

CHRIS DiMARCO (-7)

Q. Your birdie putt, looked like a Sunday fist pump. Is that kind of you found something?

CHRIS DiMARCO: No, it's more just it's been a struggle this year. Got off to a pretty good start, shot a lot of under-par rounds. In the last few weeks with the wetness and the rough and the wind, I haven't been playing good. So I put a lot of work in the last three days and I found something. I started hitting a lot of fairways and my irons were going at the hole and I was making some putts.

So I finally made a lot of putts today. I think I made eight birdies. I think you can go back, there's probably five or six weeks this year where I haven't made eight birdies for the week. So when you can make some birdies -- I made nine birdies, because I made two bogeys, so fun.

I put myself in the right position. I was using the slopes, the greens were just fast enough where you could still be aggressive and I was able to knock a lot of putts in. I made all the ones that you're supposed to. Like the last hole I could have easily just been content with a 66, but I really went ahead and beared down and said let's get one more and drilled that right in the middle. So yeah, putting-wise it's about as good as it's been in a long time.

Q. The 17 shot, I saw you out there making that birdie. How long was that, 30 feet, 40 feet?

CHRIS DiMARCO: No, that was probably 60 feet. That was one of those ones you're just trying to get down there. Hit a great putt on 15 for eagle about the same distance that went right over the edge, went by just a foot or so. You're not trying to make that, you're just trying to give yourself an easy putt for par. I just happened to have the right line and it went right in the middle.

Q. What's your best round here at this tournament?

CHRIS DiMARCO: This is my first time.

Q. Oh, it is? Okay.

CHRIS DiMARCO: This is my maiden voyage here. I played I guess 12 or 13 -- this is my lowest round on this tour by I think four shots. I've been saying I just need to get something, five, six, seven, get under my belt so I can kind of get over it. I was able to do that. Birdieing the last four holes was nice.

Q. We talked earlier in the week about how there are only three or four bad holes is where you were kind of wearing your status of kind of recovering and everything?

CHRIS DiMARCO: Yeah.

Q. When you're at that stage like we mentioned, how important is just confidence of any degree when you're just searching for, you know, finding anything to get that rhythm going, I guess?

CHRIS DiMARCO: I think that's what it's been for me, it's just been getting something positive to -- I still didn't get off to a great start today. I bogeyed my fourth hole of the day, I was 1 over through five, then got on a tear after that.

You know, yeah, just any kind of confidence breeds confidence. To go out and, for me, shoot 65, I knew it was in there, it's just been hiding deep down. It was nice to kind of show its head. And really, in all honesty, not on a pro-am day or practice round, but to go ahead and do it in the first round and coming down the stretch, like I said, to make those birdies coming down the stretch was pretty sweet.

Q. What did you learn about the track here? How does it, at least through one round anyway, suit you? Did you figure anything out even already?

CHRIS DiMARCO: Well, I'm assuming we're probably going to play the ball up the next two days unless something crazy happens. It's still pretty wet out there. Got to hit in the fairway. I mean, that's just the bottom line. I think I hit every fairway on the back nine, and when you hit every fairway on the back nine and you've got a ball in hand, you're going to give yourself a lot of chances for birdie and I was able -- I birdied six holes on the back nine.

Q. How long did you say that last putt was, Chris?

CHRIS DiMARCO: About eight feet. I probably played a good eight to 10 inches of break on it, right to left. You had to be aggressive, you had to kind of get it out there. It was an easy putt that early in the year with my nerves, it was short and tentative and weak, and that one was really nice to see a good, firm stroke that went right in the middle of the hole.

Q. I caught a cool moment on 17 on the tee box, I don't know if you recall it, but your caddie asked you to sign a ball. As you were walking off, he went under the ropes and gave it to a little kid from the charitable benefactor. Then obviously we talked about your 60-foot putt, and then when he was walking --

CHRIS DiMARCO: You know, I live by a motto that it's easy to be a nice guy, it really is. It's hard work to have to be a jerk. You don't -- I've realized over the years because I've had so many people come up to me after and say, "15 years ago you gave my son a ball, he still has that ball." So, you know, just little gestures, how much it can touch people is pretty cool.

I'll tell you what, the fans out here, this is pretty cool how many people are out here watching. I'm excited. I mean, you live to play well and you live to have nerves and play with nerves and play well with nerves. That's our drug out here. It felt good out there today to kind of perform with pressure, with really inner pressure. I wouldn't say there's not much pressure everywhere else; really inner pressure, kind a battle within myself, kind of push the old me away and say, "Get out of here, let's get this guy back." It was really good for today, for sure.

Q. You go back to '04, '05, '06, you were runner-up in a major three years in a row. You played at such a high level. Then you get here and you struggle. What part of you says, "I know it's in there, I've got to find it again," or do you wonder if it is in there anymore?

CHRIS DiMARCO: Well, no, I mean, obviously you check on it. I actually brought it up, I did a thing for my sponsor, RSM, earlier this week and I was using Tiger as my role model. Two years ago everybody counted Tiger out and would he ever play the game again. We're looking at him at Phoenix and he can't chip and you're thinking, "What's happening?"

So literally watching him do what he did in the last seven, eight, nine months is, for me -- I took four and a half years off competitive golf. That's the hardest part is getting your competitive edge back and feeling like you belong.

Do I belong out here? Yes. Do I deserve to be out here? Yes. Do I feel like I can compete out here? You know, it's been a struggle.

And I'll tell you what, there's a big misconception out here. These guys are good, really good. You know, the courses aren't easy. These are hard courses. These guys are really good, and I'm watching Scott McCarron and Bernhard Langer and these guys and how easy they make it look and I know that's how I used to do it. I used to do the same thing. I mean, a bad round was 68. You know, you've got to get back to that point. My bad rounds need to be 71 and not 76 or 75.

So it's been really close all year. I don't want to say breaks haven't been great, but I haven't gotten the best breaks here and there, shots here. You know, I was able to get a couple good breaks today. I really -- what I did today the best was I made all the putts I was supposed to make and then I threw a couple in there that you don't expect.