

## THE PANAMA CHAMPIONSHIP

### ROUND 1 QUOTES

January 30, 2025



### SAM BENNETT

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**Q. Sam, a good start, 66, seven birdies. Tell us about your day out there.**

**SAM BENNETT:** Yeah, it was good. Started off good, I think I was a few under. I made a silly play on I think it was hole 15, caught a jumper and hit over the back of the green, made a mess and made triple. From there I was able to stay patient and make a few more birdies coming in.

**Q. What exactly happened on 15?**

**SAM BENNETT:** Fifteen, yeah. I was 131 pin, 142 back edge. Me and my caddie were talking and we thought 50 would be fine even if it jumped. It jumped pretty good, just flew the green, then made a mess from there.

Probably the play looking back was just hit 55 to the front right part of the green and try to two-putt. Yeah, it worked out. I was still able to, like I said, stay patient and post a good round.

**Q. Two birdies on your back, strong finish on a course which is the toughest on tour for the past two years. You got familiar with it last year finishing in a tie for 21st, so that course knowledge also helped a little bit, I guess?**

**SAM BENNETT:** Yeah, exactly. Last year was my first year out here seeing all the courses. Yeah, I'm excited for this year. I know these courses pretty well.

Yeah, it helps. I like hard golf courses where you -- my resume shows I tend to play good the harder the course. Just sacking pars and picking off a few here and there.

Yeah, game feels good. First week I was kind of rusty, knocking off. Just haven't played a tournament in a while. Last weekend, Abaco I played well the first two days, I just had two bad holes and I didn't make any putts. Yeah, I got some rest and I was excited to get here in Panama and battle the heat.

**Q. Any shot that stands out today?**

**SAM BENNETT:** Yeah, I had a good par save on 16. Well, the seventh hole. Kind of got a fortunate break and then got up and down from a hundred yards to kind of keep my round going.



Then after the triple, hit an 8-iron in on 16 to like five feet. Tried to chip in on 17, kind of skanked a 7-iron short right and then I was short sided and hit a nice flop and it went in. That kind of got me back in the round after the triple.

**Q. What is it about that course that makes it so tough?**

**SAM BENNETT:** Yeah, first of all, it's a physical test. I mean, it's hot. Everywhere in the States it's colder right now, so it's the first time we've felt the heat in a while. The course itself is just a tough walk. It's probably the toughest course we walk all year. It's just a good golf course in general. On the Korn Ferry we don't play too many courses where the greens are firm. They weren't firm this morning, but I'm sure throughout the week they'll kind of firm up. I think that's just the ultimate test is the firmness of the greens.

**Q. Last year you came so close to earning a PGA TOUR card. So what have you worked on, your work flow to get things going and get over the hump and get your card this year?**

**SAM BENNETT:** Yeah, like I said, I didn't play good the first two weeks, but I learned a lot last year. It's a long season and pretty much you've got 26 chances to win a golf tournament, that's how I'm kind of looking at it. Especially now with 26 events for 20 spots, I mean, you've got to win.

Yeah, I wasn't great. Last year it was tough finishing 31st just outside. I think it was kind of a blessing in disguise. I'm so young and this is my first year out here. I'm still kind of learning a lot. I know these courses this year and yeah, it's going to be fun.

