

APGA FARMERS INSURANCE INVITATIONAL
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KIERAN VAN WYCK



Q. Congrats. Going into this week, did you -- had you really not seen Torrey at all?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: No, not at all.

Q. Never been on the property?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: Nope. First time on the west coast.

Q. First time on the west coast ever?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: Yes.

Q. And did you come from Charleston to here or were you home?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: I came from Charleston, yeah.

Q. So how did you manage to do this not having seen it? Talent, obviously, but how did you do it?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: Yeah, like I said, I trusted my caddie, Ron. He's a local out here. I trusted what he had to say and the advice that he gave me. Fortunately I was able to walk around yesterday with the final round and see the spots that I need to miss in and where I need to hit my golf ball.

Q. When you see the winner of the Farmers Open shoot 73 in the final round of a PGA TOUR event, are you thinking, man, this is going to be hard?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: I knew if I could get the ball rolling nicely that I could shoot an under par round. I was hitting the ball decent, putting myself in good spots. It was just about scoring and getting it done.

Granted, the weather was a little bit better today than what it was yesterday, but I think the course presented a tough test.

Q. How many greens in regulation do you think you made today?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: I would say about 15, 14 or 15.

Q. So you weren't in the rough very much?

Q. Thirteen. No three-putts.

Q. Thank you. That's a good stat. Are you normally a strong putter?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: It's normally my weakness. Of late it's become my strength. I've been struggling last couple weeks with it, getting my pace down, but I was able to spend some time on the putting green this morning before my tee time. Came out a bit early and rolled a couple putts, a couple more than I usually do.

Q. Given how difficult this course is, how do you feel like you managed it?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: Yeah, I think pretty well. I kept my ball in play. I drove the ball considerably better today than what I did yesterday and I think that's key on this golf course. If you can keep yourself in play, as we saw in the playoff, it just makes it a whole lot easier.

Q. Louis was saying he felt that he was at a big disadvantage because of your length. Can you describe the three holes for us and what you had in each time?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: Yeah.

Q. Regulation.

KIERAN VAN WYCK: First time I hit it down the right side. Did not draw a nice lie in the rough, had to chip it out. I had 181 for my third, 8-iron. Probably as good as I could have hit it to about 12 feet.

Then the second time, drove it in the fairway, had 205 to the flag and I hit 6-iron off the hanging lie. I trusted what Ron had to say and we knew the wind was helping, but it was all about getting the ball up so the wind doesn't knock it down. I managed to hit a nice one there to give myself pretty much the exact same putt and I missed it on the same side so I clearly didn't learn from the first time.

Q. How long was that putt?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: 15 feet.

Q. And third one?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: Third one, I obviously hit a much better driver, had a little bit of adrenaline pumping. Hit 7-iron.

Q. 7-iron?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: 7-iron in.

Q. From how far?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: 187 flag. Pulled it a hair, but I knew I needed to go straight at the flag to give myself a good chance to get it up and down.

Q. In competition in college or anywhere else, have you played a golf course this hard?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: I have. We played Grayhawk in Arizona for our national championship, which was very tough, unbelievably tough. The greens are a lot slicker and firmer.

I think this course, at times it looked like the greens were a lot quicker than what they were, but they weren't very quick. You could score.

Q. This was your first APGA event?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: Yes.

Q. It's pretty incredible, batting a thousand. How do you feel about that, winning your first time out here?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: I'm proud of myself and how I did. I played well yesterday, I just struggled a little bit mentally on the greens. Yeah, like I said, I just spent some time this morning.

I knew I had the game to compete and win out here coming off a good season I had last semester. Yeah, I'm proud of myself. Only good things can come from this.

Q. So you're in this tournament because you were the top of the university standings?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: Yes, sir.

Q. So how important is that to you to have that route to this tour and beyond? It's a very unique thing to the APGA as far as mini tours.

KIERAN VAN WYCK: I think APGA is doing really good stuff. I think as a young professional or soon-to-be professional, you need as many opportunities as you can. It's tough out here to play as a pro. You need those opportunities to get yourself going and familiarize yourself with the environments and everything that it has to offer. I'm truly grateful for all that they do and the opportunity that they've given me this week.

