

**BLUE CROSS AND BLUE SHIELD OF KANSAS
WICHITA OPEN
BENEFITTING KU WICHITA PEDIATRICS**

**ROUND 2 QUOTES
June 14, 2024**



MATT ATKINS (-12)

Q. Matt, bogey free today, right now tied for the lead after two rounds. How would you evaluate your performance through these 36 holes?

MATT ATKINS: Yeah, today -- actually funny, today I didn't really feel completely in control with the ball-striking, especially off the tee. I did hit some good shots coming down the stretch finally, but everything that went towards my target just felt safe and flippy. It just felt like everything full swing-wise was a little bit tentative. I felt good with the putter both rounds. Really haven't had to chip a whole lot, but the ones I have had have been mostly pretty basic bump-and-run type stuff.

Yeah, making no bogeys today, I made a couple loose mistakes yesterday and it was nice to go out there and play on the scorecard what looked like flawless golf, but I definitely caught a few good breaks. I think even on the last hole I think I, if I had to guess, smacked into that tree and then kicked back in the fairway. Like not that it would have been in a terrible place, but just little things like that. I think when it comes to being in contention and having a chance to win a golf tournament, you're going to hit good shots, you're going to make putts and then you're going to get a few good breaks, you've just got to take them when they come and just enjoy it.

Q. You say you're necessarily playing aggressive this week, or are you kind of playing your normal style?

MATT ATKINS: Well, this course, if you hit it a certain yardage off the tee, if you have a little bit of length you can kind of take advantage of 2, kind of like driving it over the creek on 2. And 3 and 11 are drivable, and then 7 is a good like risk-reward. For the really long hitters that can comfortably cover the water, it's worth the risk for sure.

Today I just had no idea where the ball was going so I laid up, I laid up on 2. It was a different wind so I think it was into the wind on 2 today. Yeah, I did not feel comfortable on 7, so I just kind of laid it out to the fairway on the right.

Yeah, I think like every year I've played the course the same. When you get a south wind, I hit a bunch of drivers, take advantage of my length on those holes and try to play conservative into the greens. You get plenty of short clubs out here and scoring opportunities so be aggressive on those, but par 3s are challenging, and I'm just trying to



have as many putts as I can, which is not -- I don't think I hit a ton of greens compared to some other weeks when I've maybe not scored as well, but I'm just capitalizing on the ones that I do have. And I've made two eagles, which you're not really expecting to make an eagle every day, and there's only two par fives, so all those things kind of help out the score a little bit.

Q. When you're playing really well like this, I know yesterday we talked and it's only the fourth start of the year, when you're playing well, do you feel any sort of added pressure on yourself?

MATT ATKINS: No. I think making a cut's way harder than when you're playing well because you know things are kind of in a good spot with your game. Like I'm missing it in the right places and like I said, I've holed a couple putts. Normal putts inside of 15 feet that you're not surprised if you make them, but those aren't anywhere near a gimmee.

Yeah, I mean, whether it's my fourth start of the year or if I've been playing all year, I went into this year with a completely open mind just trying to win golf tournaments whenever I did get into this. I had to do a bunch of qualifiers to start the year. It's kind of my first season as a pro since making it out to this tour where I didn't have kind of anything guaranteed. This is probably the worst like status that I've had. I'm still a member so I can reshuffle in, but it's just been pretty freeing year.

And I know that my goal is to get back to the PGA TOUR and the only way to do that is to win golf tournaments. On the scoreboard I haven't really finished all that high. I've only played in five events this year, I think two PGA TOUR events and three out here, this is my fourth one out here. It's nice, this is where you want to be, towards the top of the leaderboard. I'm looking forward to the opportunity on the weekend.

Q. You mentioned a couple starts on Tour. I don't think we ever asked you how your experience was at Myrtle.

MATT ATKINS: Yeah, dude, Myrtle was unbelievable. It's great to be playing in my home state, South Carolina. The course was incredible, the greens were some of the fastest, best greens I've ever puttied on. I grew up kind of going to Myrtle Beach when I was a kid on vacation and things like that, so it was kind of nice, like a little full circle.

That's kind of where I started learning to play golf just on vacation with my dad. I played all the other sports growing up. But Myrtle great. Had some support from some family and friends. I think anytime you tee it up in a PGA TOUR event it's nothing but excitement. The year I was a member of the Tour, I don't think I could say that. It was a struggle, and when things aren't going as well as you want them to go, it's easy to get frustrated. I think going through the struggles of not performing well on the points list and things like that have put me in a really good place just to be thankful for the opportunities I do have.

Like you said, this is only my fourth start this year out here, but I couldn't be more excited



and just happy to be out here, whereas if you're playing 20 events every year and you're missing cuts or not playing well, it can get lonely and frustrating. And, you know, I haven't made every cut I've teed it up in, but I've been extremely thankful to be out here every time that I've teed it up.

Q. You mentioned playing other sports when you were younger as a kid. At what age do you think it was when you started taking golf kind of seriously?

MATT ATKINS: Yeah, like I played on vacation or maybe like here, there throughout the year with my dad like hardly ever. I was in seventh grade and they came over the PA system at school, oh, if you're interested in trying out for the high school golf team, meet in the cafeteria at such and such a time.

For whatever reason I was like, man, that sounds like fun, cool. I was playing basketball, baseball. I had recently just quit playing football, but I was pretty serious in both, probably more so baseball than basketball. I stopped growing. I can shoot real well, but that only goes so far when you're only five-nine.

Yeah, I was about like 13 or so when I tried to figure it out. I gripped it like a baseball bat until I was 16. My high school coach was like, hey, here are the two grips, pick one and stick with it. I kind of just progressed like from there. Watched a ton of golf, just watched way too much stuff trying to learn.

When I got into the college and out here in the professional ranks, I just watched what everyone else did that was really good at the game and just tried to take bits and pieces of what they did. I feel like I'm still learning. I'm 33 now, but I feel like I've got a lot more room for growth as a player not only physically but just the mental side of it and the competitive side of it. I'm excited for whatever is to come, whether this is my last year playing or if I play for another 20 years.

