

ASTARA GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP
Presented by Mastercard

ROUND 2 QUOTES
February 7, 2025



ROSS STEELMAN (-13)

Q. Ross, 9 under today, bogey-free, got off to that quick start today with the two birdies and the eagle. Can you talk us through the beginning of your day?

ROSS STEELMAN: Yeah, it was, you know, just kind of putting the ball in front of me. The greens are super soft. It's got a lot of rain so that helps, especially on the short course where you're hitting a lot of pitch shots.

Just kind of drove it down close to the green on 10, hit one 12 feet past the hole, rolled that in. Then hit one just kind of center of the green on 11, made about a 25-footer. Then 12, kind of pulled my tee shot into the trees, was able to hit a pretty kind of running hook with a 5-iron into the front bunker and then one-hopped it into the hole from there. Then kind of kept the momentum a couple times making a couple par savers and then mixing in some birdies here and there.

Q. What were you doing on your last hole there to keep it bogey free? You were a little bit right off the tee and having to get it up and down.

ROSS STEELMAN: Yeah, I was in between 5-wood and mini driver. Mini I had to kind of bunt it to keep it short of the green, 5-wood I would have had to kind of smoke it, so I tried to lay off a mini and just completely whiffed it.

Then I kind of had to keep it down under some trees going into the green but didn't keep it down at all, but it missed the trees thankfully. Then pretty simple up-and-down, just kind of bump a 56 up there and roll in a three- or four-footer. Then keep some good momentum going into tomorrow.

Q. You mentioned the soft conditions. Is it difficult at all on a course like that when you're dealing with a lot of wedges to control the spin?

ROSS STEELMAN: Yeah, for sure. I feel like for myself it's almost an advantage being so soft because I'm hitting a lot of drivers, 5-woods up around greens, and they tuck the pins pretty tight so just trying to hit high, soft shots is a lot easier with them being soft, especially if you're short sided.

On a couple holes where you do have to hit a wedge into the green, like 18 and 14 kind of coming back down the hill, it's just you really have to pay attention to what you're doing,



especially as you're dealing with altitude and working 15, 17, 10 percent on different shots, trajectories and spins. There's a lot to pay attention to.

Q. And with the altitude out here, does it affect much with your numbers and how you're kind of deciding to attack holes?

ROSS STEELMAN: Yeah, so it kind of depending on the height that I want to hit the shot, the spin that I'm putting on it and how full that I'm hitting it. It changes anywhere from like five percent all the way up to 20 if I'm really trying to smoke one. It's just a lot of kind of working through some feels and getting the numbers right on a couple. You're going to have some that inexplicably go 10 yards further, shorter than you thought it was and just kind of have to let it roll with it.

Q. You had one of the lower rounds yesterday at the Lagos course. What was working well with your game over on that course?

ROSS STEELMAN: Yeah, I putted really well. I putted well today, too. Yesterday kind of started off similarly, rolled in a couple 15-, 20-footers, kind of built momentum and kept it going.

I'm playing well right now. I'm hitting my irons pretty well, driving it well and just kind of been waiting for some putts to drop and they have the last two days, so just trying to keep it going the next couple.

Q. Year three out here now, set up for a second full season now. I guess what's kind of different coming into this year after you've played a full schedule, you've seen a lot of these courses and you've had the experience?

ROSS STEELMAN: Yeah, I just know what to expect. Like last year coming down here was the first time I had ever been in Colombia, South America. So going to Panama to here was just, you don't know what to expect and it's just kind of shocking. You're trying to communicate in Spanish, which I don't speak very well and I really don't understand very well. Just kind of knowing what was coming, knowing what the courses are, kind of knowing -- having an idea in mind how to play a couple holes, it makes a big difference just being more comfortable kind of before you show up, for sure.

Q. Has your Spanish gotten better?

ROSS STEELMAN: It's probably gotten worse actually. It was good for a while. My mom speaks Spanish, but I texted my coach and said I'm trying to speak less Spanish as little this year, he said that's probably a good idea.

Q. And you have the hat on. I don't know how you feel about the Chiefs on Sunday. Your thoughts?



ROSS STEELMAN: I'm cautiously optimistic. I'm a huge Chiefs fan, huge sports fan. You always -- you work yourself -- you win the game, the AFC Championship, super excited. Like oh, no, got to win another one.

So you go through all the emotions of sports fandom. I'm excited for the game. It's a lot of fun having 15 behind center. It makes it a lot easier going into games as a fan.

Q. Do you think you'll be more nervous for that game than you are teeing it up in a golf tournament?

ROSS STEELMAN: Oh, yeah, yeah, for sure. I'd really like the Chiefs to win. I mean, I'd like to win, too, but yeah, I'll be more nervous for the Chiefs, for sure.

Q. Are there any Eagles fans out here that you know of?

ROSS STEELMAN: Oh, there's plenty, yeah. The hat's been a polarizing one this week, it's been a lot of "nice hat" or "I hate you." I've been saying it's kind of nice to be the hated team now. The Chiefs have always been, oh, that's cute, and Mizzou athletics is kind of the same thing, like oh, cool, congratulations. No, it's fun to be able to go back and forth with people about it.

Q. Who's been giving you the most trouble for the hat?

ROSS STEELMAN: Mike Soroka, the Callaway rep, earlier this week was giving me some grief for it. There's just a lot of people that are not Chiefs fans right now and they all need to say something about it.

