

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
November 1, 2023



SAHITH THEEGALA

DOUG MILNE: We will go ahead and get started. Like to welcome Sahith Theegala to the interview room here at the World Wide Technology Championship.

Sahith, thanks for joining us for a few minutes coming on the tail of end what's turned into a pretty remarkable season for you, eight top-10s highlighted of course by your win in Napa at the Fortinet Championship.

Just a few opening thoughts on being here, making your first start in the event, and how you're feeling as you head into the week.

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, yeah. I feel great. This is my last official event of the year, I guess. It feels weird to be saying that. It's been a long year, but a great year, like you said.

Yeah, it's my first time playing World Wide Technologies. The first year, my rookie year, I actually didn't get in on my number. It's nice to have that full schedule available. Yeah, I'm glad to be here, and it worked out great. My parents are here for the week, girlfriend's here. Just a nice chill week.

I love the -- the people out here are so nice. Even after playing the Mexico Open last year, I had such a good experience there and that was part of the reason why I came down here, too.

DOUG MILNE: You're coming into the week 29 in FedExCup, cracked the top-30 in world ranking in No. 29; 31 FedEx, 29 world ranking. The decision to play here, was it a pretty easy one kind of given how well you're playing right now?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, I love playing, I think that's no secret. I just, I struggle to go long times without playing tournament golf. After Napa I went a full month from there to ZOZO, so that felt like a long time. I just love competing.

And the fields at these events, everybody is so good out here that the level of golf at the top is very, very similar to some of the stronger events, strongest events. You know, they've got a pretty nice field here this year. Yeah, it was a very easy decision to come down and play.

DOUG MILNE: One last question, then we'll see if anybody has questions themselves. Take you back to Napa, obviously quite the amazing week for you, family, friends, everybody there. How special was that win and how's life changed, for lack of a better term, since getting that first win?



SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, it's been -- it's been incredible. I think a big thing that I don't know if I mentioned it before, but everyone's been so supportive of my two-year journey on the Tour so far.

I never really had the expectations of winning myself, but a lot of other people did, for sure. To them it was a question of when and not if, and to me it was a question of if. So to finally prove that to myself and just a lot of validation for the work, that was probably the sweetest part of it, just to be able to share all that with my family and friends.

Yeah, it hasn't really -- I mean, the fact that I'm a PGA TOUR winner and nobody can take that away from me and Carl and the rest of my team is epic. Just knowing that will always be there no matter what happens the rest of the way, that's awesome.

Other than that, everything's been -- life's kind of been the same, it's been great. I'm living the dream. And obviously there's very few times again where you're happy in this sport and I was just like truly, truly happy and let myself kind of soak in the win for a couple weeks there. Yeah, life's great. I've been living my dream for a very long time now. Yeah, all good.

DOUG MILNE: Well said. We'll take a few questions.

Q. It looks like you like coming to Mexico. Kind of your favorite things about being here and kind of your first impression of Los Cabos?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, yeah, so this is my first time in Los Cabos, Cabo. I've never been. Never went on a -- we always played golf during spring break stuff, so we never came out here.

Yeah, I love it. One of my mom's best friends, still one of my mom's best friends growing up, she's from Mexico so I was familiar with kind of the culture from a young age. She would go back and forth. And I met -- spending a lot of time with her and her family, they're just some of the nicest people ever. They work hard, play hard kind of thing. They work really hard. I feel like they're similar -- cultural similarities between that and the Indian culture, but also play hard, you know? You put in the work so that you can enjoy time with your friends and family, and I got a good sense of that when I was young.

Last year when I came to the Mexico Open, I couldn't believe how many fans were out there. I thought there wouldn't be too many people out there or anything, but the fans are great. They really supported me a lot.

I know a couple of my buddies that I played back in university in the States, specifically I was thinking of Alvaro Ortiz. I know he had an awesome week last year at the tournament. But yeah, I just couldn't believe how great the fans were. Yeah, I just wanted to come back.

