

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW
MARCH 31, 2022

RUSSELL KNOX (-7)



Q. Russell, bogey-free 7-under 65, excellent start to the tournament. If we can get some comments on your day.

RUSSELL KNOX: Yeah, it was a great day obviously. A little chilly this morning, but then as the round kind of got going, I mean, absolutely the most beautiful weather to play golf in.

Yeah, I mean, obviously thrilled with the round. I took care of business off the tee, which was nice. Obviously this course, if you get offline, it can be very penal. So I drove the ball well, iron play was solid again and just a couple of those good luck moments starting the round kind of got my momentum nice. Chip-in there on 7, good up-and-down on 6, great up-and-down on 9, those were kind of the key parts that allowed me to kind of settle into the back nine and have some easier birdies.

Q. You had a real run of birdies there, 12 through 15. Was there something that was going right in that stretch?

RUSSELL KNOX: Yeah. No. 12, I hit a nice wedge shot in there and had a relatively short putt for birdie, made that. No. 13 was a huge bonus. I mean, it was 220-something today. I hit a hybrid. Wasn't a perfect strike but ended up in beautiful position, probably, I don't know, seven, eight feet away. Was able to birdie an extremely difficult par 3, which is always a bonus.

Then had the par 5, which I made up-and-down from the bunker. Then 15 was a nice little bonus, too. Hit a beautiful drive down there, hit 6-iron just over the back and was able to get that in from 20-plus feet from the fringe. That was one of those kind of bonus birdies that you need when you're going to have a good day.

Q. How do you sum up the way the year's been going for you overall? What jumps out about the season at this point?

RUSSELL KNOX: It's been more kind of the way I want to play golf. I've been a little more consistent tee to green. I'm back to kind of feeling like the way I should be playing, which has been nice. I've worked very hard on my game, practicing at home. It's been nice to kind of see a little success with sometimes when you're putting in work and you don't get results, it's very demoralizing. But it's nice, I've practiced hard and I'm starting to see some benefits.

Q. Was there any particular area of your game where you felt like that work paid off today or something really shined?

RUSSELL KNOX: Off the tee's been kind of important for me. Over the last couple years just kind of got off track slightly, was hitting a few wayward tee shots. But I've worked hard with my coach, Mark, and we've really went back to fundamentals, got my setup correct and it just gives me the freedom to kind of swing away. I know it's never going to be perfect, but the last couple months it's really been a strength of mine again.

Q. What went into your decision to play this event this year and what do you kind of want to get out of this week?

RUSSELL KNOX: I had last week off and decided to sit on the couch pretty much all week. But no, I mean, I've been playing well. I had a great tournament at THE PLAYERS; at Tampa, at Valspar there played beautiful until the last day. I would love to win and get to play next week, that's obviously why I'm here and everyone should be playing. Yeah, I mean, I know my game is good so I've got to keep playing and see if I can have a great finish.

Q. Speaking of that, do you feel like you're putting extra pressure on yourself this week with next week in mind?

RUSSELL KNOX: No, zero. It would be the biggest bonus of the year obviously if that happened, but no, I'm quite happy to sit on the couch with my dog next week, too. Obviously I say that, but I mean, I'm going to try my hardest to finish first this week.