

LECOM Suncoast Classic

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW

April 16, 2025



JORGE FERNANDEZ VALDES (-10)

Q. Jorge, career best 61, 10-under bogey free today, what was working out there?

JORGE FERNANDEZ VALDES: Yeah, I think it's my best round so far. It feels really good to have a 61, is very nice. I tried to -- when I was playing good and making birdies, trying to make more because I was playing good and feeling good. So finished the round a round of my life and very happy with that.

Q. What were your strengths out there? What was working best?

JORGE FERNANDEZ VALDES: Actually, very consistency from the tee. Then obviously I think I putted good, but I hit it really good. I almost made a hole-in-one on No. 3 from like inside the hole, so played really good, hit good shots from the fairways, made good putts. Pretty consistent.

Q. And maybe not the start to the season that you wanted, but you came back here, just talk about your mindset the past couple of weeks.

JORGE FERNANDEZ VALDES: Yes, yes, it didn't start really well, but the good thing is we have another opportunity every week, so trying to be ready for the opportunity. Yeah, of course sometimes golf is like that and you've got to still do your job, whatever you think is going to work for you. Keep patient and knowing that the golf is coming one day. Yeah, it's more like day to day job.

Q. And walk me through that 2023 season and kind of what happened last season, only 11 starts made.

JORGE FERNANDEZ VALDES: Yeah, 2023 season, yeah, it was really nice season for me, won a tournament, played really good until I won the tournament, I didn't play excellent, but then won Raleigh and it was an amazing feeling, my first Korn Ferry Tour victory. Yeah, got a lot of nice memories from 2023. I was so close to maybe a top-30 and that was a little upset for me but anyways, I played great golf around the year and that's the only thing that matters. Then you have to keep playing good golf from there, so yeah, it was a lot of rollercoaster year.

Q. And then last season were you dealing with an injury?

JORGE FERNANDEZ VALDES: Yeah, last year, 2024, I got an injury on my hand

(indiscernible). I stopped playing and then come back this year. Actually, I had another injury the first tournament in Bahamas, I cut my finger changing a golf grip so I couldn't play the first in the Bahamas, so then started in Exuma, the next tournament. I already play all the tournament so far. Well, good to be back here (inaudible).

Q. Is it difficult not being able to play last year with the injury?

JORGE FERNANDEZ VALDES: Yes.

Q. What was going through your mind during that time?

JORGE FERNANDEZ VALDES: It was really difficult. I thought that probably one of the -- a lot of fun not playing and enjoying -- obviously I enjoyed the time with family and friends, but when you don't have -- when you can't play when you need to play, it's not fun. Yeah, it was tough for my mind, for my -- yeah, I thought it was going to be easier, but yeah, it was very long waiting to start playing again. But sometimes we learn from those situations.

Q. And then out there, you were smiling a lot with your caddie. I was just there for the last four holes. How much fun were you guys having out there today.

JORGE FERNANDEZ VALDES: Yeah, we were having a good time out there. He's a friend, we were talking about whatever and we were singing a lot of, you know, soccer games, soccer songs, that we have a lot of soccer songs. We were like fighting each other about our songs, soccer teams. Yeah, I think that was nice.

Q. Who's his team?

JORGE FERNANDEZ VALDES: He's (indiscernible.)

Q. What's it feel like to go out and shoot a 61?

JORGE FERNANDEZ VALDES: Unbelievable. Yeah, it's insane. (inaudible) best golf that I can, it happens, you know? Trying to be, what I say before, aggressive every time with the lines, with the shots, but at the same time doing the shot that you have to do. Technically 10 under, you know (inaudible) I didn't start the day knowing that I'm going to shoot 10 under, but once I start playing good and see that I was in a good mood, I just believed that it was going to be a good day.

Q. How do you keep yourself from getting too excited or thinking man, I can shoot whatever?

JORGE FERNANDEZ VALDES: I didn't. I was so excited, nervous thinking about my last drive, you've got to hit it good, this is my last iron, there's water on the right and there's rough on the left. All the thoughts come to me. At the end of the day you choose the target, feel it and believe that you can see the shot, that you were hitting a good shot. Yeah, that's

why golf is (inaudible).

Q. You were in the first group, right?

JORGE FERNANDEZ VALDES: No, no, I think I was in the third group.