

ROUND 2 INTERVIEW
May 3, 2019

MAX HOMA (-10)



Q. Max, eight birdies, no bogeys on one of the toughest courses on the PGA TOUR where you hadn't broke 70 in six rounds prior to today. How did this all come about for you?

MAX HOMA: I don't know. I've been playing really well since the new part of the season started, so just started feeding off that. I've been driving it better than I have in the past. It's a good golf course for me. Honestly, I'm surprised I haven't played great here yet. I really like the layout, it fits my eye really well, and when you putt it good, it makes everything easy.

Q. How strong was that finish for you? At 8 you hit that tee ball in the rough but from 58 yards away to a foot, and then you roll in that one from 24 feet away on the 9th, your last hole of the day, for back-to-back birds.

MAX HOMA: Yeah, it felt good because you want to birdie 7, especially with the pin in the bowl, and I hit a couple good shots but I just couldn't get up and down. No. 8 was a bonus because you're just trying to get that thing within about 15 feet, and 9 was a super bonus because we were in between and just played it short, and to make that putt is always pretty fun. Yeah, it's easier to go eat lunch after you birdie the last two.

Q. And that bird took you to 10 under par. How do you feel about the weekend here at Quail Hollow Club?

MAX HOMA: I'm just going to keep doing the same thing. Like I say, I really like where my game's at. I've been playing really well, just haven't put it all together, and this week it's all been pretty solid. So yeah, I'm just going to keep doing the same thing.

Q. Max, eight birdies and no bogeys, you close with two birdies there. How did that feel to get in the house at 10 under?

MAX HOMA: It's great. I wasn't really thinking about a number, I just knew I was playing really well. Wanted to kind of keep doing that. No. 9 doesn't set up well for me at all off the tee, so it was awesome to hit a really good drive and then anything after that was going to be a bonus. Yeah, the finish isn't too bad if you finish on the front, so playing 7, 8, 9 2 under is good.

Q. What did you hit on 9?

MAX HOMA: 7-iron.

Q. What are your thoughts on (inaudible)? Just kidding.

MAX HOMA: No, I'll answer. He's the best -- I played with Matt Wolf. He's the best young kid I've ever played with. It's hard to remember playing with Justin when he was that young, but man, I hope he wins the Hogan Award because he deserves it.

Q. Where did this round come from? What are you working on?

MAX HOMA: Nothing really. Honestly, if you look deep in the stats, which nobody does for me, but it's been really good. I've been driving it great. That's usually kind of my hiccup. I've been driving it pretty far and very straight. I just haven't been chipping well and haven't really made the putts to keep the round going and I did that really well yesterday. I thought it was pretty hard yesterday. Did that really well yesterday and just kept it going today. I usually hit the ball pretty well. A course like this sets up great for me, a lot of 7-irons, 8-irons in, drive it in the fairway. So I'm not really that surprised. Everybody else probably will be, but I was kind of waiting for this to happen.

Q. When you said nobody looks up the stats for me, are you talking about us or are you talking about you have no one who does it for you?

MAX HOMA: You. No, no one does it for me. You've got to have money to do that.

Q. You do it yourself?

MAX HOMA: Yeah, I do it myself.

Q. How much do you rely on it?

MAX HOMA: Not very, like very slight. Like I enjoy -- the biggest one for me is just strokes gained off the tee because that's what I have been doing a lot better at is driving the ball and I just like to see that it is good, you know, because out here I play with the same core 20 people. We don't play with the Rorys and the Dustins very often, so when I drive the ball well, to me it's good. Then you hear all about these other guys. So I think Valero I think I finished second total driving or something like that strokes gained off the tee. I was like, wow, okay, I can hang, even my good is great. So it's kind of just more for my confidence, I think, a little bit.

