

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW
January 24, 2019



TIGER WOODS (-2)

Q. A workingman's 70, how would you assess that first round of 2019?

TIGER WOODS: Yeah, you know, I think I probably could have shot something around 68 or 67 today pretty easily. I hit a lot of good putts that were around the hole that just didn't quite fall in. Overall, shooting a couple under par on the South course is not so bad, but now I'm forced to have to shoot a low one tomorrow just like most of the field did over there today. I'm sure the average score over there has got to be close to under 68 today. I've got to go do it tomorrow.

Q. Yeah, it's playing almost three shots easier today. What did you learn from today that you'll take to tomorrow and try to shoot that low score?

TIGER WOODS: You know, I felt like I drove it pretty good today even though I missed a few fairways, but they were controllable.

I felt like I hit -- my feel was a little bit off in my distances with my irons. That's just from not playing at competitive speed in a while. Hopefully I'll have that feel a little bit better tomorrow and start hitting them exactly pin high, which I've been pretty good at for most of my career.

Q. Lastly, you mentioned the feels and how much you really want to get into that. The first round of this season, trying to get that going, how difficult was it to get sort of that feels going, and will it be easier tomorrow?

TIGER WOODS: It will be a lot easier. I've got a competitive round under my belt. And the first hole was nice, I drove it right down the middle of the fairway. Normally that's a pretty good green light situation with an 8-iron. I chickened out, I don't want to make bogey on the very first hole here, so I dumped it to the center of the green.

As I get more comfortable, I'll fire at more flags and start being a little bit more aggressive and start feeling a little bit more comfortable with the game and being back competing again.

Q. Tiger, anything under par on the South course is a good score, five birdies, three bogeys. Are you pleased?

TIGER WOODS: I am. I feel like I probably could have shot 68 or 67 pretty easily today. I hit a lot of good putts that were right around the hole that just didn't quite fall in, but overall it was a pretty solid day. A couple under par on the South course is not something to sneeze at, but now I have to shoot a low one tomorrow.

It seems like everybody over on the North course shot low numbers and obviously it's playing a little bit easier than we've had the last couple of years over there. After the changes, those greens have been usually extremely firm and difficult to get the ball close to. If that many guys shot that many under par, it might be a different story.

Q. What do you work on now, what do you improve on, because everything looked pretty good today?

TIGER WOODS: I felt pretty comfortable with everything today. I felt like I drove it halfway decent today and irons were good but not great. Just my feel, my feel. Playing at competitive speed again, I didn't quite hit all my irons pin high like I normally do. That's something hopefully I'll have a better handle on tomorrow. It was nice to have some juice flow in the system again, it's been a while. I missed it.

Q. Did you take advantage of the new rules ever with repairing anything on the greens or were the greens pretty good today?

TIGER WOODS: It's poa, so they're going to be bouncy. I never had spike marks in my line. Majority of the guys are wearing soft spikes, so nothing kicked up. Nothing was in my line except for a few ball marks here and there, which I fixed.

Other than that, I really didn't have any situations where -- well, I did actually. On the 11th hole, as I was about to build my stance, my ball moved. Normally I just play it where it is, but now I had to move it back to where it originally was and then play it from there. That was a little bit different.

Tony had one on 15 in the middle of the fairway, taking a drop from a sprinkler head and we were joking, Xander and I were giving him some pretty good grief about his long arms, that he could reach his knees without bending over. He was trying to prove a point and we had a good time with it.

Q. Would you have been penalized in the old days for what happened because that ball moved?

TIGER WOODS: If I had put my putter on the ground that caused it to move or been in the area of potentially causing it to move, then yes, that would be similar to what happened with Dustin at Oakmont.

I hadn't built my stance in yet, but I was moving in there and the ball rolled. It's going to happen on poa, that's just the way it is, but moving it back is a little bit different.

Q. Getting a round under your belt now in 2019, going into the second round, what part of your game do you feel like is the rustiest?

TIGER WOODS: Well, I think that having my feel, hitting the ball -- as I was saying, hitting the ball pin high, I've always been really good at that my entire career. I wasn't that good at it today. That's just -- I'm not used to having this much adrenalin in my system. It's been a while, so try to get a feel for that and try to get a feel for how my body's rotating and how much further I hit it in a tournament situation than I do at home. That's always been the case, but I hadn't played in tournaments for a while, so one tournament since the TOUR Championship. It's going to take a little bit to get my feel back.

Q. And new clubs in the bag?

TIGER WOODS: Yeah, I got the new bats from pitching wedge through 3-iron, and then my new driver and 3-wood. Same old 5-wood and same wedges and same old putter.

Q. Is that the biggest thing you have to adjust to, first round of the year, having all that extra adrenalin?

TIGER WOODS: Yeah, yeah, it's different. I know we play for sometimes interesting denominations at home, but it's not like this. It's a different deal.

Nothing that we can do can simulate game-time speed. We try to. You know, I'm one of the worst testers at home on TrackMan because I don't have my speed, but I come out here and you see my TrackMan numbers on some of the tee shots, they're jacked up because that's game-time speed. That's just a reality that I think is for most of the players.

Q. Was there one shot of the day that really got the juices flowing?

TIGER WOODS: Yeah, the tee shot on 1 was nice because normally I haven't really played that hole all that well. Joey was asking me going down the first fairway, what did you play this hole in the U.S. Open. I said I played 6 over in the first four rounds. I made par in the playoff, which was great.

You know, I didn't want to start off with a bogey on the first hole. I piped it down 1. That's a green-light 8-iron. I normally take a pretty aggressive line. I just dumped it in the center of the green and said, okay, let's just start with a par. I happened to make a putt, which I almost did, it just hung on the lip. That's great, but now let's go to work --

Q. What's it like being --

TIGER WOODS: -- and get going in the round.

Q. What's it like being paired with such a young and vibrant player like Xander Schauffele in your first round with him?

TIGER WOODS: Yeah, I haven't really got a chance to know Xander yet. Seemed like he was out here when I wasn't out here yet, or I was out. He's been playing well and he's

played well in tournaments that I hadn't played at. Haven't really seen him. He won at the Greenbrier, HSBC and Maui and even the TOUR Championship, all four events I didn't play in. So I hadn't seen him play at the elite level in person.

Today he hit two fairways and shot 3-under par on the South course. I mean, that's impressive.

Q. Tiger, was there still a part of you that felt a little strange putting with the flagstick in in competition?

TIGER WOODS: Yeah, I did it once coming down the green on 8, but that was about it. You know, that's -- I was watching Adam ahead of us and he left it in most of his short putts. The only putt I think he didn't have it in was 16, the left-to-righter. For some reason he didn't have it in there, but he had it in on all the short ones and that was a bit different.

I've talked to some of the guys who are using it all the time like Bryson and they've for some reason, I guess when you're younger, it's easier to make a change, you haven't been playing under these rules for such a long period of time. I just feel that part of me didn't want to have -- part of me wanted to have Joey down there to tend the flag because I just felt like I might be slapped two if this putt happened to go in. So that part, I'm trying to get over that, I'm trying to get used to it, but we'll see.