

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW
August 19, 2020



SHANE BERTSCH (-14)

Q. Shane, four-shot lead heading into tomorrow. Just your thoughts on the round today.

SHANE BERTSCH: It was a really good round. It's fun when you get rolling like that. I had a couple streaks where I think I made three in a row twice. Yeah, I think I made three in a row twice. Anyway, putting something together.

Tim kept heckling me a little. He goes, "It's like I'm saying nice birdie every hole, nice birdie, nice birdie." So I got to tell him "nice birdie" on the last two. It was just nice to be out there. I know Tim pretty well and Tom's the nicest guy in the world, so it's a pretty easy setting. I got settled in and I'm playing with some confidence right now.

Q. This is your second PGA TOUR Champions event?

SHANE BERTSCH: Yes.

Q. So considering that and considering hunting your first win since the Korn Ferry Tour 2015, how does it feel to be in a four-stroke lead heading into the final day?

SHANE BERTSCH: It feels great, it feels good. I don't think I've ever had a four-stroke lead going into the final day, but I feel like if I keep doing what I'm doing, I should have plenty of looks. And I'm making some putts, so, you know, I'd rather it's four than three. I kind of struggled up the last hole, but I was glad to get a par in there. It's amazing when you don't pay attention to it how free you are and then all of a sudden you see where you are, it's just how hard golf is. It was like I wanted to really make birdie, but then I got in trouble off the tee and I was like, "Well, let's just make par." It's hard to do what you're trying to do.

Q. Could you foresee this, like a four-shot lead on your second event? Did you foresee anything like this?

SHANE BERTSCH: I can't say that I did. I knew that I could be there just from my first tournament, how I played and how my body was feeling and know how close I was at the Ally. I really wasn't close in the end, but I felt like my game was, you know, adequate to play out here and I just need to get a little consistency going. There I was making bogeys galore, so I made some birdies, but just making too many bogeys. So I've tightened it up a little bit. No, I can't say I saw myself with a four-shot lead, but I'm glad to have it.

Q. When Kenny was over here earlier, he told us about Fred Sanders and obviously they have the longstanding relationship. How did you and Fred get together?

SHANE BERTSCH: Fred lives in Denver as well, and when I got back from winning the Q-School, another buddy of mine, Zane Zwemke, is a pro at Saddle Rock where I actually won the Colorado Open there way back in '98.

But Fred lives there and hangs out there frequently, and Zane -- I just happened to come by the shop. Zane said, "Fred Sanders was asking for your number and wondering if you had a caddie situation." At the time I hadn't had anything ironed out. When I heard his record and his credentials, I was like, "If he'll take me, I'll take him." So yeah, it's fun. We're still getting to know each other, but we're moving it along.

Q. Can you talk a little more just about what you worked on earlier this week that you feel like has really put you in this position?

SHANE BERTSCH: Yeah, it kind of sounds boring, but it really is simple. It's not simple, but it's simple ball position and posture of my body to where I can get myself in position to swing. Like I said, with my knee surgery, I was a little out of whack because I was favoring it a little bit. So as it's getting stronger, I'm able to get back into where I need to be where I can really make my swing.

Q. Was that with a coach?

SHANE BERTSCH: Yeah. My coach, Jesse Blackwelder. He's in Lubbock, Texas, and been my coach for 30-something years, since junior college in 1989.

Q. So he came here this week?

SHANE BERTSCH: No, I flew out there and saw him during the off week because I wasn't in Firestone. I zipped out there and saw him. And we always get some good work done. I don't even have to hit a shot, I can set up to it and he can tell me what I need to do. Basically, just work on the same things I worked on for 30 years, but you forget them and you get out of sync and get bad habits flowing pretty easily, but I'm getting it back on track now.