

## ROCKET MORTGAGE CLASSIC

### ROUND 1 QUOTES

June 27, 2024



**AKSHAY BHATIA** (-8)

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**Q. Akshay, thanks for joining us, 8-under 64 with the birdie-eagle-birdie finish. Over here I heard you say you weren't entirely satisfied with your swing today, but you said there are other ways to compensate for that. Just a few comments about what did go right today.**

**AKSHAY BHATIA:** Yeah, putted great. I guess I missed one green today, so I got that up and down. All in all, I hit it pretty nice with the irons and I made some putts. Driver, 3-wood didn't feel too good, but I've got some time to go work on that.

**Q. And coming off a strong finish last week in Hartford, how much do you feel is carrying over from that that you're building upon this week?**

**AKSHAY BHATIA:** Yeah, I've been playing good the last three weeks. I feel like the results haven't been where I've wanted them to be, but I've been playing pretty solid. I've been right there for, you know, over 40 holes I would say the last couple weeks. It's just I'm having some hiccups either Saturday or Sunday. I'm just trying to figure that out. It's nice to be in this position.

**Q. I know you felt up and down today, but to end birdie-eagle-birdie, how much does that propel you into tomorrow?**

**AKSHAY BHATIA:** Yeah, it's always nice to finish like that. This tournament's always kind of a birdie-fest, so birdies and eagles help a lot. It's nice to finish that way.

**Q. And coming back to this course, how do you feel it plays to your strengths, especially right now heating up?**

**AKSHAY BHATIA:** Yeah, typically a good iron player, so you have a lot of irons, a lot of wedges. So I feel like I can be creative like I normally am.

And it's also nice because these greens are pretty tricky, they have a lot of small slopes, but they're soft so you can still be aggressive towards a couple of these pins.

**Q. Birdie-fest last week, birdie-fest this week, do you enjoy that type of golf?**

**AKSHAY BHATIA:** I mean, sometimes. I like a mix, you know. Played the U.S. Open, it was really hard. Then you come last week and this week and you're making a lot of birdies



so you feel like it's pretty fun again. I think a mix of it is really good and I'm just happy we get to play an old-school golf course for once.

**Q. Can you take us through 17?**

**AKSHAY BHATIA:** Yeah. On 17, hit it right off the tee, right of the trees and then had a good lie, so I hit hybrid kind of around the trees and left it just short of the green and chipped in.

**Q. What did you have into 18 and what did you hit?**

**AKSHAY BHATIA:** I had 170 flag and I hit 8-iron.

**Q. Are you -- do you know who Sauce Gardner?**

**AKSHAY BHATIA:** Sorry, who?

**Q. Sauce Gardner?**

**AKSHAY BHATIA:** I don't.

**Q. He's a cornerback with the Jets and he's been really getting into golf, blowing up on Twitter. We have some videos of his swing. If you want to take a look at his short game and stuff is on there, too, and just give us your thoughts.**

**AKSHAY BHATIA:** It's pretty good, I guess. I mean, he's obviously just starting, so it's pretty good action.

**Q. Do you have any like tips or anything that you could think to give him?**

**AKSHAY BHATIA:** I think on his -- on his short game he's using a lot of lower body, which you don't really want to do, so that was first off. Other than that, it looks pretty good. He'll just get used to kind of releasing the golf club. Looks like he kind of holds on a little bit. He's got some work to do, but off to a good start.

