

ROUND 3 INTERVIEW
January 27, 2023



SAHITH THEEGALA (-7)

Q. Sahith, can you talk about the birdie-eagle to start, how that got your day going?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, hit two really good drives. That's always the key to me is put it in the fairway. Just had a perfect look on 1 to kind of hit a draw in there. Hit a great putt, probably had a six-and-a-half-footer.

Then on 2, popped a drive and I knew I could get that second shot pretty close and had a perfect number, hit it and I knew right away it had a chance. But you never expect it to go in, so that was huge, especially knowing that it's playing really tough out there.

So to get off to a start like that, I thought it could have been -- I wasn't thinking ahead at the time, but I was thinking this is awesome, let's keep it going.

Q. I was standing next to your dad, who predicted that you would hole the eagle. He just said it out loud before you did it. Does he have that sense of your game? That's pretty good prediction.

SAHITH THEEGALA: I wish I could say he did. He has a good sense of my game, but I feel like he's just such an optimistic guy, I think he just speaks certain things into existence. I could definitely learn from him a little bit. Yeah, he's called some other big shots in my life. Yeah, it's just awesome having him and the rest of my family out.

Q. Seems like over the last two seasons you've gotten so close, second, top-5s, top-10s, it seems like you're right on the verge of that breakthrough and you positioned yourself to have a shot at that here. What's it like to get in this position again and what do you think it takes to get over the hump, because you seem so close?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, so I've kind of said the same answer a lot of times I've been in this position. All I'm focused on is just trying to get better. I've been lucky to be on such a good trajectory the last two and a half years with my game and just putting in a lot of work with my trainer and coach. Haven't really been -- I've never been less worried about results. Because of that, I feel like I've played my best golf.

Every week I feel like I'm learning something. Even if the golf gets a little worse that week, I feel like I'm making progress as a whole. I'm just going to try and stick to that and that's going to be my key to hopefully -- the goal is just to put myself in more positions like these, you know, and if I'm in more positions like this, like I just think that's going to be -- that's more my goal than to try and chase a victory or anything.

Q. What's your earliest memory of this place?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Gosh, I mean, I played Junior Worlds for like seven straight years because I lived an hour and a half away, maybe more than that. They have a putting contest on this green right here. I think I came here even when I was 6 or 7 to have that putting contest on these greens and watch the big guys play, the 15-through-17 play.

I probably played here first -- I played like a city tournament when I was 14 here and then I played Junior Worlds 15-through-17. So I've probably played 40 rounds on South.

Q. What would it mean for you to get that first win here of all places?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, just the whole west coast is obviously very special to me. It would mean a lot. But like I said, I've been playing well and it's nice -- it feels great to kind of shake off the rust quickly. I didn't play golf, it was the longest break I've taken in like four years. I took pretty much three full weeks off.

I played pretty solid last week, I came in like 50th but I thought I played all right. It was good to kind of see some progress coming into this week. Yeah, just going to go out there and try and play another solid round.

Q. What did you do during those three weeks?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Well, I was sick for a little bit. It was crazy, I haven't been sick in like two years, but when your body -- I feel like my body knew I was going to shut it down for a bit and it just -- I just got sick. So I just stayed at home for a while, I hung out with the fam a bunch, I caught up with pretty much everyone, went to a lot of family get-togethers. It was a lot of fun. Just a lot of laying down, it was brilliant. It's what I needed for sure.