

CHARLES HOWELL III (-16)

AMANDA HERRINGTON: We would like to welcome Charles Howell in again, third day still at the top of the leaderboard, although the scores did fluctuate a bit today. Assess your round in the third round.

CHARLES HOWELL III: Yeah, I got off to a really nice start, which was really good to kind of calm me down a bit and kind of get today going. Didn't really finish off with much of anything to speak of. Yeah, I knew some -- the scores behind me would be low, especially with some of the finishing holes here, I knew the guys would make some birdies and close the gap if I didn't keep going and that's what happened.

Yeah, I've got a chance to win the golf tournament tomorrow and I would have taken that Thursday morning, no doubt. Fortunately, I'm still one ahead.

Then playing with Cameron and Jason was a good group. Man, Cameron, he's got a bright future ahead of him. I've never seen an iron hit as hard as he hits it, holy cow. I mean, I think he might have hit two drivers today maybe. So it's -- I've never quite seen a 3-iron fly the way his does.

Q. More so than the play, just the stuff you talked about yesterday about looking ahead, trying too hard, that kind of stuff, how do you feel like you did today with that aspect of the game?

CHARLES HOWELL III: I thought I did pretty good especially getting off to a nice start, and then just towards the end I had some difficult reads and didn't really -- yeah, I actually thought I did a better job of that than I thought I would have, to be honest.

I know just a one-shot lead from what could have been doesn't really answer that, but I think I did a little bit of a better job than I thought I would have. Tomorrow is going to be a shootout, so I think that a little bit, I think everybody's mindset will be fairly aggressive. There's nothing to protect, if you will. I mean, this golf course really isn't going to lend itself to that mentality.

So tomorrow for certain will be a shootout, so I think tomorrow's mentality of being more aggressive is kind of built in. But as far as today, I thought I did a little bit of a better job than I thought I would.

Q. Did you think you were aggressive today?

CHARLES HOWELL III: I did, and then I thought -- no, I kept trying to like push forward.

My thought was, okay, get to 19 under, get to 19 under, et cetera, et cetera. I kept trying to push myself to that as opposed to looking at a lead or an amount of a lead, if you will.

Had I played the last few holes a little bit better, I think I had a chance to get to that. I got off to a good enough start to do it, I should say.

Q. Did you hit the ball a little bit kind of under the level that you showed the first couple of days? Was it the putting? You know, how would you characterize that?

CHARLES HOWELL III: I thought I hit the ball good, not great, not as well as I did the first two days. And for whatever -- certain days you just have difficult reads on the greens and I thought today we had a lot of putts that were quite difficult to read and that's just the randomness of golf and of putting. Really nothing you can do about it except to say we had a lot of putts on crowns, et cetera, et cetera, and that's just what's going to happen on certain days.

As far as the ball-hitting goes, it was good. It wasn't quite as good as it was Thursday and Friday, no.

Q. With that said, how difficult is it after two days when you miss a couple of fairways and two greens over 36 holes, how difficult is it to keep hitting the ball at that level?

CHARLES HOWELL III: I think eventually the law of averages does play out, you just hope it does it before Sunday night. It is. I really like this golf course, though. Whatever it means when guys say it fits your eye, this golf course, maybe because I've played here so many times, I really do like it. You can get it. Man, if you get going, you can certainly get it and shoot low ones, which guys are showing.

So I would expect to hit the ball well again tomorrow. I would say it's going to be a matter of me getting the putter hot and being able to take advantage of some of that to get some momentum going. When you're in a logjam type situation like this, it's hard to come out on top without a little bit of momentum on your side. Certainly the last five or six holes today it felt a little bit of a chore more so than earlier in the day.

Q. Charles, you've been a consistent player throughout your career. Did you think it was going to take you this long to win your third, you know, PGA TOUR win, and what do you think it's going to take tomorrow in terms of a score? You said you're going to play aggressive.

CHARLES HOWELL III: Yeah, I mean, I've talked about it forever. Yeah, I thought I would have won more by now, no reason to rehash that.

As far as tomorrow, I would say 20, 21 under will do it because even the guy sitting there at 13 under or so can get right up there to that number. It will take at least 20-issue I would say. From what I'm believing, I don't think the wind's going to be up too much tomorrow, so I

would say guys are going to get to that number, especially Webb Simpson up there, who's played well around here before. Luke List can shoot low, so I would say that 20 number is good.

Q. By your own definition, that feeling of having a chance to win and all the stuff that goes on with it, how do you define that? Nerves, butterflies, what's your definition of it?

CHARLES HOWELL III: You know, mine's kind of excitement and I would -- like the opposite of that would be, and I've done this a lot is tee off on Sunday morning T-57, you know, that can feel a bit like a death march at times. So your mentality can shift to, well, I'm going to work on a couple things today, or I'm going to try to play just crazy aggressive, or let's see if I can find something for next week. So the mentality sort of shifts off what's going on right there that day.