Q. Do you consider yourself a streaky player?

MAX HOMA: Two years ago, streaky very bad, so yeah, a little. Honestly, this year's been the most consistent I've played. Besides the team event last week, I played all right. I think I've only missed the cut at Valspar and maybe somewhere before that, so it's kind of been my best run of cuts made and getting in the mix a little.

I've had my fair share of kind of being in 20th going into the weekend. So yeah, I'm a little

streaky, but I don't think that it's been like that. I think it's more like I didn't have a great command of my game so it looked streaky because the bad was poor. You know, I've been playing like this for -- at home and out here for feels like four or five months. It's been good for a while. It doesn't feel too streaky anymore.

Q. In what ways are you different now on your third year on the PGA TOUR versus when you first came out?

MAX HOMA: Like I said, driving's huge. I'm driving it really, really nice, and I have been since about Hawaii, maybe just before then. We went to a cut off the tee in La Quinta and that was great. Just putted terrible for that little stretch.

But sticking the course, keep playing that cut, and my iron game's always been my strength. So just doing whatever I want from there. But that's the -- I've grown up a lot. My attitude is awesome nowadays. I don't really get too down on myself. I have an awesome, awesome caddie that doesn't let me. If I'm quiet, he yells at me and tells me quiet golfers are usually very mean to themselves, so we have a good thing going.

Q. (No microphone.)

MAX HOMA: I don't anymore. Two and a half years ago I went back to my coach, Les Johnson. I had him in college.

Q. Do you think that's true?

MAX HOMA: What's that?

Q. Quiet golfers are usually --

MAX HOMA: They said it. I wasn't. I was just really hot and I was trying to stay upright.

Q. Sounds like it's true, though.

MAX HOMA: It probably is. He knows a lot more than I do. Yeah, it's probably true, but at that exact occasion he was wrong.

Q. You talked about was it Valspar where you finished second in total driving?

MAX HOMA: No, Valero.

Q. Do you remember what you finished that week?

MAX HOMA: Yeah, 43rd and I putted like legitimately awful. Like I think like legitimately. On the weekend I like couldn't find the hole, especially Sunday. I hit it awesome on Friday, Saturday, and both those days I felt like I could have been a few lower and I was in 20th.

So like little stuff. For me coming off two years ago playing so bad out here, little stuff like that gives me a little boost. I know I'm always going to get the putter back, I've always been a pretty good putter. Just seeing that like my good golf is really good, especially where I think my strength is tee to green and then just having some faith in it and work hard, go home and resettle and come out to a course that I love and sets up well for me and something like this happens, I guess.

Q. Even if you finish 40-something, you can take something from --

MAX HOMA: Well, you have to. I mean, you have to. I guess if you're, you know, Tiger or something obviously that's horrendous. I'm not saying I played great. I putted awful, but I hit it well enough to at least be top-20 to 10 if I putted good. I putted really bad. On the weekend I missed like seven, eight putts inside of 10 feet and you can't do that. It's like I'm not going to get down on my hitting because I putted awful. Golf is not one whole encompassing thing, there are little parts to it. That's how I always try to look at it or else I drive myself nuts.

Q. When did maybe the confidence turn around?

MAX HOMA: La Quinta. Whenever I drive it well, I feel great. I went through some really lows with my driver a couple years ago out here. I mean, I don't remember what my worst one was, I think it was Wyndham, but it was embarrassing. I was hitting like seven provisionals a tournament. So when I know where I can hit off the tee and I have a good game plan off the tee, I feel very confident because I really do think I'm a great iron player. Of all the things that you might struggle with self esteem, that's always been kind of my go-to.

So when I have the driver going like this, I feel great because the foul ball doesn't feel like it's in play anymore. I haven't hit one in God knows how long and that's where it's hard because you're just waiting for a really bad drive and then it gets embarrassing and your score gets a lot worse really fast.

Q. The "relentless" I keep looking at every time you raise your arm. What is your story behind that?

MAX HOMA: It's always been my favorite word. There's a great book, one of the basketball trainers, the book's called Relentless. It's always been my favorite word in college. Just kind of being tougher than everybody, not giving up.

