



MICHAEL THOMPSON (-7)

Q. Michael, bogey-free 64, hit all 18 greens in regulation here in the opening round. How would you describe what you were able to do out there this afternoon?

MICHAEL THOMPSON: I played really solid golf. Funny you mentioned that, I had no idea I hit that many greens. Just on a day like today, just a really good flow going. I feel like I'm seeing my shots well, seeing my putts well, saw the chip on the last hole pretty well, so everything was just really flowing nicely. The swing felt good. It wasn't perfect, but it felt good enough that I was confident enough to post a good number.

Q. During the four-month break, anything in particular that you worked on to be ready for now, this shortened, congested season?

MICHAEL THOMPSON: Yeah, mostly my fitness. I've been working really hard, averaging at least five days a week in the gym and really pushing myself. Not necessarily for distance, but just to stabilize my swing, stabilize my body during the swing because I have a tendency to get a little loose and get a little floppy, so to speak. I think that's really starting to pay off. I posted a lot of really good numbers since the start back up. Really happy to be in position to have a good weekend.

Q. Starting this tournament 151st in the FedExCup rankings with just a few events left. What is sort of the priority to make sure you get in those Playoffs?

MICHAEL THOMPSON: Yeah, it's really just being diligent about playing my own game. I'm not the longest hitter out here, I'm a really good putter so I'm going to rely on that and make sure that I do the work day in and day out to keep that part of my game sharp. And then just going out and playing my game. I coach at Alabama JC and Coach used to always say, "Just go out and play Michael Thompson golf." I've said that before out here on Tour. If I just go do that, then I'm going to play well and give myself a chance to win on Sunday.

Q. Michael, great playing today, 18 greens in regulation, you still had to hit a chip. Tell me about that last hole. That was kind of entertaining.

MICHAEL THOMPSON: Yeah, that hole was playing so long, back tee, back pin, into the wind. I had 224 to the flag and it was just too close for me to hit my 7-wood, so I had to hit 4-iron. I favored the left side of the green there because I didn't know if I could cover the water. A bit unfortunate to have to chip that. All I really told myself was just be confident. It's the last hole of the day, I'm playing well, there's a little bit of nerves going on there and it's not easy chipping off of a putting green because they have these things cut down so tight. So just stick to my routine. And then on the putt -- felt like I hit a decent chip and then on the

putt, I told myself "best putt of the day" and sure enough I did.

Q. You're one of the best putters on Tour, best putt of the day is really good. About a hundred feet worth of putts, but it really was the ball-striking. It's a second-shot golf course, but that being said, you'd better put the ball in the fairway or the second shot doesn't matter much?

MICHAEL THOMPSON: Right, yeah. I didn't feel like I missed too many fairways and if I did, I was in a decent enough position to get on the green. Putter was where it was at today. I saw my lines really well, I was really confident with my speed, I didn't have to work very hard for many pars. Really had kind of an aggressive mindset, which is kind of what you have to do now on Tour, you've got to go for it. It was nice to do that today.

Q. Twenty under, hardly good enough on the PGA TOUR nowadays, but very rarely do you have the leader come from the afternoon, or possibly leading a tournament. You get to quick turn around and get the golf course in the morning, got to be excited?

MICHAEL THOMPSON: Yeah, I feel really good about my swing, I feel good about my ball flight and the shape of the ball flight. I'm feeling really comfortable in my own skin right now, which is key to having confidence out here. Then just go out and play my game, not try to overpower the golf course like some of these guys try to do and give myself a chance on every hole and let my putter do the talking for me.

Q. Michael, can you remember the last time you hit 18 greens any time you played golf?

MICHAEL THOMPSON: No, no. I usually average probably 12 to 14 around, so 18 is pretty spectacular. I think it's a testament to my iron play was on today. I felt really comfortable with my swing. I didn't try to muscle any shots, I picked conservative lines when I needed to and got aggressive when I felt like I could. I just managed my game really, really nicely today.

Q. One of those putts that you had out there was that chip on the last green. How much precision does it take to have the touch to chip on a green like that?

MICHAEL THOMPSON: Yeah, I think you've got to rely on the practice that you've put in with your chipping and your technique specifically because you really have to have solid technique to be able to know where the bottom of the arc of the chip shot is. So standing over that, I just told myself to trust my routine, stick to it, don't stand over the ball too long, just go through the motion and let the club do all the work. I could have hit it a little bit better, but to give myself at least a putt for par was all I was asking for. Like I said before, just let my putter do the talking for me.

Q. What does this course bring out in strengths of your game?

MICHAEL THOMPSON: Putting, really. I really like these greens, I've always liked bentgrass greens. Growing up in Arizona, I grew up on kind of slow Bermuda, kind of grainy Bermuda, and so it was a treat to get to play bent. So when I get good greens like this that roll smooth, it feels like the ball is hugging the ground for a long time, I get excited because I know I'm starting it on my line and it's easier for me to get a good feel. I think I started out the week with confidence in my putting, and I'm going to go do some work in a little bit and maintain that and just kind of keep it rolling.

Q. Hopefully tomorrow, with playing in the morning, you'll have some fresh greens?

MICHAEL THOMPSON: Yeah, greens will be perfect. It's always nice being first off. Even though you have to wake up before 5:00, it's still nice to get out there early and get perfect greens. I'll keep the confidence going and just go do my thing.