunate enough to hit my driver very well today, so that was huge, and given some opportunities to make birdie. Unfortunately, I just didn't hit a good one on 18, but other than that I felt pretty awesome off the tee.

Q. The last couple tournaments maybe haven't been what you're looking for, but those couple tournaments there in March kind of up to now, do you feel like confidence is really gaining as the season goes along?

KEITH MITCHELL: Absolutely. It's such a learning curve out here with the golf courses and the competition, just getting comfortable really. This week -- I worked with my teacher a little bit last week and just kind of I felt like my game was in a really good place, and this golf course suits me. So I just tried to stay out of my own way out there and I felt like I did that pretty well today.

Q. You mentioned Tiger and Rory. What's it like to have your name up at the top of the leaderboard with a field of this stature?

KEITH MITCHELL: It's different. It's a first, but it's something that we've been working for, all of us rookies, forever. So I don't want to say it's uncomfortable because that's what we're striving to do. So it's fun to get there. I know it's only Thursday, we've got three more rounds, so I'm just going to try to do the best I can until Sunday, and if it's still there on Sunday, I'll be extremely happy.

Q. You mentioned the crowds. Is that something that you feed off of as a competitor?

KEITH MITCHELL: Absolutely, that's what we're out here for and that's what really makes these golf tournaments what they are. It's a lot of fun. And these crowds here are really respectful. They cheer for you even when you make a bogey, which is nice, just some reassurance. It's been a great week out here at Quail and awesome, awesome crowds.