

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW
July 31, 2020



TOM GILLIS (-5)

THE MODERATOR: All right. Tom Gillis, great opening round, 5-under 67 out there, Ally Challenge. I want you to talk to us a little bit about your day.

TOM GILLIS: Well, I didn't have really any expectations because I played so poorly yesterday in the pro-am, and I hadn't played a whole a lot of golf. I had some back problems over -- during the corona, actually helped me out this whole delay, because I was having some midback issues and got that fixed about two weeks ago with some injections and I got no pain. So I just haven't played a ton, so I was just wanting to get back into the swing of things, walking, getting into the rhythm of Tour golf. So I think that had a lot to do with it. Expectations were low, and just drove the ball -- played really solid. Had plenty of power and pop, so -- and I made some putts. And I would say probably a little jittery just because we haven't played tournament golf for five months. So I think it was more to, like, try to enjoy yourself and chat with the guys you're playing with. It wasn't going to be one of those rounds where you could just get locked in and focused for four and a half hours, because when is the last time we have done that? So yeah, it was good. I'm happy with it.

THE MODERATOR: Obviously, being a Michigan native, this is a golf course I'm sure suits your eyes, being back home. And I think you held a share of the opening round lead last year.

TOM GILLIS: Yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Some hot starts here at Warwick Hills.

TOM GILLIS: Yeah. It's funny, I had never played good here prior to last year. And last year I kind of broke through and had a good week and played really nice all three days. And so I think I'm -- I think I just needed to get through that, all the years of playing the Buick and never really playing that good and just kind of needed to get through that last year and then just push that aside. So for me it's probably even a little bit easier not having fans, just because you've got a lot of family and friends you haven't seen in a while. And I don't want to say it's a distraction, but sometimes you just want to go chat with them and talk to them, and kind of got to do your job.

THE MODERATOR: Sure.

Questions?

Q. Is this course special to you, though? I remember you played the Buick many

times here, then obviously being back last year, and now right in contention.

TOM GILLIS: Yeah. Well, just being back here is special, now that we live in Florida. All my family lives here, and we're only 35 minutes away. I played last week with a friend who is a member here. And I think I probably appreciate it even more now that I live in Florida and it's so hot down there right now. And to come back here and feel this, really green, trees are beautiful. So it's always going to be special. It was the first place I ever played a PGA Tour event, so my first event was here. So, yeah, it holds a special place in my heart.

Q. Could have taken the lead on that bunker shot on 16. You were this close --

TOM GILLIS: Yeah.

Q. -- to making it.

TOM GILLIS: That close to a birdie, and then that close to a bogey, so it was -- yeah, well, I thought I hit a good shot. It never checked up, it went -- when it was rolling down there, I had a good view, I thought it was going to go in. It just hit the right edge and rolled about four or five feet by. And I just pulled the putt, and so I made bogey. But yeah, it is what it is.

Q. Take us through some of your key birdies today.

TOM GILLIS: Key birdies. Well, the first one probably, because there wasn't much going on the first six holes. I missed a little one on 5, about three feet. I birdied 7. I believe that my -- no, 6 was my first birdie and that got me going. And I birdied 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, and I think 13. So, yeah, we had -- it was good. I would say the first one was the most important one, because -- after five months off.

Q. Calm the nerves?

TOM GILLIS: Yeah, yeah, just -- yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Tom.

TOM GILLIS: Okay.