
Q. Nick, how would you assess the round today?

NICK WATNEY: I was very pleased with today. I didn't have a great warmup or first few holes, to be honest. Kind of just went back to fundamentals and then putted really, really great. I was very pleased that I hung in there, kind of felt like I had some kind of mental fortitude out there and very pleased with the score.

Q. Is that kind of an important thing out here? This is a difficult test of golf. To have -- if you kind of get off to a slow start to be able to know, hey, this is a tough golf course, make my birdies when I can but stay sort of focused on the task at hand?

NICK WATNEY: Yeah, I think that's fair to say, especially starting on the back side, there's some demanding shots right away. I bogeyed the 11th and just tried to stay patient, get as many birdie putts as possible and really hit -- I putted really great. So hopefully that will keep going and we can have some fun.

Q. What was working so well with your putting today?

NICK WATNEY: I think everything. I felt like I saw the lines well and then my speed was great. Obviously speed and line is a good combination and yeah, I thought the greens were just pure and I was very pleased with my putting.

Q. As we kind of go into more in the spring here, how would you kind of assess where your game is as we head into a big part of the season?

NICK WATNEY: Yeah, I really feel like I'm building. I haven't had results lately. I played well in Florida and then actually played really well in New Orleans. Just the nature of the event, it didn't work out great, but I really feel like I'm building and learning and work my way back.

Q. You mentioned the mental fortitude of the round today. How about the mental fortitude over the past couple years? Can you just talk about your journey? You're a past winner on Tour. What is it like to continue fighting and just find yourself back in contention?

NICK WATNEY: Yeah, last year was definitely a struggle on the course and I had some just kind of inner reflection, do I still love this and do I want to play and all these things. I really honestly, I do love it.

So then I kind of said to myself, how often am I having fun on the course, and the answer

was not enough. It was just like this is -- this was actually -- ironically, this was the very first Tour event that I got to play, I got a sponsor exemption. I remember walking around here like this is a dream come true, you know? So I think I needed to realize a little bit of that again as opposed to just this is a grind and et cetera, et cetera.

When I really kind of took stock of it, it wasn't a hard decision to keep playing or keep working or whatever because I really love it. I really enjoy to play well, too. Obviously today was fun.