When I played very, very bad two years ago, I just kept thinking about that word. I knew I was going to be back out here and I was going to make myself get back out here and that's kind of when my attitude changed. You've kind of got to love yourself a little bit more, so I started to love the process of what I'm doing a bit and I took it day by day.

To me, that's just kind of what a relentless attitude is, tough as nails. I don't think a lot of people have gone through what I did out there and then put together something like this today. When you do, it makes you feel great, so that's kind of always been my goal for the last couple years.

Q. We can look this up, and we will look this up, Max, I promise, but how bad was it?

MAX HOMA: I made \$14,000. I think I made more money in the pro-ams on Monday than I did in the tournaments. I also got --

Q. Can we look that up?

MAX HOMA: Yeah, you could. It's going to be depressing. Yeah, it was bad, so there's obviously a lot of scar tissue.

But finally, honestly, since I've been driving it better, since probably that Pebble tournament I played well, that scar tissue's gone away. I feel like me again. I know I'm pretty good at this. I've played with a lot of players that are doing pretty well out here and I used to hang around them a little bit, so I know I'm good at this. It's just kind of been a steady climb of getting my game back and also the confidence and the comfortability out here. That was the hardest part and I'm actually starting to feel that a little bit.

Q. I've seen that with a couple other players, when you were doing what you're doing in amateur and college golf and things don't come quickly, for lack of a better word, and you see guys that you were with or played better than succeeding, is that almost harder than dealing with that patience than dealing with your own game?

MAX HOMA: Harder's probably the wrong word.

Q. Relentless?

MAX HOMA: You feel a little inadequate because you think to yourself, "Why am I not doing that," but it's not "I can't." That's where the -- I mean, Justin Thomas is still one of my best buddies out here. I never envied it. I envy that he was able to just keep being him because that's who he is, he's very good. I envy the fact that I thought I had to be someone more and I didn't. I'm still the same dude I was in college. I thought I had to get better, I thought I had to get a lot better, which is crazy. I've heard that 50 times in college; don't try to be anything more, don't try to be better, whatever. Just keep getting -- you know, as you get older you think about all the hours you put in and it only gets greater. That's what I was kind of frustrated with myself in, but it was great to see him to continue to succeed, or other players, Daniel, Jordan, because I at least know what that looks like.

I don't know what Tiger's game looks like, I have no idea. It's a highlight reel of YouTube videos I've seen. But I knew if Justin is doing this and I play great golf, and obviously he's had a stellar career in college and everything, but at least knew I was in the bubble of what

you could do, so that's kind of kept me going a little bit. But yeah, in general it wasn't too bad, I knew I was playing bad.

Q. Was he in your peer group, Justin?

MAX HOMA: Yeah, two years younger. Frickin' studs. But we played same Walker Cup team. Got to play some practice rounds with him, played Web the first year with him. And obviously I know Justin is far superior, but I also knew that like my good golf was somewhat similar. I mean, who knows -- I doubt that he has gotten like incredibly better because he was already an incredible golfer. It was kind of the mainline for me to look at and be like, all right, well, you know, just got to get back to being me five years ago.

Q. (Question about caddie.)

MAX HOMA: Yeah, Joe stayed with me before it became financially irresponsible for him to work for me. Went with Chappell, which was a really good call, did great. Chappell unfortunately got hurt. Worked out for me because Joe's one of my best friends since we were kids and we work very well together. I mean, even on bad weeks nowadays, it's still so fun. Get to hang out with one of my best friends, laugh about how bad we did or whatever. Then when we play good, it's even better.

Q. How much do you talk Dodger baseball?

MAX HOMA: A lot, a lot. He's going to shave that beard when they win the World Series. So gosh, everyone should have been rooting for him last year. We talk quite a bit about that and the Lakers basketball, so that keeps us going.