

## LECOM Suncoast Classic

### ROUND 4 INTERVIEW

April 19, 2025



### NEAL SHIPLEY ( -18, won playoff)

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**Q. Neal, what a day. In your eighth career start, your first Korn Ferry Tour victory. Just how are you feeling right now?**

**NEAL SHIPLEY:** I feel great. I'm excited to celebrate with some family later. Haven't had the best start to the season, but now we're in a great position for the rest of the year and looking to build on this momentum for next week and the other weeks to come.

**Q. Five playoff holes it took.**

**NEAL SHIPLEY:** Was it five?

**Q. Yes.**

**NEAL SHIPLEY:** I lost count.

**Q. Walk me through I mean start to finish, how you were feeling.**

**NEAL SHIPLEY:** I mean obviously some nerves on that first playoff hole and the first tee shot I hit in maybe an hour and 30 minutes, an hour. But yeah, once we got to like that second or third playoff hole, I was really settled in and comfortable. Yeah, just made a couple clutch putts there coming in, which was awesome.

**Q. And walk me through that final one, especially this putt right here. What did you see, how were you feeling, how did you feel when it went in?**

**NEAL SHIPLEY:** Well, I got an idea from the first playoff hole when his putt up the hill was a little bit faster than it looked so I knew I didn't need to nuke it up the hill. Gave it just enough pace and it just looked like it was kind of a double breaker, a little left at the start, a little right at the end and yeah, we got it just right.

**Q. How did that feel when you saw it about to sink in there?**

**NEAL SHIPLEY:** Well, at first, I was just hoping to get there, it just crawled to the front lip. But once it went in, yeah, I kind of just went berserk. That was fun, it was a nice little release of energy.

**Q. And your season, you had enough starts last year on the Tour to gain conditional**

**status to start the year off here. Everything, T-15, T-9 there. Just how did it feel to really gain status and now be exempt the rest of the year?**

**NEAL SHIPLEY:** Yeah, no, I'm pumped. When I started the season I was conditional, I knew I needed to make some cuts. It was kind of great to have that relief from I'm going to be out here for at least this year and next year, so really pumped about that. It's nice to have a job for a year or two now.

**Q. And that back nine got a little rocky today. Were you looking at the leaderboard a lot?**

**NEAL SHIPLEY:** Yeah, I mean, I definitely was. We got a little unlucky on 16 with just kind of a bad break I think with how that ball bounced on the green. Then on 12 we just got gusted. It's going to happen when it's that windy out there.

Other than that, we played a really clean round, hit a lot of great shots. Really, really happy with the way I played and performed this week.

**Q. And Top 20 earn Tour cards at the end of the season, you put yourself in really great position now. Just how much is that going to be on top of your mind?**

**NEAL SHIPLEY:** We're just going to let the golf take care of itself. I'm going to focus on trying to win again and maybe try to get a third, too. I mean, that would be awesome, get out of here a little early. No, just playing good golf will take care of that so I'm not worried about it.

**Q. And who is your support team this week?**

**NEAL SHIPLEY:** I had Greg, my girlfriend Molly here this week, and my longtime swing coach Way. So it's good to have them. We're all in a house this week and it's just great to have 'em around. It was a fun, fun week.

**Q. And how did it feel to celebrate this experience with them?**

**NEAL SHIPLEY:** Oh, it's awesome. They've all put in a ton of hours with me. Way's been working with me since I was 12, so it's been a long time coming. Yeah, just super excited, happy for everyone and everyone that's put a lot of work in and a lot of their time into me.

**Q. Having to wait that long, what was going through your mind just watching guys kind of get up to 18, 19 and then fall back?**

**NEAL SHIPLEY:** Yeah, it was a little nervy. When I finished up I really didn't think it would be enough. Was pretty happy to just be in a playoff. To be in just a one-man playoff was a blessing because when I was on the golf course there was four other guys at 18 under at one point.

So yeah, no, definitely a little lucky that some guys slipped coming in, but took advantage of our opportunity and yeah, super happy about it.

**Q. What can you tell us about this tournament and this golf course?**

**NEAL SHIPLEY:** Yeah, the golf course, it's in awesome shape. It's one of the better events we've had this year I think in terms of the golf course quality. It's amazing, the greens are super slick.

It's not super challenging off the tee, but it makes up for that in the challenge it presents around the greens. You have to hit a lot of greens to score well out here. Definitely if you strike the ball well you can shoot some low numbers.

**Q. And what can you tell us about the people of Lakewood Ranch?**

**NEAL SHIPLEY:** Oh, it's been awesome. They've been super welcoming to us. They're excited to have the tournament, which is always great when you come to a place and the people around the tournament, around the community, around the golf course are happy that you're there. That was awesome.

