

ROCKET MORTGAGE CLASSIC

ROUND 2 QUOTES

June 28, 2024



AKSHAY BHATIA (-13)

Q. First, can you take us through the tee shot on 17 and have you seen anything like that before?

AKSHAY BHATIA: Oh, yeah, that was wild. No, never seen it. Rules official's never seen it, so it was kind of one in a million chance that ball goes in that small hole in that drain, so it was pretty funny.

Q. What's the craziest lost ball you ever had before that? Have you had one stuck in a tree?

AKSHAY BHATIA: No idea. That's probably the craziest.

Q. This course, we haven't seen a lot of lefties over the years in the thick of it come the weekend. Does it set up well for you? Does it set up for lefties? Does it matter?

AKSHAY BHATIA: I don't think it matters. It's a ball-striker's golf course, a lot of wedges. That's kind of my strong suit, especially inside I would say 150 yards, so I think that's why I like this golf course. Yeah, just I don't think there's a difference lefty or righty.

Q. Back to the drain cover, it seems like you're pretty upbeat about it, but do you wish it was covered up or they could have done something different about it?

AKSHAY BHATIA: Oh, no, that was hilarious. It's going to be pretty viral, I think. What are the odds of that happening?

Q. It is viral, there's that. How much did the lead you gave yourself yesterday and having that pad send you in with good momentum today?

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah, it was good. I still had to make a lot of birdies today to kind of keep going. It was a good start. I've got two more days to kind of keep pushing and trying to have a good finish.

Q. How difficult is it to follow up a good round with another one?

AKSHAY BHATIA: Depends who you are, I think. For me, I feel like when you know you're playing well, then you feel like you can hit all the golf shots that you need to hit to make a good golf score. I think difference in situations maybe it's a little harder, but out here you can



easily make five, six, seven birdies.

Q. On your last hole, the second shot, was that one of the more clutch shots of the day? It seemed like a tough up-and-down from where you were.

AKSHAY BHATIA: It was a pretty basic chip, so I -- you know, I knew if I miss it barely long, it was fine. Obviously Min Woo chipped in right after me. So yeah, I don't think it was anything too clutch, just kind of kept the momentum.

Q. You played the weekend with Scottie. Playing with the No. 1 player in the world, do you take anything with that?

AKSHAY BHATIA: It's cool to see what it's like. He's obviously playing on a different level than many of us out here. Yeah, I mean, he just kind of plots around and doesn't make many mistakes and doesn't let anything get to him. That's why he's the No. 1 player in the world, he holds himself to that standard.

Q. Being around it, do you take anything from it, like just watching it, watching how he goes about his work?

AKSHAY BHATIA: No. I mean, it's really cool obviously. Very creative around the greens, iron play, he drives it great. I mean, everything he needs to do to be No. 1.

Q. Reflect on your journey here and what you did out of high school, and do you feel like maybe that path is paying off now on how you did at the U.S. Open and Travelers and where you are now here with maybe a chance to win it again?

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah, I mean, I think I always believed that my path is going to work out. That's why I decided not to go to school. But yeah, it's great. I've got a long time to go before I can say, you know, this is the right decision, but so far I've made progress every year I've been a pro. It's nice to see and I'm going to keep learning.

Q. Talking about progress just from the last time you were here in Detroit on a personal level, how have you changed or how do you feel different?

AKSHAY BHATIA: I mean, last year was a weird year for me. I was going to play Korn Ferry Tour and then all of a sudden I'm on the PGA TOUR and then I'm getting all these starts. It was just kind of -- you know, obviously I wanted to win as bad as I could to get my status out here secured, but yeah, I was just learning a lot. I was going through caddies at the time and then I'm just kind of more person, I was 21, now I'm 22 and I'm engaged, so a lot's changed.

Q. You talked about what it was like playing with Scottie and you described his game. If someone were to come and play with you, how would you describe how you're hitting the ball, how you're walking the course and how you're seeing the game right



now?

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah, I would -- I think a lot of people would say ball-striking is pretty solid. I don't hit it that far, especially this morning I was hitting it really short compared to everyone else in my group.

Yeah, I like to hold myself to a good standard. If things aren't going my way, I try not to let it bug me. All the fan support, I want to -- I want them to appreciate who I am out there and not just moping around if I make a bogey or whatever may happen. Hopefully that's what people would say.