I would say up near the top of the leaderboard with a chance to win or a chance for a high finish, it's much more excitement, a bit more engaged in the day, the results of the day, et cetera.

Q. When's the last time you felt this excited about being excited?

CHARLES HOWELL III: When Mike Gundy went for 2 against your alma mater. Didn't quite pan out.

Q. I meant on the golf course.

CHARLES HOWELL III: On the golf course? I've never been -- no. You know, actually, Malaysia this year, the CIMB, I didn't ever really have a great chance to win, but I finished fourth or fifth there and it was -- yeah, that one was. Especially with the first event of a new year, if you will, et cetera, and to play well there to get to 20 under there, et cetera, it was that. I was quite surprised I didn't play better the following week in Korea because of that finish in Malaysia, but I would say that week at CIMB was pretty big for me.

Q. When you were younger, if you went back to 2000, 2001, was it still a feeling like excitement or was it nerves back then? Younger, was it more nerves?

CHARLES HOWELL III: It was a bit of both, I would say. I would go back to maybe say the NCAA in 2000, if you will, and then starting my professional career, there was nerves and excitement there. There's probably less nerves now, more on the excitement side of, hey, man, I've got a chance to do something here.

I think over the course of time there's always going to be some amount of nerves, but I think that gets dampened a bit after you've played -- I read this was my 530th tournament, if you will. Some of the nerves have kind of dampened a bit, but it's just an excitement. If I go shoot 65 tomorrow, I have a great chance at winning. It's the excitement for that, for the

potential outcome.

Q. So when you signed your card and walked out of the tent, where was your excitement level, because you're still thinking back on the round or the last nine or whatever?

CHARLES HOWELL III: You know, I would say definitely not as high as it was the first two days because I felt the last four or five holes I left a couple out there, but the positive being that I still hung in there well enough to have a one-shot lead, that I didn't completely shoot myself in the foot and lose that.

But still knowing that I'm still in the last group tomorrow, knowing that, hey, if I go play good tomorrow, but the same can be said for Jason Gore or Cameron Champ. If you go out tomorrow and shoot 64, you're going to win a golf tournament.

I think that carrot that dangles out there, it's the same reason Bernhard Langer's playing when he's 105. It's just like the carrot is always dangled out there in this game. Sometimes we need a coach to say, you know what, you're not good enough anymore and it's time to go to pasture. But in golf, it's always out there, you just know you're one day away or whatever. It's kind of that feeling a little bit of if I shoot 64 tomorrow, I can win this golf tournament.

And if I shoot 74 tomorrow, I'll be telling myself, well, let's have a good offseason and we start back in Hawaii. It's a cycle that keeps going. It's why the Champions Tour is here and there will be a Super Champions Tour next.

Q. Would a result on either side tomorrow, would that impact how you look at yourself as a player?

CHARLES HOWELL III: Like most golfers I judge myself based on my score. If I shoot low, I'm a good person; if I shoot high, I'm a bad person, so yes.

No, I think I'm most excited to see like how I handle tomorrow because I have no idea what's going to happen. Nobody does. So I'm most excited to stick to my routines and stick to the things that I think I need to do to play well and see what happens from there. And this whole sort of fall season has always been a great barometer of knowing what I need to work on this offseason and how that practice and preparation may need to shift. But I'm actually really excited to see how I handle tomorrow.

Q. And if you could pick one being in the final group, would you rather be a 44-year-old who's resigned to being a part-time player or 23-year-old who won four starts ago?

CHARLES HOWELL III: I'll be a disgruntled 39-year-old right in the middle, how about that?

Cameron's got a hell of a future. You know, I played a lot of golf with Tiger from 2000

through '08. I mean, I've not seen a guy hit a golf ball this hard ever that played professional golf. I've seen long drive guys or whatever. This guy's got a hell of a future. If he stays on this path and, man, keeps his head in the game, he could be a guy that could really change the game. He's out there hitting 3-irons off tees I've never ever seen guys hit irons off of in any weather condition. You know, you see a lot of guys come around, Bubba and Dustin Johnson and these guys who hit it far, and then there's this guy and you're like, Wow. I would probably pick him, but to go back in time for that.

Q. Two things: What's the most interesting thing Cameron said out there today, the 23-year-old?

CHARLES HOWELL III: He doesn't say much. I'm trying to think if he said, "Good drive," if that ever impressed him. I don't know if he had. He might have said, "Straight drive." He doesn't say much. (Laughs.)

Q. The other one, did Jason at all try to sell you any insurance today?

CHARLES HOWELL III: No. We'll talk about that tomorrow because life insurance at our age, yes. It's not property and casualty anymore, it's just straight up life insurance, yeah. Buy term, invest the difference.

AMANDA HERRINGTON: Thank you, Charles.

CHARLES HOWELL III: Thank you.