

ROUND 1 QUICK QUOTES
January 29, 2026



SAHITH THEEGALA (-6)

Q. Went low for the final round at the American Express and a nice 66 today. How are you feeling after Round 1?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, yeah, I feel great. I scored it well. I drove it really bad. Every time I hit driver in the air I hit it in the rough. Every time I hit the fairway it was like a low guy. I don't know what the stats are, but I probably hit four or five fairways max and pretty much every easy hole I drove it in the rough.

Other than my driving, I played really, really well. Irons were great, rolled it great, short game was good. Yeah, for how bad I drove it, I'm very happy with the score.

Q. As someone who typically plays well on the West Coast, how nice is it to come here to Torrey Pines where you've been playing since you were little?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, it's such, it's like you can't put an amount on the comfort level thing. I've probably played a hundred rounds on the South Course, and even the North Course I've probably played 15, 20 times now.

Just something about kikuyu, kikuyu rough and kikuyu fairways and even with a little overseed, like the poa's kind of catching up on the North Course. So just really familiar grasses, familiar temps. It doesn't get any better than this.

Yeah, it feels great. I have my family and friends out. I love Torrey, it's one of my favorite stops on Tour even though might not statistically fit my game. Yes, West Coast Swing, I'm so, so comfortable here.

Q. So the trips here beyond I assume Junior World, right?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, yeah.

Q. Three or four times Junior World?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, I played like the San Diego City when I was really young, Junior City. I played Junior Worlds three times here, obviously U.S. Open, and then this is my fifth time here with practice rounds included. A hundred might be a little heavy. It's probably in the 50 to 70 range. Actually, maybe more, maybe more. I remember playing two full practice rounds every time for Junior Worlds so that's five, whatever it is.

I don't know if I've ever played here casually. Just tournament rounds and practice rounds.

Q. So you didn't make the trip down just to play?

SAHITH THEEGALA: No. We're not too far because Inland Empire, probably took two hours with a little traffic.

Q. And where would the South rank, or this facility, where would it rank on your Tour standings of golf courses?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, yeah, I think it's definitely difficult. The rough's always -- the rough's always a little patchy I'd say. The rough's up for sure, but sometimes you get a great lie and you have no issues being in the rough and other times it's a straight hack out, can't even reach the green.

It's a little bit of a dicey one and I think that's the consensus with West Coast golf in general. Kikuyu and that kind of stuff, it's so lie dependent. I mean, you could be short sided, but if you have a good lie in the kikuyu you could put so much spin on it. And vice versa, you could be absolutely toast.

Yeah, I'd say it's in the top third percentile for sure. I know it's not everyone's favorite golf course because some of the holes are pretty forgettable. I feel like you get a straight away long par 4 with one bunker down the right, and the green complexes are not the craziest. There's nothing maybe super fun to a normal golfer, but with the right pin placements and right conditions it's a major championship test, it's a U.S. Open golf course. It rewards you just golfing your ball, there's no way around that.

Q. Obviously with the finish last week and then this course, can you talk about how you're feeling coming into this year with -- it's kind of crazy, man, that looking at where you were and then just kind of one tough season and you've got a lot of work ahead of you.

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah.

Q. Can you just talk about that?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah. In some ways it was kind of a bad year to have a bad year and to get hurt because I don't know how many I missed exactly but I missed a good amount of Signature Events and a couple majors, and potentially rushed back to catch the last major. I knew there was no way around it. Medical doesn't get you into any of the Signatures and it actually would have been a category that's like two spots lower than I'm in now. Would have been better off probably the year before if it happened.

It is what it is, I'm just happy to be healthy. Definitely getting the confidence back in my game. The big thing is just being at close to 100 percent as possible and I feel awesome and maybe even better than I was two years ago.

I made some changes that are aimed toward longevity on Tour for sure, especially when it relates to the longer stuff. Got to look at it as a blessing in disguise. I said at the beginning of the year, it's kind of like a nice reset. Just got to earn your way into ever start, try and play my way into the big ones. But at the end of the day, I still have full status on the PGA TOUR and that's pretty darn cool. It's a new opportunity every week.

Q. I saw that you described your swing as now in hindsight a ticking time bomb in terms of your posture and things like that.

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah.

Q. Can you talk a little bit about how you needed to change that?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah. The crazy thing is like my spine health is actually really good. Like all the scans like my neck, my back, like no structural issues at all. And for a golfer they're like you actually have a great back.

