

ROUND 2 QUICK QUOTES
December 15, 2023

BRANDON HARKINS



Q. Great round today, 66 at Dye's to move right into position. How would you assess how you played today and how it compared to yesterday at Sawgrass Country Club?

BRANDON HARKINS: Pretty similar, to be honest with you. The wind was -- at least over here, it seemed much calmer today. I thought the officials and everyone did a pretty good job of setting both courses up for the weather.

Yeah, so much of the same. I just tried to keep the ball in front of me, and I think I hit all 18 greens today, which can't complain about.

A couple putts here and there could have gone, but yeah, I'm happy. Just staying patient, keeping it in front of me is kind of the key.

Q. Coming here, what's your experience with this course? How much have you played here at Valley?

BRANDON HARKINS: The one time was for the event during COVID. We played here. So I had four competitive rounds here, and that was kind of nice to reflect on a little bit.

But we definitely didn't have these conditions. This is different. I'm not sure I haven't seen anything -- how across the street played today. But with that said, it's also a different direction than we played when I was here last.

It's all kind of -- it helps to have been here, but it's certainly a different situation.

Q. Does your game plan this week differ at all from the way you might approach game planning a course for a normal tournament based on the top-5 scenario, or do you attack it the same way?

BRANDON HARKINS: No, it's all the same for me. It could be different for other guys, but it's just golf. Golf is golf. Go out and do the best you can. It's pretty simple for me.

Q. Do you approach every tournament trying to win, or is there ever a scenario where you've approached a tournament not necessarily trying to win, trying to get to a number?

BRANDON HARKINS: Yeah, I think everyone would like to win every event. You just want to do the best you can and kind of see where you stack up at the end of the week.



It's easier said than done. But that's the plan at least. Just go out and hit one shot, hit another shot, and see what it adds up to.

Q. What's it mean to you to be here to have this opportunity -- you had a unique kind of path the last few months with being on a couple bubbles at the end of the regular season and then at second stage.

BRANDON HARKINS: Yeah, it's great to be here. To be honest, I wasn't certain I was going to do Q-school, and all the right people in my corner talked me into it. Ended up playing second stage, and here we are. Can't pass on the opportunity.

Q. What's it like at the end of second stage kind of finishing and you know you're kind of relying on a couple guys needing to make a bogey just to get here? Is that a unique kind of moment in time?

BRANDON HARKINS: Yeah, to be honest I was on my way to the airport, so I wasn't paying too much attention at the time. The weather at our site was wild. It was wild. That last day was really tough.

I've got full Korn Ferry status, too, so that was nice to have in my back pocket. So I wasn't actually watching my phone very much.

But like I said, it's great to be here.

Q. When was the last time you did Q-school before this year?

BRANDON HARKINS: Shoot, you may as well ask how old I am. '16 maybe?

Q. So it's been a while.

BRANDON HARKINS: Yeah, a few years on the main tour in there. Yeah, I think '16 would have been my last time at Q-school.

Q. You mentioned a little bit ago that people had to talk you into playing Q-school this year. What was your argument to not playing?

BRANDON HARKINS: That's a good question. I was just worn out. I was worn out. It wasn't my best year this past year. Yeah, just worn out. I like being home with my family, my friends. Needless to say, I like a little bit of an off-season.

No, it didn't take very much twisting of my arm to be here. I think just a couple days to relax and reflect, and then I was, all right, ready to go.

Q. What status would you have had out on KFT if you didn't go to Q-school?

BRANDON HARKINS: I kept my full card out there.

Q. So you still had to go to second stage then?

BRANDON HARKINS: Yeah.



Q. Did you ever play Q-school when it was PGA TOUR cards up for grabs?

BRANDON HARKINS: My last year it was in Palm Springs, and we played six rounds. I can't remember. It might have been.

Q. Did you play there in 2012?

BRANDON HARKINS: Come on, I'm not that old.

Q. You turned pro in 2010.

BRANDON HARKINS: I guess I wasn't that good at that time.

