

ROUND 1 QUICK QUOTES
September 12, 2024

NICK WATNEY (-4)

PROCORE
CHAMPIONSHIP

Q. Nick, 4-under par 68, nice round. If we can get some comments on your play.

NICK WATNEY: Yeah, played pretty well. I putted great and although my driving stats weren't spectacular in terms of fairways hit, I hit a lot of really solid shots maybe just off the fairway. Overall, very pleased with the score and I'm happy to be in northern California. Yeah, all good things.

Q. I don't know if it got back to you but Max Homa was up doing his press conference this week and he said how meaningful it was when you gave him an autograph one time when he was a little kid. I had to look at the ages and I was like, he's not that much older, but how does that make you feel? Do you feel old hearing that?

NICK WATNEY: Yeah, definitely. I really like Max Homa on and off the golf course, so that's very humbling to hear and that makes me feel a little bit old.

Q. He's never told you about that?

NICK WATNEY: He hasn't. I don't know where it might have been, maybe at the Olympic Club maybe.

Q. He didn't give the specifics.

NICK WATNEY: Yeah, that's interesting, I guess.

Q. How much -- I know the results haven't been there for you this year, but you had a good week in New Orleans with Charley.

NICK WATNEY: Yeah.

Q. But how much do you have to kind of give yourself a kick in the butt or a pep talk to kind of keep at it when the results aren't there?

NICK WATNEY: You know, this year has kind of been a bit of a reset, to be honest. Just with the -- with Tour life and stuff when it's not going great but you're eligible for tournaments, you feel like you should definitely go and play. This year I've not been in a lot of tournaments, so I've been practicing a lot, working hard.

I really still love playing golf and competing and stuff like that. It's not so much as like a kick in the butt to keep going, it's just more of like do you still believe that you're good and you

can do this. Kind of seeing some signs and it's nice to play a good round. Hopefully keep going and get some more opportunities and keep improving.

Q. Have there been any tournaments that you could have played that you chose not to?

NICK WATNEY: Not this year. In years past, like golf's strange only because the better you play, you kind of play fewer events. Like the really top guys play the least as opposed to eligible players. I mean, I think I played maybe nine or 10 tournaments this year, which I'd like to play more. Some of the guys, if you're -- you know, you need to play, you play five or six or seven or eight events in a row, that's not always beneficial, but it's really hard to not play if you're eligible when things aren't going well.

Certainly all the way back, this being kind of a reset just to -- obviously I had some issues with my game and being able to be home and really work on them and play good at home and then come out here, start to see some positive rounds is, I don't know, I feel like I'm own my way back I guess.

Q. Are you working with new instructor?

NICK WATNEY: I'm working with a guy -- I am working with Scott Hamilton, but I've been working with him for a little while now. So it's just more of like taking stock of everything.

I think if I'm being really honest, my ego for a few years now is I think I'm good, but maybe wasn't honest with myself just how my performance, how poor my performance has been. Now I've had some, you know, some kind of really looking at a few stats and performance and being aware of different things, it's been -- I got a lot of work to do still, but I think I'm on a good track now.

Q. What was the most glaring stat that you were like, oh, I've got to work on that?

NICK WATNEY: My driving has just been debilitating. Driving it out of play and just making it so it's impossible to compete on this level. So like I said, today I didn't hit a lot of fairways, but I hit a lot of good, solid drives. With the golf course getting bouncy, these fairways are already pretty narrow and they get each more narrow. Overall I hit decent today and putted great, but my driving has been the stat that's like, you play from the trees, you're scrambling, just missing greens in the right spot, not even trying to make birdies from the trees. That's been kind of the root of a lot of problems and I'm starting to get a handle on that.

Q. What was the turning point where you realized like you were sort of deluding yourself or telling yourself a little bit of a lie?

NICK WATNEY: I think it was just this year like kind of I played San Diego, I got a sponsor exemption and then I didn't play for a while. I was kind of like, yeah, you're -- I don't -- I think it was an honest conversation with myself. Like I lost my card last year and I deserved to

lose it and it was like I've earned my spot being at home.

That was, for whatever reason, I don't know if it's just I've been on Tour for a while or what, but it was kind of like, wow, yeah, I'm not a very good golfer at the moment, so I've got to kind of make a plan and work hard and see if I can start to play a good round and where that will leave me.

Q. So that was a wake-up call?

NICK WATNEY: Yeah, definitely, definitely.

Q. What's the pressure you feel this fall to get that card back?

NICK WATNEY: I mean, I'm so far back, I don't really feel that pressure as of now. Like if I play good this week and kind of get some momentum and it's getting down to the end and I have a chance to keep it, then feelings might change, but at this point it's like, I mean, I just want to continue to improve. The card is not really -- I don't know, if I was 130 or something it would be -- I think it would be a lot different, but at this point I hope that's an issue. I hope that would be an issue at the end of the fall. I want to hopefully get in as many tournaments as I can and improve and put myself in positions that I'm nervous and positions that matter and see how I handle them and keep going from there.