

ANIRBAN LAHIRI (-7)

Q. Early out this morning and kind of an up-and-down round, but excellent way to finish the day. What are just takeaways from this week?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: Yeah, I got off to a horror start today and I kind of struggled a little bit in adapting to the conditions overnight. I think with the rain, the golf course played more like how it usually plays on a Thursday in the years past. This week has just been firm and fast and I've enjoyed that.

Today I think I was a little off with my yardages and I think the key here, to leave yourself in good spots. I didn't do that early in my round and it was nice to finish strong. I know I needed to make a few birdies coming in just to be safe for the Playoffs, so that feels good.

Q. What's the takeaways from those birdies that you're going to take the momentum going into --

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: I feel like I've been playing well, I just haven't put it all together. I think it's been a case of having these five, six holes in the middle of my round that I've let the momentum slip or haven't taken the opportunities and that's made the difference between a 3 or 4 under and a 6 or 7 or 8 under on a good day, and on a bad day I come in shooting even par or 1 over instead of, you know, being able to shoot 2, 3, 4 under. So I've got to clean up a little bit and try to make sure I keep the momentum, make fewer mistakes, especially from the fairway.

Q. Anirban, 3 over through six holes, how are you feeling at that point about the FedExCup?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: Pretty frustrated actually Apart from the whole bigger picture scenario and whatever else is going on, just how the course was, there was hardly any wind, it was soft. And the funny thing is off those three bogeys, every single one of them I was on the fairway. I bogeyed the first hole with a wedge in my hand, I bogeyed the second one with a 9-iron in my hand, and I three-putted 5. So I think the first six holes it was just going downhill and I had to kind of really gather myself and kind of center myself and get back to doing what I've been doing well. I didn't really do a lot wrong in those six holes, but that's the difference between being a couple under and a couple over if you don't score, if you don't make those six-, eight-footers and that's what basically happened today.

Q. What do you compare the pressure of this week to?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: You know, quite frankly, anyone from the Korn Ferry category has

pretty much played this whole year with a gun to his head just in terms of the number of starts most of us have got. It's been a really difficult year. Coming out of COVID last year, guys hadn't played a lot. Even though we've had a 50-tournament-long season, the average number of tournaments that someone from the Korn Ferry category like myself played has I think gone down. It was fortuitous that I started well in the fall, but again, coming out early this year I had a bad patch, then I had COVID, I missed a bunch of events. So pretty much from when I tried to get my strength back and trying to get back to playing competitive golf, by the time I could find my feet, it was mid to late June, and I got COVID in April. So I missed a two-month period there where I was, realistically speaking, being able to compete.

I've had pressure for a while now, so this is not something new. I think in a way it's been a good preparation for me because I feel like I'm playing well. It's a matter of time before I can start putting it together and I actually get into contention and whether you're -- whether you need to do something to make the cut or make the Playoffs or keep your card or win, it's still the same thought process, like I've got to do this, and I've been able to do that these last few weeks and that's a huge confidence booster and a huge positive for me going forward.

Q. To follow up on that, a lot of people tell you I don't like to think about having to make birdies or have to shoot a certain score. Your back was very much to the wall today after the sixth hole, you knew that, so do you think you're pretty good in that situation?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: See, I think that everyone's wired differently. There's a lot of guys who don't look at the leaderboard and they're like, no, I'm going to play it as I find it, and that's what we try and do. Personally, I don't buy into that on a Sunday afternoon. Whether you like to admit it or not, it's not how it works when you have six or eight or nine holes left and you're three back. You're not going to hit the percentage shot if you know you need to shoot 3 under in the last four or five holes, you have to go at it at the cost of not being, you know, stupid but putting yourself in a place where you could drop a shot. So you have to think differently, the perspective changes from a Thursday to a Sunday.

So, for me personally, I had my eye out. In fact, I knew after I missed that putt on 15, I had an easy putt for birdie, I knew I needed to make at least one more to make sure that if someone makes a late charge by some -- and it's happened before, guys coming in, they can either go this way or that. They can either go berserk and birdie everything or crumble with the pressure, that's a part of it. So I wanted to make sure that I was in a position where I can go and have lunch and not have to refresh every 30 seconds.

Q. Do you feel very relieved?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: Definitely. I'd be lying if I say I'm not relieved. I played the Korn Ferry Finals in 2019 after losing my card and then I had a horrendous season, I played awful, I got stuck in India -- I won't say stuck. I was in India for the pandemic. Enjoyed my time there, but I missed for, five or six events which basically put me right at the bottom of my category on the Korn Ferry list. That meant I got three tournaments in the fall out of 11 where -- and you

have to play well and reshuffle. It's been 20 months of grinding.

Obviously I haven't played well. I feel like I'm getting closer to my A game, which I know is good enough to compete with the big boys. It's a relief that I can at least plan a schedule to some extent, I'm not waiting until Monday to see if I'm going to be first alternate or in and that's been the case a number of times in these last two years. So that's definitely something that I'm not -- I'm happy that I don't have to look forward to that. But having said that, I think I'll probably take a few hours off, relax, talk to the family, but I guess reset and I have the opportunity next week to maybe get to the next week and maybe get to the next week and I have to look at it from that perspective.

Q. I don't think I realized, you got pretty sick from COVID?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: That's right.

Q. I didn't know that.

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: I lost like 15 pounds in 11 days and I lost a lot of speed just to kind of -- like I said, I got sick in April the week of Hilton Head, Heritage. That was I think early April or mid April just after Augusta, and by the time I got back to speed and my body weight, it was I think middle of June. I think Congaree was the first event where I felt human again, like I could play golf.

If I was to look at that as like six events that I could have played and competed and that I was not able to, again, there's no excuses, I'm not the only one, there's a bunch of guys that got COVID. A lot of guys are still dealing with it so I'm not alone and I don't feel any pity or any of that, but that was my situation, had to accept it, deal with it and do what I needed to do.

You know, kind of got lucky that I got into the Olympics. That's something that I committed to, so I didn't play 3M, I didn't play Reno, so there's another two things. You asked me that question, I've had a gun to my head for 60 days now. I'm happy that at least for the foreseeable future what opportunities I get are in my hands and not something that I have to wait and hope for.