**Q. It went to five, you sealed the deal. Just talk a little bit about that last time and what it was like to make that putt.**

**NEAL SHIPLEY:** Yeah, that last putt was a long putt, but definitely just a relief. Obviously I had to kind of try and lock back in expecting him to make his putt, but once his didn't go, that was awesome. Pumped to get my first win out here, first one as a professional. Yeah, we've been building this year towards it, so super excited about the work we've been doing.

**Q. The field, there's a lot of gentlemen, a lot of competition, everybody wanted what you won today but what's it like to actually get it done and you move forward?**

**NEAL SHIPLEY:** Yeah, it feels great. I'm super pumped about it, pumped that we get tomorrow off before the week in Dallas so we can have some fun.

Yeah, no, this is what we play for. We play for moments like that; we practice for moments like that and we work really hard so that we have the opportunity to hit those putts to win. Really glad that I put myself in the position to do that this week.

**Q. And then how do you think PGA TOUR Americas has kind of maybe prepared you for the Korn Ferry Tour this season?**

**NEAL SHIPLEY:** Yeah, well, I mean, PGA TOUR Americas was a great little proving ground. I was only out there for maybe five events last year, but I think it just helped me get in the groove of traveling, how to interact with guys on the tour, just kind of the whole vibe,

because it's pretty similar when you get out here. Maybe some bigger grandstands and the quality of golf is a lot better, but how things operate, I came to the Korn Ferry and my first event this year and felt really comfortable, where do I go to sign up and do all those little things. I think it's been really important to have that comfortability to start my career.

**Q. And I have to throw out Max Moldovan, a former teammate. I mean, the two of you sunk a similar putt to win. Just how's it feel to kind of share the last three weeks as winners with him?**

**NEAL SHIPLEY:** Yeah, that's awesome. Sorry, max, had to one-up you here so soon.

But no, I mean, super happy for him. He's off to a great start, he played well this week, made the cut. And no, it's great. I think Buckeye golf and Ohio State golf is slept on and we're here to make sure it's not slept on for much longer.

**Q. Getting your first professional win out of the way, is there any sense of relief to get that box checked off and not have to worry about that going forward?**

**NEAL SHIPLEY:** Yeah, I mean, a little bit. I figured it would come just based off the type of quality player I am. Not to like pump my own tires, but I know that I can compete with these guys out here even before coming here. It's just about getting the right opportunity and just having the stars align. We got that this week. And I think the important thing was I was going to stay patient regardless of what happened this week and what happened in prior weeks.

**Q. That par save on the third playoff hole, that seemed to really pump you up. Did that do anything for you mentally?**

**NEAL SHIPLEY:** Yeah, for sure. A putt that long gets you pumped up. I'm one of those guys when I have my back against the wall, whether it's in a playoff like that or whether I'm on the cutline, I tend to always go down swinging. I think that's just my mentality, I'm not afraid to make those putts in those moments.

**Q. It seems like you're really embracing the fans here, signing a lot of stuff, giving a kid your glove. Seems like it means a lot to you. How cool is that? Do you have like people following you, supporting you in such a way?**

**NEAL SHIPLEY:** Yeah, yeah, it's really cool to have that type of crowds. Honestly, it's just the least I could do. Without them we wouldn't be here. They help give us this platform. Even on the Korn Ferry Tour to have a turnout like this this week is amazing. It's great to have all these fans out here watching. Have to give back to them in little ways I can.

**Q. You said you're going to celebrate. Anything specific on your mind?**

**NEAL SHIPLEY:** I don't know. We were planning on driving to Palm Beach tonight, so we have to make that decision if we're going to do that. If not, I'm going to have to change some

flights around and figure some stuff out. I don't mind doing that, it's a good problem to have.

**Q. How long do you think that last putt was? What's your guess on that?**

**NEAL SHIPLEY:** Probably 35 feet. I can give you a good guess here. I'd actually probably say like 40 feet.

**Q. Really?**

**NEAL SHIPLEY:** Yeah, because based off the slope, I just pulled the book out, it's a good guess.

**Q. A couple days ago I saw you talking to Nate Stember. You hit a bad shot on 7 in Round 2 and you were talking to him on hole 8 about how you get out your anger in the moment but then you move on to the next shot. Can you just talk about how you move on to the next shot?**

**JOEL DAHMEN:** Yeah, well, I feel like, you know, unfortunately I have a tendency to kind of let my anger out. Sometimes in good, sometimes in bad ways, I'll admit, but I feel like that really helps me just kind of -- it's like a release valve, like if you're taking some pressure out. I feel like if you just hold it in, you're like a pipe that's just ready to burst at some point and then it bursts in bad ways. So I'd rather just kind of let that air leak a little bit at a time just so you can stay cool and calm and just move on. Air out your laundry and your grievances with what happened and just let it go.