

## LECOM Suncoast Classic

### ROUND 1 QUOTES

April 18, 2024

### KEVIN VELO (-7)



**Q. All right, Kev, 7 under, great playing to start at LECOM. What was clicking for you today?**

**KEVIN VELO:** I feel like me and my caddie have a really good strategy going. The greens are really firm this week, which is a really nice change from some of the courses we play later, so it's nice to think about the golf course a little more. We hit some really good wedge shots, but mainly just kept it in play. It was a clean card, putted it well when I needed to and made a couple.

**Q. In terms of the game plan, what entails making that plan? What are some of the things you were thinking about like as you map out the week?**

**KEVIN VELO:** Yeah, so we have to favor on different sides of fairways to make sure we're attacking the pins in the right spots. For example, on hole 14, the par 5, we have that whole right side of the green that we can work with, so we were pretty much aiming 40 yards right of the pin and we were able to kind of draw some in using the front slope of the green. Now we can use a lot of the slopes around the golf course, which helps us out.

**Q. Is that something that as having a season of experience under your belt, something you've kind of added to your preparation a little more intentionally this year, or is that -- were you doing that same way last year, too?**

**KEVIN VELO:** So I was trying to do it last year, but now that I know the golf courses more, I have more experience to build off of when I'm understanding these golf courses. When I go out during the practice rounds, I know pretty much where to hit it. Now I can do a little bit more of detailed work where I'm finding exactly where I want to land it into some of these greens and even where the best putt is.

**Q. Kevin, congratulations on a good day and everything you're doing. This is a great opportunity to continue your saga to get to the Tour. Talk a little bit about this stop and so far what you see and what you think.**

**KEVIN VELO:** Yeah, I think this is a great place that we play. The golf course, the community, everything, everybody rallies around it really nicely. We have a great group of volunteers and we have hundreds of them out here, which is fantastic for us and the tour. This is hopefully just another step on the way to the big tour for me, which would be nice, but I've got a lot of work ahead of me for the rest of the week, but excited to see what the course



holds for me.

**Q. Great golfers put four good days together. Just talk a little bit about that, and the first day gives you the good foundation.**

**KEVIN VELO:** Yeah, it's really important to get off to a good start. We're not going to play perfect all week, but it's really important to play consistently and to get a low one going early, that's a huge bonus and it's a really positive start.

**Q. Last question, Sarasota and Bradenton, I know you guys are focused on the links, but how special is it to be here in this environment and play your game?**

**KEVIN VELO:** Yeah, it's fantastic. Sarasota and the Bradenton community, it's awesome to be here, especially this time of year. It's not too hot yet, which is great. The beaches are fantastic, the food's great and the people are awesome, so we're really happy to be here.

**Q. When you look at your season so far, what did making it through all the stages of Q-School do for your confidence?**

**KEVIN VELO:** It was huge, it was huge. We talked at final stage and it was a grind, but it kind of showed me that I could do it. And I definitely doubted myself a little bit last year, which it can be hard, but once I finished up Ohio State dead last in the field, I was pretty motivated to get back on the horse and grind away. If I didn't go through that, I wouldn't have won at Colombia, I wouldn't be playing as good as I am right now. It's really important. I think Q-School's the best tournament in all of golf, it's a huge opportunity to get through that and now we're playing great.

**Q. How did you spend last week, the off week?**

**KEVIN VELO:** Super chill. Probably played two or three times, hung out with my girlfriend and my family. When I'm home, I like to kind of prioritize my time at home a little bit more and get away from golf because we're on for so many weeks that when I can go home and relax, I really do a good effort at that.

**Q. Did you watch any of the Masters?**

**KEVIN VELO:** I did not, actually. I think I watched 30 minutes of the coverage, but that was about it.

**Q. How huge was that win in Colombia for your confidence? You mentioned Q-School and obviously you got it done in Colombia.**

**KEVIN VELO:** Yeah, I mean, winning cures everything pretty much, but being able to kind of get over that hump. I mean, I hadn't won since -- in two years, since the Argentina on the Latin Tour. I mean, it shows me again that I can do it. I know I have the game to make it on



the big tour and I know that I just needed a little bit of a mental switch-up. And that week playing in my first final group on the Korn Ferry Tour, it was huge for me to get over that hump. But confidence-wise, it's through the roof right now, but I'm trying to make sure I stay with all my game plans and just pick apart each week.

**Q. And finishing last in Columbus last year, what was your kind of thought process there? You said you kind of had a chip on your shoulder, so were there any like specific thoughts about changes or just where you were in your career at that point?**

**KEVIN VELO:** Well, every stage that I've been at I haven't ever been the best necessarily, so I've always had to work super hard for it. I felt like when I finished up that tournament, I took three days off, didn't touch a club, didn't think about golf.

Then I went and saw my coach and we sat in his office, it's like a little golf room, for like three hours and we just talked, talking about how we can improve our mental game, how we can improve little parts to have bigger improvements throughout the year.

But it was -- that was actually more motivating than probably most people think because I was able to finish up and shut it down for about three weeks before first stage. It kind of propelled me to work even harder than I do, and I feel like I work really hard, but it was really good.

