

WEBB SIMPSON (-12)

JACK RYAN: We'll go ahead and get started here with Webb Simpson, who is tied for the lead after 36 holes of the Rocket Mortgage Classic.

Webb, an 8-under 64 today, if you could just walk us through that round.

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, played just kind of good solid golf all the way around. Never really put stress on myself, maybe except for No. 11, but the front nine was, you know, just a great ball-striking round of nine holes for me. You know, I was hitting it where I wanted to hit it, we were getting good yardages, good clubs into the green. A couple misreads out there overall, but a good day on the greens. I always love playing bogey-free golf, so it felt great to get a bogey-free round in. I started out 4 under with half the field done and I'm already in like 50th place, so I had to remind myself that birdies are out there, just stay patient.

Q. Can you just talk about your decision to play here this week? You know, top-5 guys didn't come, they had come before. Obviously you're right outside the top-5, but just your thought process in coming here and not taking the week off as many of the top players did?

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah. So when I was sitting home, I knew that the next two and a half weeks or three and a half weeks I would be -- no, two and a half weeks before Memorial, I decided I want to go play. I've heard great things about the golf course. It's a Donald Ross design, and guys that played here last year that I talked to about it loved the golf tournament, they loved what Rocket Mortgage did. So I knew enough to know that I should come if I could come and it worked out with my family where I was able to commit and get here.

Q. I know it's a close-knit community with the PGA TOUR players. Just wanted to get your thoughts on Chris Kirk and the obstacles in his life he's overcome and to be at the top of the leaderboard with you. Just your thoughts on him and his personal comeback?

WEBB SIMPSON: Yeah, I was out there thinking about him a little bit just with his decision to take some time away from golf and take care of himself. It just made me so happy. Chris has been a friend for a long time and I'm so proud of what he's been able to do and come back and make the comeback he's made, winning on the Korn Ferry Tour and now he's out here trying to win a PGA TOUR event. I just think it shows Chris' kind of grit and heart and also shows how good he is. I've played against him for a long time. So it's great to see and I'm so happy he's doing well.

Q. What have you enjoyed about the experience at Detroit Golf Club? Obviously the low score, but what else?

WEBB SIMPSON: I've always loved a Donald Ross design. I grew up in Raleigh, an hour from Pinehurst where Donald Ross is famous there. I love playing golf courses every once in a while that you can go make birdies. You know, most of the weeks on the PGA TOUR, they're very challenging and tough to make birdies, but this week is a great mix of the fairways are pretty wide, but there is rough, it is penal if you miss the fairways and the pins have been very tricky. These greens are constantly moving all different directions. So yeah, that's what I enjoy about it, kind of old-school, dogleg golf course with big trees. I know the members are proud of their golf course, as they should be.

Q. This might be incorrect, but I think I saw this on the broadcast, that you're first in greens in regulation this week so far. We saw that last year with Nate Lashley, that was a big part of his success, too. It seems like that's been a theme for you so far in this return from golf. What do you think is working well for you in your approach shots and your irons?

WEBB SIMPSON: Well, I came out to Colonial and hit it really poorly after that first round. We went to the range after the round and we just started doing an old drill that we've kind of done throughout me and Paul's time together, just in and out of it, but we started doing it again, saw results that second round. Even though I missed the cut, I still hit it a lot better and I think doing that just simplified my mindset when I go to the range and when I go to the golf course of what we're trying to do. We saw immediate results there at Colonial and it's kind of continued to -- I'm still hitting it solid and not hitting too many loose shots. So we're going to continue to do the drill.

Q. I know that the last two weeks haven't gone exactly as you planned with the schedule, but how much do you attribute this week's success through two rounds to how things ended at Hilton Head?

WEBB SIMPSON: I think a lot. You know, I didn't -- I only did -- went to the golf course twice last week and just tried to continue to work on what we were at Hilton Head, but I came in confident, I came in feeling good about my game. You know, when you're playing -- most guys I feel like play well out here when they're not really thinking a whole lot, their mind is calm and they feel in control and they feel confident. That's kind of where I am right now.

JACK RYAN: Webb, we appreciate the time and best of luck on the weekend.

WEBB SIMPSON: Thanks.