And I love the food, I love Mexican food. I don't know how real Mexican food I'm eating at the resort necessarily, but we're going to go into the city today and see what we can get into.



Yeah, just good vibes all around. First impression has been awesome and I'm just going to enjoy the rest of the week, too.

Q. About the golf course, your first impressions, and also the fact that it is a Tiger Woods design, that makes you pay more attention?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, the first thing I think of when it's a Tiger Woods design is that you kind of know that the fairways are going to be wide, which I love. Driving accuracy, I think it's been well documented, is the worst stat of my game, so having open fairways is really nice for me. I can kind of use my creativity to shape it into the holes and stuff.

But my first impression of the golf course is I really like it. It's very hilly, no flat lies, a bunch of slopes that you can use to funnel into the greens. Anywhere from wedges on the par 4s to I hit a couple 4-irons today. The wind was a little opposite in the morning today and there were some really tough par 4s on the front, specifically 4 and 8 I think were playing really long.

But there's plenty of scoring holes as well. I think Tiger was talking about how he just likes to make people think on the golf course and the back nine out here is just all strategy. There's very few drivers, a lot of placement. You need to have good angles or else these little cacti come into play and the way the arroyos and the desert is around the greens. It's a nice blend of kind of tactical, strategic golf and then also just putting yourself in the right spots, because I think there's going to be some really low scores out here.

Q. My last thing is, it's been a big year for you, 2023 you played the majors, you have been exposed to a lot of big things, new things. Kind of what have you learned from this year and what do you look forward to in 2024?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, I had an awesome year. It's moved really, really fast. I think that's -- that happened to me my first year, too. My rookie year just went boom, the year's done.

This year, having a full schedule and playing all the majors, like you said, and just having more exposure with the guys that are top 10, top-20 in the world, whether or not I'm trying to go out of my way to learn a few things from them, I'm not really sure I can say that, but just I'm able to pick up things subconsciously from them just by watching how they play the game a little bit, whether it be discussions with their caddie or strategy, or I'll ask them a question about how their first few years on Tour were and what they would do different or what they did that was great.

Just little stuff like that I feel like I'm always learning, which is a great thing about this sport. A lot of the guys have been super nice to me in that they've been open about sharing information and that sort of stuff. I'm always a very curious person and I'm curious to see how people go about their way, especially in a sport where everyone does seemingly



everything different. Yeah, I just like picking those top guys' brains and playing with them more and more.

Also, just putting in the work and see if I can kind of join that fray of those guys. Yeah, playing in the majors and some of the big events, no matter what anybody says, it's a different feel, for sure. It's a different feel. Just means more and you can feel it during the week. That's what I'm most excited about again this next year is just to play in events like the Masters and PLAYERS and just try and get in contention again.

Q. What is the most scary shot on this golf course?

SAHITH THEEGALA: There's a couple on the back nine. I'd say 16, the par 3. There's a front section of the green where it's like 15 feet wide and there's a backstop, but if you miss the backstop, it's impossible to stop it coming forward. It's almost like an island little piece. There's hazard short right, hazard right, short and left and long. You only have like a little sliver long right of the hole to hit it safe. That's a scary shot. It's a wedge, though, so I'm sure you'll see a ton of shots close and a ton of shots in the hazard. That's a shot where you just kind of want to get it over with, I think. But if the wind stays down, it won't be too, too scary.

There's a lot of tee shots on the back nine, specifically 12 through 14 I think are the three -- they're pretty wide, they're probably 50, 60 yards wide, but if you miss the fairway, it's just lost ball into the junk. Just kind of getting those three tee shots in play and then finding the surface on 16, those are the scariest shots for me.

DOUG MILNE: Anybody else? OK. Well, easy enough. Sahith, we appreciate your time as always and certainly wish you the best of luck this week.

SAHITH THEEGALA: Thanks, Doug.

