

JAY HAAS (-4)

Q. Birdied the first two holes today kind of coming out of the gate.

JAY HAAS: Yeah, I had a good warm-up and then hit two beauties at one to three feet, and two, I hit a beautiful long bunker shot to about five feet and made it. And three had a good look, 15 feet, and didn't make it. And then four, since the first time I played this course, I've never felt comfortable on that tee. I drove the right rough and didn't reach the green and didn't chip very good, made bogey. But then hung around, hung around, and made a nice birdie at eight.

Q. What did you hit in there?

JAY HAAS: I hit a 7-iron. And then nice pars at nine and 10. You know, nothing crazy, but good up-and-downs. Then good shot on 11 didn't make it. No. 12, beautiful shot about eight feet and made it.

Q. What did you hit on 12, do you remember?

JAY HAAS: Hit 8-iron. And then 14, that's another hole I just don't feel comfortable on. I hit a pull over there and it was kind of up against the tree and got out to the fairway and didn't hit a very good third shot and missed the putt.

But then probably the shock of the millennium was I hit a drive on 16. Tee was up a little bit, but still I'm thinking it's just going to be an 8-iron layup instead of a hybrid. I hit it down the right side and one shoe's in the rough. They said it just caught the slope or whatever and I was way down the flat and I had to go for it. I hit a hybrid club on the left fringe, I wasn't any more than 20 feet from the hole. I never would have considered going for that green. Nice two-putt there for birdie.

Q. Were you surprised that came out a little slower?

JAY HAAS: Yeah. Actually, when I putted it, most of the time we can feel a sense whether it's short or long or whatever. When I hit it, I went, "Oooh, I like that." It was a good bit of fringe, but I didn't want to get too aggressive and just, you know, pumped up figuring it's going to get there.

Q. Tricky pin on 17?

JAY HAAS: Not a good drive at 17 again. And that kind of in the last couple days, I shot two over yesterday and my driver hurt me. You know, the bad drive at 14 hurt. But then

turned around, hit a great shot at 18 and probably one of my best shots I've ever hit I think, as nervous as I was, on 18 from the fairway there. Had to go up and over the tree, it's just not in my wheelhouse at all. Hit a beautiful 6-iron to the back fringe there. Just had to hit it a little harder and it would have gone in.

Q. Were you surprised it came up short?

JAY HAAS: Yes and no. It kind of popped when it came out of the fringe and it looked like it was sitting good to me. It wasn't sitting down in the hole or anything. But yeah, it kind of popped up a little bit there. I was trying not to be -- I thought, "Gosh, settle down, you're pumped up, don't just crash it by four feet, you're going to get it there," and I didn't. So that was a little disappointing.

Q. Did you have four or five in your head as a number? Are you a numbers guy?

JAY HAAS: No, really wasn't. I just kind of looked and I was trying to get one more, trying to get one more.

Q. Is it one of those things, do you scoreboard watch throughout the day? Does your caddie?

JAY HAAS: You know, a little bit, and I saw that nobody was running away. I was disappointed with the bogey at four because nobody had gotten off to an unbelievable start. When I made the birdie at 12 I looked and, you know, right there. So yeah, I was -- I like scoreboard watching, I like to see my name up there. It didn't make me any more nervous than I already was. I like to know where I stand. I played good. What are you going to do?

Q. Obviously with Bill in contention at the John Deere, do you keep up with that at all during the round?

JAY HAAS: You know, I didn't today. Nobody -- a lot of times people will tell me on the course, but nobody said anything so I kind of thought he wasn't doing well. If he had been leading or kind of right there, I think I would have heard. And Tommy, I was going to ask Tommy, my caddie, but he never said anything. So I just had that sense that I didn't want to be deflated. So anyway, then I got done and I asked Tommy. He said, "Yeah, he's 1 over going to 17." You know, hey, it was a tough day for him, I'm sure, thinking about all the stuff that can change for him and all that if he would have done it.

Q. Did you guys talk last night at all?

JAY HAAS: We didn't. We just texted back and forth. I was just trying to not get in his stuff too much. Just said, "You know what to do, you know how to do this, be patient." You know, just the same old shit that I usually say. He knows how to play. I knew it would be a hard day for him, he hadn't been there for a while.

I know he's disappointed. You never know. The two guys that were leading, I saw they were 1 over and 2 over. It's hard to play with the lead. I don't care what league you're in. Watch the guys over at the Scottish Open, they weren't hitting great shots, the leaders. It's not just reserved for the 50 and over crowd choking down the stretch. But I'm sure we'll talk tonight and he's probably excited for me.

Q. The last thing, you teed off today. Had you won, you would have been the oldest winner in Champions history. What's it like? I mean, this golf course is a brute, all the guys talk about how tough it is.

JAY HAAS: It does not suit me at all, but the way it was playing, it was playing pretty fast in the fairways and everything and if I could keep it in the fairway I had a chance.

But Retief's hitting an iron on 17, I'm hitting a driver and that same iron. Say 18, I don't know if he hit probably an 8- or 9-iron on the green. If he's playing well, he's hard to beat. But there are a lot of guys that if they're playing well they're hard to beat.

And they didn't play great, I was able to beat them. That's the good part about this game is there's no defense and score is what matters, not how you do it or anything, if you're long or short or anything. If I had to return serves or stuff like that, I would be in deep shit.