
Q. Alex, another solid round here at Port Royal. What do you like about this golf course so much?

ALEX SMALLEY: I don't know. The weather can be kind of iffy this time of the year so you have a lot of changing conditions. I think the wind here is a great equalizer. You really have to manage your ball around here. I know the holes aren't the longest but there's some 360-, 370-yard par 4s where we're hitting driver and then 8-iron if it's into the wind.

It's really all up to the wind direction and how hard it's blowing. I've seen a couple rounds here where it's not really blowing and you have to shoot 6 or 7 under just to keep pace, but when it's up 20 to 30 miles an hour, anything under par is very solid and I think most guys would take that.

Q. Do you feel like that's what you did well today, just managing your round, or was there something that really stood out to you ball-striking-wise?

ALEX SMALLEY: I don't know. The greens aren't the largest here so when the wind does get up, it gets very tricky to hit a lot of the greens.

Yeah, I mean, just managing, just trying to give yourself as many birdie looks as you can, really being cognizant if you have a putt that's into the wind or downwind because the speed changes drastically according to that. I made a lot of good putts today, putting felt pretty solid most of the day. Had a couple crosswinds where I played a little more break because of the wind and it didn't quite take it, but I made my fair share as well. Overall, pretty happy with how it went.

Q. Has it been a little stressful for you with the number reducing from 125 to 100? I was just looking at the fall and there was a lot of missed cuts there, but with an impressive T-4 in Japan. How big was that event for you?

ALEX SMALLEY: Yeah, I forget when they announced when they were reducing cards, if it was at the beginning of the year before the season started or if it was kind of February, March time frame.

I got off to a pretty decent start this year, which with the card reduction kind of relaxed me a little bit. I know it's a very stressful time of the year for a lot of players out here.

Yeah, I mean, getting off to a good start this season was huge. Like you mentioned, I hadn't played the best in the fall, but I tell people all the time, with the way the points are out here,

you can miss a lot of cuts but if you have a top 2 or 3 finish, it kind of helps you get back on track. You can miss a lot of cuts, but if you have a lot of top-5s you're kind of vaulting up the point structure as well.

Q. Do you kind of lick your chops coming to an event like this where you had some good finishes, played four times already? How much do you look forward coming to an event like that?

ALEX SMALLEY: Yeah, anytime -- there's certainly events where everybody has their events where they feel comfortable, this is one of them for me. I haven't done super great on those that I felt comfortable on this year, but yeah, I always look forward to coming back here.

Sometimes I don't look forward to playing in 30-mile-an-hour winds because sometimes it can be tough just to stand upright and stand still over a putt. The wind's blowing you around and you could get a gust where it's mainly into and then you get a gust off your right and that kind of throws off your stroke. Like I said, there's a lot of variables that go into it.

I feel like I have a decent game plan around here and if my swing's in a decent spot and I just follow the game plan, I think -- and I guess the results have kind shown that I can be consistent out here.

Q. What was a highlight today for you, a particular shot or moment?

ALEX SMALLEY: Probably my tee shot on No. 8, the par 3. I think it was playing about 195. It's kind of weird because the tee box is kind of back behind the trees and the wind was off the right a little bit. So these trees block it so you can't really feel a lot of the wind on the tee box, but you see the flag bending over sideways up by the green. I hit a 5-iron, a little low kind of three-quarter 5-iron. It started right edges of the green and once it got kind of past all the trees and toward the green, it probably drew 30, 35 feet and went in there to six feet. But still wasn't an easy six-footer. It's blowing all around, it was a downhill left-to-right putt but happened to go in.

Q. You mentioned the start of your season. I think you made six of seven cuts, your worst finish was T-21. Like you said, you missed four of your last five with the T-4 in Japan. What maybe have you been searching for or what maybe do you think you found obviously coming to a place that you're really comfortable at?

ALEX SMALLEY: Yeah, I think for me a lot of -- a lot of my swing keys come when my timing is correct. I tend to get in trouble with my transitions a little too quick or if I swing -- I have a tendency to kind of overswing, maybe swing a little past parallel at times. Especially here when it's blowing this hard, one of my keys is just to kind of feel a little tighter and compact with my motion and the ball usually comes out a little lower, which works decently well here.



Yeah, I was just trying to get back into that. Putting hasn't been great this fall. I've had a lot of stress on second putts if the first one didn't go in. Out here, when it's blowing as hard as it is, when you have a three- or four-footer, it's very nerve wracking, it's very stressful.

But my speed was very good today. I had a lot of just kind of, I call them mindless tap-ins. You just kind of get up there, don't even have to think about it and it goes in. That kind of helped reduce the stress a little bit.

