

ROUND 4 QUICK QUOTES
March 9, 2025



KARL VILIPS (-26)

MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Karl Vilips, winner of the 2025 Puerto Rico Open, to the media center here.

Karl, congratulations on the win. Guess we would like to open it up, just your emotions over the last 45 minutes since you won?

KARL VILIPS: Trying to soak it all in at the moment. I don't know, just thinking ahead to next week already, PLAYERS, I'm getting ready for it. It's been a bit busy, but I'm sure when I'm in my hotel room later I'll be thinking about something.

Q. You just mentioned PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP. In addition to that, you get into the PGA Championship this year as well as a two-year exemption on the PGA TOUR. How much of that was on your mind coming into the day as the 54-hole solo leader?

KARL VILIPS: Last night that was about the only thing on my mind was everything that comes with a victory here. I had a hard time getting to sleep. But on the course it was just staying in the present, doing what I can do and I think I did a really good job of that because it is tough to not think about everything. Once I hit that wedge close on 18, those thoughts definitely started flowing in my head.

MODERATOR: Throughout your whole round you were steadily in the lead, at one point Rasmus jumped. Can you talk about the day to day, how often did you look at the leaderboard? I guess the mentality, did it shift at all when you were seeing the lead kind of close there?

KARL VILIPS: I think the front nine was pretty steady because no one was really pushing me and I knew that the guys in my group were in second, third. When I checked the leaderboard after 12 tee I saw Rasmus was pushing a little bit and I made an unforced error there.

Next leaderboard that you could see was on 14 so I just had to get somewhat aggressive, make a couple birdies not only to retake that lead but also try and give myself a cushion. So I was definitely watching it every time I was able to get a chance to look at a leaderboard.

MODERATOR: What were your emotions walking up to the 18 green knowing that you just had a putt there to win it?

KARL VILIPS: I mean, I was just trying to stay in the present as best as I could, not think about it because the job was now finished. I know it sounds super cliché, but until that last

putt drops, you've got to do just everything you can to just be in the moment. But yeah, definitely I think walking up it was like OK, one more good putt and you're a PGA Tour champion and that's all it took.

MODERATOR: This is only your fourth start on Tour, third this season. When do you think it will sink in that you are a PGA Tour champion this quickly into your career?

KARL VILIPS: Probably tonight when I'm going through all my messages. Been a little overwhelmed by the support that I've been getting, it's just so special that I have so many friends that are reaching out. I think once I start responding to those, call a couple of friends, I think that's when it will start kicking in.

MODERATOR: You had success as an amateur, you had success in college, won on Korn Ferry Tour this year and now winning here in your fourth start. Does any of this surprise you that it's happening so quickly?

KARL VILIPS: I mean, if you told me less than a year ago when I was at Stanford that I would be a PGA TOUR winner at this point in my career, I think I would be a little surprised.

But I think I've just been so true to the process and everything that my team has me doing that it shouldn't be a surprise when I make the putt on the last hole. But we've got to keep moving forward and try to win at an even higher level.

MODERATOR: You mentioned PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP earlier. Now living in Jacksonville, can you talk a little bit about the excitement about going into next week at TPC Sawgrass?

KARL VILIPS: I'm just excited to sleep in my own bed, cook my own meals, be with my roommates. It's going to be a lot of fun. Never really had a chance to do like a home tournament. Obviously just moving there in November, I played a course a bunch.

It's been looking really good. Last time I played it was three weeks ago so I'm sure by now it's in pristine shape and I'm really excited. That was the big goal, I wanted to get into THE PLAYERS and I knew I had to win this week to do it. It's just a dream come true to be able to play in that tournament.

MODERATOR: We'll open it up to questions here in just a second. Can you talk a little bit about entering today with the solo lead? Were there nerves? Is there something that you usually go through? Were you a little bit nervous coming into the round or do you try your best to treat it as a normal round?

KARL VILIPS: Nerves are kind of the night before. Every scenario running through your head, it's tough to fall asleep. I think on the course and in warmup it's just go out and play the golf that I've been playing. I'll give myself plenty of opportunities and if I make enough putts, I think at the end of the day I'll find myself in contention and with a chance to win and

that's kind of what happened.

Q. How special is it to have your first win in Puerto Rico?

KARL VILIPS: Oh, it's awesome. It's my first time here. When I got onto property at the Grand Hyatt early in the week on Monday, I was pretty blown away by the beach. That's the first thing I did, I went to the beach.

And it's special, you feel the love on the golf course with all the fans. You can tell that they really enjoy this tournament and that it's special to them. We really couldn't have asked for better weather throughout the whole week.

So it's special. First time here, certainly won't be my last and to get the win here is really cool.

Q. How cool is it to be representing Tiger Woods' Sun Day Red?

KARL VILIPS: Well, I signed it three weeks ago, so not too long since a Sun Day Red player has gotten a win. I think it's really special. I think it shows me that there's a reason why they chose me to rep their brand and I'm just really happy to be able to do it in a way that's, you know, as myself. It's really cool and I know everyone at Sun Day Red team is going to be super happy. You've got to look good to play good, so yeah, it's really cool.

Q. Has Tiger talked to you this week?

KARL VILIPS: Yeah, it was tough because I got on my phone after the round and I was just scrolling, like who was texting me? I think I got one from a random number that called me as well. Then there was a voicemail saying it's Tiger and I couldn't like process it in the moment, I was just trying to -- I'll get back to that later. That's pretty cool.

