

ROCKET MORTGAGE CLASSIC

ROUND 1 QUOTES

June 27, 2024



WILL ZALATORIS (-6)

Q. Just how do you feel the strength of your game has played into the finish you had today?

WILL ZALATORIS: Yeah, I mean, I was just told I made 159 feet of putts, which definitely helps. I drove it OK, drove it really well last week. It's been a grind this year to put it mildly coming back from surgery, trying to integrate the changes, and I feel like I put one round together and then maybe kind of don't have it another day. So I didn't really see much positives for about a month there and it's nice to see a couple low rounds already. I put a lot of work in after the U.S. Open. I was less than pleased is probably the nicest way I can put it with my performance there. Yeah, everything feels really good. I maybe need to hit some iron shots a little bit closer, but it helps when you make, I guess, three putts over 30 feet today.

Q. When you get to look at this on the schedule, does the design and structure here play into maybe taking a break from the rigor of the rest of the Tour calendar?

WILL ZALATORIS: Yeah, it's a breath of fresh air. This is a throwback golf course that I love playing. Rocket Mortgage and the whole team here, Jason Langwell, the guys up at Orchard Lake have been amazing to me. This is my third time playing here and I missed it last year just because of the surgery, but it's a lot of fun. It's a golf course that if you get out of position, you've got to work for it, but at the same time keep it in the fairway around here and you can make some birdies.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILL ZALATORIS: Yeah, I definitely would have liked to have gotten one, what was it, 3 under out of the four? Yeah, I mean, the par 5s are pretty gettable out here, so I had to make a 30ish-footer for one of the birdies. Wouldn't mind making them a little bit easier on me tomorrow, but yeah, like I said, it's a lot of fun having some risk-reward holes. I think the big thing is I just did a really good job of actually, not on purpose, but I kept putting myself on the par 5s on the proper angles to get them into some of the hole locations.

Q. You mentioned your coach moved up here. How much time were you able to spend with him this week and what work did you guys do to get ready for this week?

WILL ZALATORIS: Yeah, I lost the ability to hit kind of the low fade, which is my go-to, for about two months there, and finally we kind of picked up on what I needed to do just kind of



messing around on the range on Monday. It's nice that it's finally clicking. Like I said, this year's been a giant work in progress. There's been some positives, there's been some lows, but I think the big thing is just staying patient. I'm not a very patient person, I don't think any of the people out here that play professional golf are, but I just needed to kind of remove the expectations of whatever my performance is, I just need to get better with what I'm doing every day.

Q. Just one thing, I don't know if you're familiar with Sauce Gardner, he plays for the Jets. He's been getting into golf and we have some of his videos of like his tee shots and short game, if you want to hit play and kind of give us your thoughts.

WILL ZALATORIS: I mean, he's got some speed, for one. I mean, the dude's an athlete, we know that, but this is -- that's pretty impressive. Clean up a little bit of the short game there and he's going to be pretty good pretty quick. All those football guys are freak athletes. I played with Calvin Johnson and Aidan Hutchinson on the 313 on Tuesday and those guys were silly good around the greens. That's pretty impressive.

Q. Do you have any tips that you would give him for someone just starting out?

WILL ZALATORIS: I think he's a little busy nine months out of the year, but keep practicing and keep loving the game.

