

ROUND 2 INTERVIEW
May 4, 2018



PETER MALNATI (-7)

Q. With the solo leader, Peter Malnati. We saw Jason Day coming for you, just a shot back. You were able to shoot a 68. You talked about how much your ball striking, you've been working at it and it's improved. What did you bottle up there?

PETER MALNATI: Honestly, the biggest thing that's different this week from kind of the last couple years for me is just I'm more relaxed. I'm feeling good, I'm confident with what I've been doing, and I'm kind of letting it show on the course rather than letting it stress me out.

Q. You're the best of anyone in the field right now. What's it like standing over the ball and having that type of momentum you've been able to carry through?

PETER MALNATI: Oh, man, that's crazy. I think I expect a lot of myself as a player. I've been thinking about the couple that I missed out there today, so that's silly but not in a bad way. I know I'm putting really good. It's fun to putt on greens where you just get it started on line and you just watch it roll in and hopefully go right in the hole.

Q. Peter, how big were those last three holes? You get a couple of birdies and then that crucial up-and-down on the ninth out of the sand.

PETER MALNATI: Crucial. I don't know about crucial. I like, you know, I like always being the best score I can make on a hole, and from where I was in that bunker, 4 was pretty darn good. So I'll take it, I'm happy.

Q. What is it about this course, this layout, Quail Hollow Club that's allowed you to put together these two great scores in the first two rounds?

PETER MALNATI: The immaculate conditions certainly help, the golf course is perfect. You feel like if you execute well, you get the results that you deserve for the execution. So I feel like I played well. It's fun to see putts roll and go in the hole. It's just kind of fun to play golf on a golf course like this, that's for sure.

Q. On top of that, how much are you looking forward to the weekend now with the position that you're in, 7 under after two rounds?

PETER MALNATI: Yeah, I've been trying to kind of embrace just being a little more calm and relaxed on the golf course this week. It will be a good test tomorrow to see how I feel walking to that first tee. I'm sure there will be some nerves, but I'll definitely be excited and I'll be able to hang on to some of this calm that I felt these first two days.

Q. Starting off on 10, you make the bogey at 11 but you still get the birdie and then the birdie at 18. If that's a springboard to the front nine, it's got to be, right?

PETER MALNATI: Yeah. I don't get to do this much. Do I need to talk into the microphone or can I --

Q. Yeah.

PETER MALNATI: -- just talk straight to --

Q. Microphone.

PETER MALNATI: I'm just being silly.

So to birdie 18, you know, to birdie 18, whether it's your last hole or making the turn, feels really good. Yeah, definitely to kind of do that, to make a 3 on that hole, you kind of feel like you're stealing one a little bit because it's a tough hole. To do that definitely gave me a little momentum heading into my second nine today, so it was fun.

Q. When did you kind of get comfortable again playing like your style of golf instead of what you thought a Tour player's --

PETER MALNATI: Yeah, I've tried -- I've been working on it for like a good while, but I definitely -- you know, this is maybe a longer answer than we have time for, but I'll shorten it.

Last week at the Zurich Classic, I'm playing with Billy Hurley, who's probably the guy on Tour that I know best. He was my big brother when I was a rookie. I think he and I both helped each other through some challenging times.

I found myself -- I always want good results, but last week I wanted them especially bad because I wanted them for me, I wanted them for him, I wanted them for us as a team. I realized when we got done playing lousy for two days that I just was so into the results, that's all I could think about. It created a lot of anxiety, a lot of pressure, just a really heavy weight to play with.

What I always was so good at before, before anyone had ever heard of me, before I played on the PGA TOUR, was just playing and trying to do the very best I could. Being in my process, going through my plan, following it, and then being at peace with whatever happened. And there really hasn't been a lot of peace for me lately because I just want the results so badly.

Last week, wanting them twice as badly because I had a partner that I was trying to pull for, that was I think an epiphany moment for me. The more you strive for the results, the more I try to get the results, sometimes the more anxiety, the more pressure I feel.

So that was like really -- this week I came into the week and I have the word "process" written on my glove. That's kind of my focus. Just focus on my process and be at peace with the results. It's been a lot of fun.

Q. Talk about being calm today and trying to do that. Are you normally not calm when you play golf?

PETER MALNATI: I mean, I always have fun, I always smile. I love my job, and I even love my job when I suck at it, which I don't think very many guys out here can say. I love my job, so I always have fun.

But having fun and being relaxed aren't the same thing, and I definitely am pretty high strung. Having trouble now for a couple years, yeah, I'm out there and there's a lot of -- there's a lot of anxiety, there's a lot of really strong desire, there's a lot of pressure that I put on myself. So yeah, I would say that I'm not always as calm as I would like to be even though I may look happy and smiley.

Q. What's the key to playing this golf course well when it's a place that favors guys who hit it maybe a little bit longer than you do?

PETER MALNATI: Good attitude helps, for sure. And then one thing that I've been really trying to do is just have a great plan on every shot. Like know where I want to land the ball, because sometimes you have to play for some bounce and roll. That's something I'm not always that good at because I don't always know -- I'm not the most precise ball-striker ever, but at least if I have a really, really good plan, then maybe I can get away with some of the imprecision if the plan is there. So that's something I've really tried to focus on, having a really good plan, knowing where I'm trying to land my approach shots. And I've really been swinging nicely this week, so it helps. Obviously, the better you execute, the smarter you look.

But I've had a really good plan and I think that has -- that has helped me get away with some of the maybe, you know, iffy execution because I think having a plan, having the knowledge.

And then also I have to give some props to my caddie, he did a really good job. He got here a couple days before I did and he knows some of the places -- like he's told me on some of the approach shots, hey, I think we can be aggressive here because if you hit just over the back of this green, it's an uphill chip into the grain. He's helped me a lot just giving me some comfort on some of those shots.

Q. (No microphone.)

PETER MALNATI: A scary one. Yeah, my goodness, I'm trying to give myself 15 feet there. That's a terrible miss over on the right, it's no good. I'm a good bunker player, I'm confident in my ability to hit a good bunker shot, but I'm trying to give myself 15 feet and I just -- kind of clubface goes under it more than I want it to. And, I mean, at no point at

impact did I think that was clearing the lip. Then it clears the lip and lands in, and I was like, oh, that was a perfect shot. But it was pretty scary when it hit it.

Q. Scary, but it worked out nicely?

PETER MALNATI: Yeah, definitely all that, for sure. I wanted to be semi-aggressive and try to get some -- get the clubhead under it with some loft and pop it up, but I slid under it a lot more than I meant to. But got away with it. Sometimes that has to happen. And the fact that I had the good plan to try to hit it 15 feet past the hole. If I had been trying to hit it close and it did what it did, it would have rolled back to my feet. So had a good plan, didn't execute awesome, got away with it, looked like a genius.

Q. How many times do you hit a 6-iron or longer for an approach shot?

PETER MALNATI: Definitely playing the course like practice round days when we're just sort of maxing out the length and playing from the back, I would say more than half the holes, for sure. I would say, you know, probably around half the holes. I can run through it if you want me to, but I would say approximately half the holes I'm hitting a 6-iron or more.

That will wear on you a little bit. I would say the greens for the most part out here are big enough. Like 9, I had a 5-iron into 9 out there after getting a good break off the tee, too. But I had a 5-iron in and you're looking at that green and you're thinking, you should hit that green with a 5-iron, it's a big green. I didn't, but you should. And that's the case with a lot of the greens. Like the new first hole, that's a hard 4- or 5-iron because that thing's small. It's a good par 5 green, but a small green.