MODERATOR: While we're on the topic, we were talking about players before with Sun Day Red now. Growing up, obviously Stanford guy too, what are some of your memories of watching Tiger during his career and then specifically PLAYERS Championship.

KARL VILIPS: I mean, you just can't forget that putt on 17, better than most. You've got that one. Every time I went to a tournament in college, we were always playing the coverage from I think 2012. Not sure when him and Lingmerth were going at it. There's so many memories I have of him. I mean, the first big one is him making the putt at Torrey to force a playoff, watching documentaries of him, studying to go to Stanford and then his U.S. a.m. highlights.

There's so many things that I've watched with him that I just kind of try and do what he does. Study hard, attend a good school and obviously hard work's going to pay off in the end, but he's been such a huge influence in my golf career.

Q. What were the keys to shooting the 72-hole scoring record in this event?

KARL VILIPS: Yeah, I didn't realize I broke the scoring record by five, that's pretty cool. I think the putter got hot this week. I think it's a course where if you're in the fairway, you can take advantage of it. I just did a pretty good job this week of making sure at all costs I was in the fairway and if I did miss, I was on the right side.

Honestly, the wind, it's a lot like Jacksonville, so as long as you're able to deal with the wind, you still should have plenty of chances.

And I just hit it to the right spots. Whenever I got in some trouble, I left it in a good spot. I think I only made three bogeys for a week. That's a big thing for me, keeping those mistakes off the course, and I feel like I had this course pretty figured out at the end.

Q. What was the most challenging part of the course this week?

KARL VILIPS: I would say that whole back nine was pretty tough. You have people chasing you and you have to hit quality shots. 15 is a pretty tough par 3 with the wind off the left, you've got to be able to draw something in there. And 16's not easy into the wind with that back pin, and 17's a long par 3. I think that whole back nine, just having to hit quality shots to give myself looks and just painting clear pictures, and my caddie was doing a great job of helping me do that.

Q. (No microphone.)

KARL VILIPS: I think the wind is a big one, but I haven't played in too much wind since starting on the PGA TOUR the last two weeks. How much downwind -- how far goes downwind versus into the wind. I think very with very few tournament reps under my belt, it's good experience with my caddie as well just figuring out numbers, getting more dialed in as you play more.

Also, handling the sweat because it's pretty hot and steamy. I think that's something I always struggled with in the past but I think we figured out a way to make sure everything feels dry, and it helps being able to make good committed swings. The humidity as well as the wind were two things I'll take away especially as we enter the hot part of the year.

Q. Congratulations on your win. There were a lot of amateurs and college students which participated. To that note, what advice would you give to young golfers and amateur golfers aspiring to transition from amateur to professional status?

KARL VILIPS: I would say there's no mountain too high. Like you can turn pro and anything can happen, you've just got to get hot at the right time. Yeah, got to put in a lot of hard work to win and to compete, and it takes a lot of experience.

So I would say give it a shot, you never know what can happen. My last year has been pretty

crazy. I would encourage them that if they feel ready to take the next step to do it.

MODERATOR: Your golf journey's been documented I think since you were 7 playing your entire life up to this point. Looking back the last few months, you had to miss a good amount of time because of an injury. How fulfilling is it now being a champion in your fourth start after coming back from that back injury?

KARL VILIPS: Yeah, we put in a lot of hard work. Just so proud of my team for giving me the right advice, for pushing me to work through this, keeping me in a good mental state throughout this whole thing has been huge. You take two months off, you all of a sudden think you're going to go out and shoot 85, like that's not a joke.

So it's nice to see that third start out, plenty of reps under the belt, just continuously learning week in, week out, it's big. And to see the reward of that, it's great.

MODERATOR: Then you mentioned when we spoke yesterday that you still had some rust there in Mexico, that you were feeling you had to knock it off. That was only two weeks ago. Coming into this week, did you still feel there was a little rust or did you think that you were ready to do what you ended up doing?

KARL VILIPS: I thought I was ready to compete this week. I played really nice at Cognizant. I know the result might not look like I did, but felt like I found something with the swing. I just made a few silly mistakes, putter got a little cold, but I felt like I was swinging it really nice.

Even heading into this week, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday I was flushing it. I was just happy to keep that same swing thought, the feel was very real and executing under the gun. Hopefully I can carry this over into PLAYERS.

MODERATOR: I know we've talked about PLAYERS a couple times now. What's your comfort level at that course?

KARL VILIPS: I'm quite comfortable. I think I played six Junior Players there in the AJGA and I don't think I had a result outside top-10, so I feel pretty good out there. I know it's not the Junior Players, but I think with the way I'm hitting it now, make good decisions, prep well, I think I could be in for another solid week there.

MODERATOR: And my final question, now with the win under your belt, what are some of the goals that you have for the rest of the season?

KARL VILIPS: I think we had a big jump start into making the Tour Championship. I think that was the big goal to start the year was to get into that top-30 at the end of the year. There's plenty of golf left to play, but I think it's big being able to get into all of these Signature Events, majors, THE PLAYERS. I think that's a big jump start to the goal of making the Tour Championship. Obviously I wanted to win this year and knocked it out third

week, so we might have to reevaluate some of those a little bit.

MODERATOR: Awesome. Congratulations on the win.

KARL VILIPS: Thank you.