Q. Do you intend -- maybe you don't know just yet, but do you intend to play

additional APGA events throughout the season here?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: Oh, for sure. If it doesn't clash with any of my college tournaments, I'm sure my coach will allow me to play. Like I said, it's all about experience. I'm always keen to get more exposure and experience.

Q. Have you tried PGA TOUR qualifying yet at all?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: I have not. I do have a PGA TOUR start in beginning of March, the Puerto Rico Open. That will be my next event after one of my college tournaments.

Q. How did you come to golf in the first place in South Africa?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: My dad took up the game when we were really young. I was 4 years old, my brother was 7. Yeah, he would come home with David Leadbetter swing videos and put it up on the TV. He never knew that we would really take to the sport.

I was a soccer player back home and I enjoyed playing soccer, but I really liked the individual aspect that golf presented and sort of creating your own destiny.

Q. Are there very many black players in South Africa in golf?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: There are a few. We have some (indiscernible) To the APGA Tour back home in South Africa which promotes diversity in the game. Yeah, there's quite a few good players.

Q. What was your home course like?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: Quite short. Really nice greens, though. Quite short, but if you would bomb it off the tee, you would absolutely destroy it. Not much of a challenge than any of the golf courses that we play over here.

Q. And how did you end up playing in the States in Charleston? Did you always aspire to be a college golfer here?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: Yeah, it was always a goal of mine to come over and play college golf. I think college golf is really great in preparing you, taking you to the next level.

My coach, Mitch Krywulycz, at the time recruited me whilst I was playing a tournament in Indonesia for South Africa. I managed to play well over there and he recruited me. We spoke over DM on Instagram for a little bit. I was meant to do a college visit in 2020, but COVID shut down a lot plans and I kind of just freewheeled it and trusted what he had to say without seeing the campus or anything around it.

Q. Just like seeing Torrey Pines the first time? What do you think of California now

that you've seen it?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: It's beautiful, I love it. I would have liked for it to be a little bit warmer.

Q. So would we. This is a little unusual.

KIERAN VAN WYCK: It's definitely a beautiful place. The cliffs down out on the golf course is really special. I had a chance to look at those today and just take it all in.

Q. And how old are you?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: I'm 23.

Q. And one last thing, we needed to kind of verify this, but we're told that you're the first amateur to win an APGA Tour event. Can you kind of let us know what that means to you?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: Really proud, like I said. Lost for words. I think it's incredible. I'm proud of myself and how I did and really looking forward to what's next.

Q. Where do you think this tournament victory ranks amongst your all-time golf accomplishments, highlights, moments?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: It's definitely up there, for sure. I (indiscernible) to win in the Bahamas about two months ago, which I think was one of the best wins I've had in the last while, but this is definitely up there. Having to win in the playoff, for sure, probably ranks number 2.

Q. The Bahamas is what got you into the Puerto Rico open; is that right?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: Yeah.

Q. Given the fact that you guys went to a playoff, what was your most important putt you made today other than here at 18? Kind of when you were out there in the thick of it battling, what was your best hole or shot?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: I would say I had pretty -- two pretty good saves on 15 and 16. I would say the more impressive one was on 15. I pulled it down the left side in the trees and had to punch out and got up and down from about 40 to a tucked flag on the front edge. That was definitely one.

Q. At 17 did you pull that drive?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: Yeah. I should not have hit driver on 17, but I felt that I was driving it pretty good all day, that if I got it in play, that it was a birdie chance, for sure. Didn't pull it off.

Q. You mentioned Puerto Rico will be your first PGA TOUR start coming up. Do you feel like this tournament win might open some doors up towards potentially other exemptions down the pipeline on the PGA TOUR?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: Definitely hope so. Like I said, yeah, the APGA is doing really good for golf, especially for nonwhite golfers in America. I would hope it presents opportunities.

Q. You would like to think people would take notice of this, one of the premiere APGA events on Tour?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: Yeah.

Q. These conditions on this golf course, it will get people's attention, right?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: Yeah, very tough, very tough. I enjoyed every part of it.

Q. How serious of a soccer player were you back home? Were you playing at a high level?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: Yeah, I was pretty good if I say so.

