

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW
January 25, 2023



BRENDAN STEELE (-7)

Q. Seven under, bogey free today for round one.

BRENDAN STEELE: Yeah, obviously anytime you play bogey free on the PGA TOUR that's a great accomplishment. If you can do it at Torrey Pines on either course, that's fantastic as well. Really nice to get off to a good start obviously. We've got some weather coming in so nice to have a few in the bank before we go and kind of get our face punched in tomorrow.

Q. What was it like kind of building off with Sam's group that you guys were kind of building off each other?

BRENDAN STEELE: Yeah, Sam and I are good buddies. It was actually the first time that we played together in like a full stroke play like tournament round, so that was kind of cool so we were kind of looking forward to that. Sam started off with an eagle on 1, I made a birdie and we just kind of rolled from there. Seemed like a lot of good stuff happening.

Q. You had played together like in a practice round or a casual event?

BRENDAN STEELE: Yeah, I think we played together in Zurich, so in the team event. We played a couple practice rounds together, we've gone out for beers and stuff. We like to hang together but we haven't had the chance, just luck of the draw.

Q. Is there anything about Torrey that you approach to it and game planning has changed from when you first started playing here or is it pretty much the same?

BRENDAN STEELE: It's probably pretty similar, but I'm definitely trying in general, my game plan is to be a little more aggressive right now. I'm trying to. And that doesn't mean like do anything silly, but I'm trying to make sure that I'm not aiming too far away from pins. My tendency is to be a little cautious out there, which is not the way that anybody plays anymore, it's kind of more of an old-school way of playing.

And my iron play in general's very good. So I'm trying to kind of take advantage of that and be a little bit more aggressive getting the ball closer to the hole. I started doing that over the weekend in the desert and it seemed to work so I wanted to carry that out here, even though it's a much more difficult place.

Q. Is that adjustment kind of cultivated over time, just how deep golf is getting and like a 10th place finish 10 years ago might be 20th now and along those type of lines?

BRENDAN STEELE: Yeah, definitely. I was talking about it last week, we used to play across the street at Palmer and Nicklaus private and the courses I thought were much easier than playing Stadium and Nicklaus tournament. The cut was always like 8 or 9 under and then the cut this year was 10 under playing the more difficult courses and the guys were leading at 23 under after three rounds. I had finished second in 2015 at 21 under on the other rotation.

So, I mean, that just shows you that it's a lot more difficult. So I finished 17 under last week. I felt like I did a lot of really good things and it was 32nd place I think. It's definitely really tough out here these days.

Q. I guess there's more than one way to determine momentum. I asked Sam about the momentum within a round from hole to hole to hole. In your case, and you've done this however many times, you've played the desert and then you've come here. How much if anything does what you did last week carry over to this week?

BRENDAN STEELE: Yeah, I mean, I think -- I was feeling really good about how I was hitting it, so that definitely carried over. So just the confidence level in the ball-striking was good. I did feel like I made a change -- I needed to shoot a really low round Saturday last week to make the cut. I was at 3 under, the cut was going to be 10, kind of knew that going into the day, and I shot 8 on Saturday with a different mindset. So I tried to carry that over on Sunday and I shot 6 there and I tried to carry it today and shot 7 today. So definitely the mindset changes is really important there.