It was more muscle stuff with my posture. I kind of had a double S curve going. A lot of people worry about the side bend and the neck tilt, but the amount of force I create there is actually not that much. It is something that we're watching especially through kind of the upper back.

I've never had low back issues thankfully, but the problem was I just wasn't using my low back. I wasn't tucking at all, I wasn't flexing my core at all. I wasn't using my low back. That's a big rotational piece.

Obviously there's a give and take and I think 28 years of not using my low back, I'm not going to be ripping up my low back or anything, but just posture in everyday things made a huge difference. Not sitting down as much at home, just a little better posture when I'm standing.

Honestly, the biggest thing was just less sitting because sitting's such a killer for me. I feel like I instinctively slouch. It's crept into my golf game. My posture's gotten a lot better over the ball as well, it's more of a singular curve than a double curve.

Yeah, I think we've got a good plan, talked to the right people. Thankfully, it's nothing, nothing big. It was really nice to see the scans of my back be like I have no structural issues at all.

Obviously can't just go out and swing however I want. Yeah, I'm excited where we're headed. I've already kind of tested with a lot of -- I haven't hit a ton of golf balls, but I've definitely put it to the test in practice and I feel incredible.

Q. So when you come out here to this kind of rough, you're not --

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, the rough --

Q. -- you're not flinching or anything?

SAHITH THEEGALA: The rough was never -- well, actually the rough was an issue with my oblique, but with my neck or back it was never an issue. But yeah, it is nice to take full hacks out of it without worries because the better posture honestly fixes a lot of things.

Q. How big do you feel like this first stretch is for you? You can play your way into I think two Signature Events with some good finishes. How important is it to get into those and sort of start to build points and everything to go forward --

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah.

Q. -- and maybe improving your ranking and all that kind of thing?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, it's like the eternal Catch 22 of golf. It's like you want that extra motivation to like try and play your way into that, but at the end of the day it's like I'm not playing any different either.

Obviously it's a goal of mine to make it into those elevateds and into the majors. It's great that I even have an opportunity to do so. But the old "good golf takes care of a lot of things."

I love the West Coast Swing. Mentally and physically I feel rejuvenated when I'm here. Yeah, again, I just look at it as another opportunity. If I get into them, great. If not, still got a full schedule on the PGA TOUR. Keep trying to get better.

But yes, it's very nice that we get to start on the West Coast every year.

Q. Were you down much at all when you were at kind of your lowest in terms of the physical part of it?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, yeah.

Q. You've always seemed like such an upbeat person.

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah. It was a bummer because it was not a big injury, it was just an oblique strain. It felt like I could push through it, but in reality I lost six, seven miles per hour speed. I injured my neck because of that, just because my posture was crap and I was compensating all sorts of ways. It was just frustrating not being able to do what I needed to to get my golf better.

I tried playing through it for a little bit, then I rested it. It took forever for my speed to get back and the trust in my oblique. It was not a big injury, but like every time I flexed my core, I gave

a little flinch. I couldn't take a great backswing. I think there's plenty of videos of me poking at my side, which did absolutely nothing.

Yeah, it was a bummer. I've never had like a mid kind of injury like that. The only big injury I ever had was my wrist in college and I was out for like a year. It was really easy what I had to do, just heal up fully, rest it.

This one was a little bit up in the air, especially with hurting my neck at the end of it. It was kind of a combination. Yeah, it was a bummer, but again, I knew I had this year of status still, so nothing to get too down about.

Q. In 2022 WM, played with Scottie, Scottie's first win the final round. Can you just talk about your memories of that experience watching him and just going through that round?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, I joke to everyone that I'll take the credit for really starting Scottie's career. I know he had a lot of great finishes in majors before that, but to get his first win there was huge.

Yeah, even back then he showed a lot of the same composure that he has. I think he finished like 5 under in the last seven holes to kind of clip Cantlay there.

Yeah, it's pretty crazy to see him do what he's doing because I think a lot of the guys that are similar age to him kind of see him as just another competitor and he's going on this Tiger-esque run.

And he couldn't be nicer. He couldn't be a better guy to be No. 1 in the world.

Yeah, it's so impressive and I think he's become a little bit of the blue print of if you're playing well in this day and age, you still can dominate. There's a lot of talk about not being able to dominate to the level of Tiger, and he has a long way to go for sure but he's really proving that it can still be done. Rory's right there with him but what Scottie's doing is unreal.