



AUSTIN COOK (-6)

Q. Austin, really nice defense of your title with an opening 66. Even though it was on the Plantation and weather was tough, it still wasn't easy out there.

AUSTIN COOK: Yeah, no, it was definitely cold and very windy today, but I was able to just keep the ball in the fairway, and then hitting the greens like I needed to and a few putts went in.

Q. Yeah, 16 out of 18 greens, and the greens that you did miss you got up and down, so that's got to be very pleasing for you. Your mindset coming into this week; obviously a new experience, haven't defended a title before. Tell me a little bit about what your outlook was and what you did to prepare for this week.

AUSTIN COOK: Yeah, didn't really change anything preparing for this week. I went out Saturday and Sunday, did some duck hunting. I'm really just trying to come here and have some fun with it. We missed the cut in Vegas and my attitude wasn't great. Kip kind of said some stuff and straightened me out. We're really just going to try and have some fun this week.

Q. Yeah, caddies are so helpful, and an experienced one like that has got to mean a lot. So now three straight days on the Seaside course, you've had experience playing this course before in college. You've got to feel good about your chances.

AUSTIN COOK: Yeah, obviously it's early, but ball-striking is pretty good right now and I think that's key for the other golf course. And my chipping's pretty good, two-for-two in up-and-downs. You kind of need all that to win on this golf course, especially if the wind keeps blowing like this and it's cold. Hopefully the ball-striking keeps working.

Q. J.J.'s tied for the lead also, a little recreation of last year? A lot to go.

AUSTIN COOK: That's right, yeah. Obviously he's a great ball-striker and I feel like I'm a great ball-striker and this is the kind of course that those succeed on.

Q. Just hitting it straight and not an overemphasis on distance?

AUSTIN COOK: I mean, distance helps, but it's not necessary on this golf course to play well, but straight ball-striking is. I mean, you see Cameron, I think Cameron's up there as well. He hits it so long and straight, dude's going to have a great career. It helps, but it's not necessary.

Q. Anything different about the first title defense?

AUSTIN COOK: No. I'm very calm, which I think is a great thing. A lot more calm and just relaxed than maybe I thought I would be. Overall, it's been a great week and I'm very comfortable around this place, so that's helpful, nice.

Q. Any preference on going to Plantation first and then Seaside tomorrow? I think conditions will be tough out there even tomorrow, too.

AUSTIN COOK: Yeah, that was the key pattern last year, so I would like to play Plantation every time first.

Q. Austin, no defending champ has won here, but you got off to a great start. How did it feel coming back?

AUSTIN COOK: It felt great. Last tournament I played was Vegas and missed the cut, didn't really have much of anything going that week. Today, to be able to get the two greens I missed up and down and I get a couple good putts to fall, it felt great.

Q. How important was that with the conditions the way they were? How good does it feel to get off to such a good start knowing that Seaside played really tough today?

AUSTIN COOK: Yeah. I mean, the wind out here, it can really start to whip and it did a few times out there for us, but a couple great shots, flighted shots when I needed them.

Q. Tomorrow you'll head to Seaside and play in some difficult winds. What will be your mentality?

AUSTIN COOK: Kind of the same as today, fairways and greens, just trying to do things that I can control and that's put a good swing on the ball. The wind's going to be there. You've got to trust the wind and trust that it's going to do what you think it's going to do to the ball and just hit a shot.