Q. Do you remember your first attempt at Q-school?

BRANDON HARKINS: Yeah, it would have been as soon as I turned pro. It took me a couple years to get through second stage, and then when I finally did, I played finals a couple times.

Q. I guess there's more this year than usual, but not everyone out here knows what it's like to play on the PGA TOUR and have your card and play a full season. It's been a few years since you've done that. What would you tell somebody that hasn't experienced that, what it's like?

BRANDON HARKINS: You know, it's just a lot of the same. You're just on a much grander scale. Everything is kind of -- you're looked at more and everything is a lot bigger.

But at the end of the day, you're still playing golf, and you've just got to keep that in mind.

Q. When you think of your career as a whole, how do you evaluate your career overall based on what you expected when you turned pro, and do you feel like you've overachieved, underachieved, or kind of what you expected?

BRANDON HARKINS: You know, deep down I always figured I could do it. When I made the PGA TOUR in '17 I think it was, '18, whatever it was, it was for sure the highlight of my career. Kind of made me realize that I actually can do it.

Now it's where I expect to be. It's kind of funny how you -- your attitude or your expectations kind of grow a little bit.

Yeah, it's certainly where I think I should be.

Q. When you first got on the Korn Ferry TOUR, was that where you felt like you should be, and then you improve your game and it evolves from there?



BRANDON HARKINS: Certainly when I first earned Korn Ferry status, it was a huge step up for me from what I had been playing, and it just kind of is a steppingstone to the PGA TOUR, and I was fortunate to play one year and move up.

Yeah, so at the time it was huge for me, absolutely.

Q. Is Joel Dahmen one of those guys in your corner?

BRANDON HARKINS: Yeah, yeah, he is. He's in my corner. He's a good friend of mine, and I know he wants me to get back out there, that's for sure.

Q. Is there anything you've learned from him or that you take from him just in his approach to life or the game?

BRANDON HARKINS: Well, you've got to take Joel with a grain of salt. He's a Seahawks fan, first of all, myself being a 49ers fan.

Yeah, no, we're really close. Our wives are really close. So not even just things with golf. Outside of golf, we're always hanging out with them. My family and his family are pretty close. We spend some Thanksgivings together and that sort of thing.

I would say not necessarily with golf stuff, just friendship, and it's only grown over the years.

Q. Was he one of the people you talked to about playing Q-school or was that other people?

BRANDON HARKINS: He definitely pushed me to do it, yeah. He said, get your butt back out there.

Q. Is part of the initial hesitation knowing how daunting and the odds of getting through second stage?

BRANDON HARKINS: A little bit. It's a process, and you've kind of got to work your way through the ladder system a little bit. At the time I was worn out after a long year for me. But happy to be here. That's for sure.

Q. In terms of being worn out after the year, knowing you have these two rounds and you're in position, does that cycle back and now you're fired up knowing you're a good weekend away from getting back out there?

BRANDON HARKINS: Yeah, yeah, absolutely. Kind of like I said, nothing really changes. I'm just going to go out and keep playing how I play the game.

But with the possibilities on the horizon, that's great. Try not to think about it too much, just kind of take care of my own business.

Q. Is it something where in terms of the balance of trying to force it versus letting it come to you and sticking to your plan, how do you anticipate those emotions playing out over the next two days?



BRANDON HARKINS: You know, I tend to -- I think I do a pretty good job of not letting those things creep in. I literally just try and hit the best shot I can every shot.

When you're actually focused on your process and taking it one at a time, it's kind of easy to not think about results and what can happen and what can't happen and that sort of thing.

I just try and stay in my lane a little bit.

Q. How many kids do you have?

BRANDON HARKINS: Two.

Q. Have you gotten to Christmas shopping because it's only a week out until --

BRANDON HARKINS: No, I am a little bit of a procrastinator when it comes to that, that's for sure. My wife might say she has three kids, but we have two. No, I've probably got to get on that next week when I get home.