Q. What level were you playing?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: I stopped when I was 12 years old, so I was in academies, local clubs back home in academies, but decided to -- I was playing golf and I was really good at golf, too. Winning a couple trophies every odd weekend.

So like I said, the only reason I really chose golf was because of the individual aspect of creating your own destiny and you can play on your own. My dad was a good footballer as well and he didn't like that sort of part of it where the coach kind of decides whether you're going to play or not and what your future will look like.

Q. What's your dad's name?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: Rodwell.

Q. Rodwell?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: Yeah.

Q. Did he play professionally?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: Semi pro.

Q. Given that you're at Charleston, which isn't -- you know, it's not Texas or Oklahoma or Stanford or whatever, is that also a cool thing for you to be able to win something representing Charleston, this program that's now meant a lot to you and just kind of put yourself out there for them?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: Yeah. Every time I step on the golf course I'm proud to represent them. They've afforded me the opportunity to play over here in the States and I've obviously done well thanks to the program and my head coach, Mitch, as well as a few others, the assistant coach JP and the new assistant coach, but they've all played a vital role in my development as a player.

I think college golf is in a really good spot. We see guys like Nick Dunlap and Luke Clanton and Jackson Koivun and these are all guys that I play with every weekend. I think golf is in a good spot and it's definitely preparing us for the next level.

Q. Winning on the APGA Tour and now starting at Puerto Rico, what does it mean back home in South Africa, especially where you're from, winning now and representing your country?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: Yeah, I'm sure they're pretty proud of what I do. Sometimes when I go back home I have to pinch myself and stay humble. There's a lot of people and media that always want to talk to you and do something, but I'm sure they're proud. I'm glad to represent my country on this stage as well as a nonwhite golfer.

Q. Would your dad have been able to watch this today? Was it on?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: I'm not sure, I haven't looked at my phone or seen if he's messaged me yet. When I finished on the 18th a couple of my friends were texting me and I saw a couple videos from TV, so I think he might have been watching.

Q. What time is it in South Africa? It's 5:00 now.

KIERAN VAN WYCK: Ten hours ahead.

Q. So like 3:00 a.m.?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: Yeah.

Q. What's that phone call going to be like back home in a little bit? How are you going to celebrate?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: I don't think I'll get it today, but tomorrow morning. I'm sure my dad's sleeping right now, and the rest of my family. I'll probably speak to them in the morning.

Q. They'll be celebrating though, right?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: Oh, yeah.

Q. What's your celebration tonight or tomorrow? Where do you go tomorrow?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: I'm going back to Charleston tomorrow, but I've heard there's a victory party of some sorts, so go there and celebrate a little bit. Yeah, I have school on Tuesday.

Q. And when's your next college tournament?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: Starts pretty much next week, start of Feb. It's our home event at Briar's Creek, so quick turnaround. I'll get to practicing again on Tuesday.

Q. Are you close to your teammates?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: Oh, yeah, pretty close. We spend time pretty much all our time every day with each other. Yeah, we're pretty close.

Q. Are they going to give you crap about this too in any way, the money you could have won?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: I think they'll give me crap about my tee shot on 17, to have not hit driver there. For the most part they're very supportive.

Q. They can't get on you about your putting today. Putting and short game, you pretty much led the field I would assume in strokes gained on and around the green.

KIERAN VAN WYCK: Yeah.

Q. So Mr. Stats, how many putts -- how many one-putts?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: I'll say about six or seven.

Q. That's pretty good, man. Being that you spent some time in South Carolina playing now, have you picked up any like professional Tour advisors, mentors, anybody that you've hung around with?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: No, not yet. We play a lot of good golf courses around there, but I haven't picked up anyone really.

Q. The town that you grew up in, where is that relative to Durban or any of the --

KIERAN VAN WYCK: Johannesburg, it's about a five-hour drive north from Durban. Durban's on the coast. I don't know if you're familiar with they played the SA Open at

Glendower a couple times, Royal Johannesburg.

Q. So you're kind of in a suburb of Johannesburg?

KIERAN VAN WYCK: Yes, I'm in a suburb of Johannesburg.

Q. I wasn't sure because you're listed from I think another town (simultaneous speaking).