

ALEX CEJKA (-6)

Q. Talk about the day. I mean, things must have been working pretty well, right?

ALEX CEJKA: Yeah, it was good. I drove the ball well, which gives you a lot of chances when you're in the fairway. I hit a lot of great iron shots where it gave me a lot of looks and putted well. So I drove it well, hit a lot of fairways, plus every time I kind of had a birdie chance, I take advantage.

Every day is a little bit different. The rough is pretty severe. If you miss at some wrong spots here, it can be tough, but today was pretty flawless. You know, it's a pretty day, one of the few days where kind of everything is working, you know, the short game and the putting and the driving. I'm very happy.

Q. This is a very, very hard golf course. I mean, do you like playing this golf course and the difficulty of it?

ALEX CEJKA: I like it. I like it when everybody shoots 4, 5, 6, 7 under, but it's a great course. I played here a long, long time ago in the World Series of Golf I want to say 20 years ago maybe and it was back then already really, really tough, really narrow and, you know, I just told me I've got to miss it in good spots. There's a couple holes where you really want to miss it on the right side, you have a shot, and I did. Even when I didn't hit the fairway, but I was on the right side to be able to hit to the green.

My thinking was great, my execution was great today. There's still three rounds to go, a lot of things can happen on this golf course, but I'm happy round number one is done, you know, and we'll see what happens.

Q. Won two majors last year. Are you pushing obviously to get back on the track with those?

ALEX CEJKA: Oh, everybody's pushing, everybody wants to win.

Q. You were 13th the last two, you were kind of hovering there.

ALEX CEJKA: I get it. I've been playing really well even this year. Maybe my results don't show it, you know. Always one little stupid mistake, I don't make one or two putts and suddenly it's a 2 under instead of a 4 or 5 under. Overall, I'm healthy, I'm playing well. It's just finally today was one of the days where I got rewarded for the game I've been having lately.

Every day, as I said, is a little different. I had a great group, good guys and everybody kind of played well, which also you carry each other with good shots when you see good shots in front of you. It's been a great day.

Q. I'm curious, I hear a lot that they say, "I missed it in the right places." I mean, you're obviously not trying to miss, so how do you manage missing in the right places? What goes into the thought process of that?

ALEX CEJKA: Well, like for example on No. 2 -- on 3, that short par-4 down the hill, you can't be right. When you're right, you can't hit it onto the green, so anything left is great. I was just going left. I tweaked it a little bit, but it was in the rough, but I have a great shot. It's still a tricky shot, but if I miss it right, I saw -- 10 minutes earlier I saw Davis Love in front of me, he hit it right and he had to chip it backwards because he couldn't go for the green.

So I had a great plan today. Again, it all depends how the wind is, how you're playing. It's a lot of factors that determine how you go about your routine, about your execution, but today the wind was great for the shots I was seeing for me and I hit good shots. And, as I said, I putted well.

Q. So it's shading towards the spot where you want to play from --

ALEX CEJKA: Yes.

Q. -- and away from the absolute worst thing?

ALEX CEJKA: Exactly, exactly. You know, I don't have the power like Tiger to hit pitching wedge over trees from 190 yards, so we've got to play a little bit smarter than those guys.

Q. You've done really well on the Champions Tour. Has there been something about it that's clicked for you?

ALEX CEJKA: It's a big difference if you play on this tour or if you play on the PGA Tour against 23-year-old kids who hit it 50 yards past you, make every putt, make every chip, so it's difficult. The last couple years on the PGA Tour I played good, but the courses were just too long. You know, too much pressure. You're trying to make the cut and you're annoyed even if you make it but you finish 50th because you just -- physically, you just can't beat those guys on a weekly basis. I can have a good week and I can finish up there, but that's not what we play for playing 30 tournaments and finish once up there. Those guys are just super good. The game has changed in the last couple years, everybody hits it so far now. So it's really pleasant to play like guys my distance with no cut. You get totally -- it's a totally different mindset than teeing it up on the PGA Tour on Thursday and you know you have to shoot 6 under to make the cut. That's the only difference.