



MICHAEL THOMPSON (-15)

Q. Michael, what an interesting round of golf today. Leads, no leads, tied for the lead. It was very entertaining, but you just stayed the course, you really did. Just that one bogey.

MICHAEL THOMPSON: Yeah, really a solid round. I battled some nerves early on. I hadn't been in this position in a while, so kind of relearning how to be there and thinking back on the memories that I have of the Honda and Boise.

Got into a really nice groove there starting on 5 and really gave myself a lot of chances all the way up until 17 where I just made one bad swing. I just didn't commit with that wind off the left. Kind of the same with that tee shot on 18. To finish with that par on 18 is huge. I really wanted that par, I didn't want to compound the mistake I made on 17. I think that's going to bode well for me tomorrow.

Q. I love what Damon said to you on 17. He goes, "Step up, man. Let's hit a golf shot, bro."

MICHAEL THOMPSON: Yeah, we've talked about that actually. There's plenty of shots out here on Tour, especially this golf course with the water, where you just need to I like to say just sack up and hit the shot. To be able to do that, hit a good, quality golf shot that almost held the green and then to get that up and down with that bunker shot, I mean, I'm honestly just proud of myself for stepping up.

Q. If you're playing well, the golf course gives you that, it tells you what to do and it's a clear picture, very much like Honda. So except for the grass being different, very similar course?

MICHAEL THOMPSON: It is, it is. You know what shots you have to hit. There's no if, and or but about it, you've just got to step up and hit the shot, execute, and I'm doing that well this week. I'm happy with where I'm at, feel like my game's really good. It was nice to get those jitters out of the way today and tomorrow, going to go have some fun.

Q. Day three in the books, Michael. How would you characterize what happened here on Saturday for you?

MICHAEL THOMPSON: I think overall, pretty good. I haven't been in this position in a long time, so it's nice to get my feet wet again, and I felt like I played really solid. I told Dennis that I fought some nerves early on in the round, just hadn't been there before or in a while. You know, just had to compose myself. I feel like in the middle of the round I got into a really

nice groove, kind of calmed down, started seeing putts come off the face a little bit better, saw more solid golf shots. Those three birdies in a row were kind of a great jump start for me. I feel like I played really solid on the back nine, I just couldn't get anything close enough, couldn't get any putts to drop. A couple bad swings on the last two holes, but made a really nifty par on the last that I think is going to keep the momentum going for tomorrow.

Q. Seven years ago you won the Honda Classic. How can this help you tomorrow as you look to get back in the winner's circle?

MICHAEL THOMPSON: The biggest thing is just remembering what it felt like to be in that last group on Sunday, to have the feeling coming down the last few holes where I truly believed I was going to win that tournament and I did.

So I think just kind of anchor that in my mind and go out tomorrow and go play Michael Thompson golf again. The game, it doesn't need to be more complicated than it is and if I keep it simple, I'm going to have a good day.

Q. How much is that possible out here with no fans? As you told me yesterday, it's about composure and staying sort of in your little circle. This is a different environment. How can that be helpful for you?

MICHAEL THOMPSON: It is, I think it's helpful for me in that it kind of allows me to keep my emotions even keel. That's kind of the way I play golf, that's what I like to do on the golf course. I don't talk very much and sometimes if I get too riled up or faced with a hard shot in front of a lot of people, I get a little nervous. I'm not going to lie about that, it's just who I am. I think no fans, it's going to allow me to be more composed.

Q. You already touched on about the mindset for tomorrow. When can you remember really the last time being in the heat of battle?

MICHAEL THOMPSON: It was really Albertsons Boise Open in 2016 I believe it was. I remember I was playing really great golf and making a ton of birdies. Coming down the last few holes, I just kept telling myself to stick to my routine and just keep doing what you're doing. Finished off that tournament really, really nicely.

So that paired with Honda and making birdie on the last down there in West Palm, those are great memories to have. Even going back to college, winning the SECs, I'll rely a lot on those memories and those feelings from those tournaments.

Q. The tee shot on 18 goes in the water. Would you classify the water hazards here as maybe the most challenging part of the golf course?

MICHAEL THOMPSON: Yeah, they definitely make you think. If you're not confident over the ball, you're more likely to make a poor swing, which is going to result in a penalty. So you have to be really diligent with your visualizations, your commitment to each shot and

pick your target, trust it. I did that really well today other than the last two. I think I'll keep it going tomorrow.

Q. The pandemic, what you did during the pandemic with the adoption and everything, talk a little bit about that and how long it took from Tulsa, and maybe did that process change your outlook about what's important if you can carry that over for tomorrow?

MICHAEL THOMPSON: Yeah, we left the week after THE PLAYERS, after it was canceled. That Tuesday we left for Kansas and our daughter was born that Thursday. That was just a really exciting time to get to be there, be in the delivery room, care for her those first few days.

And then with the pandemic, everything started closing down so we were actually stuck in Kansas for 27 days. Law offices closed, courthouses closed, so it was tough to get our paperwork through. But it was really a joy for me to be able to stay home those first three months of her life and really get to care for her and learn her little nuances and see her smile. It definitely puts perspective in your mind when you have kids because golf is very important and it's what I love to do, but our kids are what we live for. I'm very, very thankful that I had that time with her.