

ROUND 3 INTERVIEW
November 19, 2022

BEN MARTIN (-14)



THE MODERATOR: Bogey is not the way you want to finish, but how would you kind of characterize the round as a whole today?

BEN MARTIN: It was solid. I don't know my stats, but it seemed like I hit a lot of fairways and a lot of greens. I don't remember chipping a ton, so it was kind of the way you want to play golf.

Kind of boring, but I think Larry Penley at Clemson used to say, "Boring golf is good golf, good golf is great golf."

So, yeah, very similar. That's kind of how I played yesterday. Took advantage of opportunities and didn't make a ton of mistakes.

THE MODERATOR: What do you feel like you did best today?

BEN MARTIN: I think I did a good job. You know, made the turn a couple under, 3-under, so I was around the lead. I think it's easy -- it can be easy for me to start peeking ahead and thinking ahead, but I think I did a good job on the back nine of setting myself a goal. All right, let's go play a good nine holes and shoot another 3-under par on the back nine. I think I did a good job of just staying in the moment and executing the shots I wanted to hit.

Q. Ben, how long before your back really felt -- when did it start feeling pretty good?

BEN MARTIN: Let's see.

Q. Or good enough to where --

BEN MARTIN: I'm 35. My memory is leaving me. I guess I struggled most of the '18 year and didn't play the last seven events of the season and then only played one event in 2019.

The Korn Ferry, did some rehab starts in 2019 there. I would say towards the latter part of 2019 started getting back into it.

Then it was like I was coming back on a medical. I had full status since, like, 2014. So I think mentally it was a little tougher. All right, you've got seven starts. You have to get it done in seven starts. And this was the first season back where I've been fully exempt.

Just being able to kind of fight back from that and play nicely in the Korn Ferry Finals in August was pretty exciting.

Q. I know you had won before that, but you're standing on the 18th tee on THE PLAYERS with a chance to win on Sunday. I wonder how much that experience, even though it didn't turn out the best for you, how much does that experience tell you about yourself and as a player?

BEN MARTIN: That was a cool week. Obviously, a memorable one because Rickie won in the playoff. But yeah, to be there on Sunday birdieing 15, 16, 17 to tie for the lead was one of my top experiences out here on the tour to have a shot to win. Probably the most competitive field we've played in.

I think any time that I can think back on those instances on Sundays where I've had a chance to win and in Vegas when I did win playing the last four holes 4-under to get it done, I think those are the things that I'll be able to draw on more.

Q. In Vegas it was an eagle and a birdie the last three holes to finish. You can't really count on that happening all the time, can you?

BEN MARTIN: Exactly. I think that was the day where I was maybe even-par or 1-over. Vegas is a place you know you need to make birdies if you want to win, so to be able to capitalize on those finishing holes was special.

Q. How are you a different golfer since the back injuries and since you feel like you felt better?

BEN MARTIN: I think that coming back I was kind of searching to find maybe what I had before. I don't know if I'm that different. I think -- one thing I've struggled with too is in that same time I was having kids and just -- you know, you get a little bit of time at home. You are, like, man, this is kind of nice to be at home.

Maybe even going through a phase there, man, do I want to transition careers kind of thing? I don't know if it I ever seriously thought about that, but it was certainly in my head when your body is not feeling great and you're not playing great golf and struggling to enjoy our time out here.

But I think that's one thing I learned coming back is if I can enjoy it first and then I think good golf comes instead of telling yourself you have to play well to have some fun out here.

Q. It sounds like you have a different perspective.

BEN MARTIN: I think a little bit. I think I've always had pretty good perspective, but as family comes and kids and stuff like that, you know, you kind of realize if I shoot a 62 or 72 tomorrow, not a whole lot is going to change in my life.

Q. Does this feel like kind of a last day of school vibe to it? I know it's not the end of the season, but you get some time off, which is rare.

BEN MARTIN: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, like final exams. I've played 16 of the last 21 weeks. Like, I wasn't exactly fresh coming into this week. Kind of ready for that break, that summer break or that winter break to use the school analogy.

But Monday, Tuesday I was kind of thinking through the week. Like, if I don't -- I'm ready to have a break, but if I pack it in this week, I'm going to be disappointed next week at how I finished.

So I think one of the thoughts in my head is, all right, let's finish the season strong. Not necessarily from what my score ended up being, but the effort that I put it into the week.

Q. What are you going to do next month or whenever you start back up?

BEN MARTIN: No plans. Just be. I think being on the road so much, I'm just going to enjoy being around Greeneville and friends and family. We may do a weekend trip up to Asheville or something, the Grove Park Inn with Omni, but mainly just kind of relax until Hawaii. Probably duck hunt. I will duck hunt, yeah (laughing).

Q. Does the season start today?

BEN MARTIN: It did. The first week.