

U.S. Senior Open

Flash Interview

Thursday August 11, 2016

Vijay Singh



THE MODERATOR: Ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to welcome Vijay Singh into the media center. Vijay, out in 33, in in 33, for 4 under at 66 in the first round.

Vijay, congratulations on a terrific first round.

Could you take us through your scorecard first with some of the birdies starting on the 6th hole.

VIJAY SINGH: What's the 6th? Par 5, right?

THE MODERATOR: Yeah.

VIJAY SINGH: I hit a really good drive there, drove the ball really well today. I hit a drive there and hit a 5 iron, knocked it on and two-putted.

THE MODERATOR: And then you birdied 9 and 10 back to back.

VIJAY SINGH: Yes, 9 I hit -- it was kind of into the wind. It was a perfect 9 iron, so hit it to four or five feet. And 10, I drove it down there and hit a sand wedge to 12-15 foot, made that.

THE MODERATOR: And made a birdie on 15 to get it to 4 under.

VIJAY SINGH: 15, I hit a 3 off the tee and hit a 50-degree sand wedge and hit it another 8 foot, 10 foot, and made that. Bogeyed 17, probably the worst shot of the day. I tried to hit it hard and got in front of it and pushed it right, didn't get it up and down. Hit a 9 iron to two, three feet on the last.

THE MODERATOR: Nice way to finish. It seemed like, as stress free as a U.S. Senior Open could be, at least 13 out of 14 fairways, 16 out of 18 greens. How did you feel the course is playing out there today?

VIJAY SINGH: Played a lot easier than the first practice round I played. In other words, it was really firm. Couldn't stop even a sand wedge. Nothing was spinning. If you missed a green, it was very difficult to get up and down.

So I thought, if that weather had continued with no rain, it would have been a really, really tough test. It still is. You still have to hit the fairways here. But it dried out a

little bit, but still you get some run off the fairways and the greens are stopping. So if you hit the fairways, you've got a good chance of having a good birdie opportunity.

THE MODERATOR: And you certainly did not only hit the fairways, but now you're leading the field in driving distance, which isn't unusual. How specifically does driving it that far help you on a course like Scioto?

VIJAY SINGH: I only hit a handful of drivers because all the bunkers kind of start around 290, so you don't need to drive the ball further than that, and you hit a short iron in. The two par 5s, you need to hit a driver. I hit a driver on 18, which I really did not need to, but I was feeling a little upset about the bogey on 17.

I'm driving the ball well. I'm hitting my irons good. Playing the regular tour, I've been playing pretty decent out there too.

I came here with obviously expected to play well every time I come to the Champions Tour, and I just played well today.

Q. Since you do play the regular tour so much, maybe you could just give a comparison between the courses you play on the regular tour and this course, how it would stack up, say, how it would set up.

VIJAY SINGH: This is really -- I mean, you can hole anything. Going out there on a regular tour event or even a U.S. Open, obviously, the greens -- they could make the greens a lot faster and firmer, but this is a really good test of golf. If anybody has any complaint about this golf course, he must be off his head because this is a really good golf course and good test and a good setup par 5. There's only two of them, but you still have to hit the fairways and great par 3s and a whole lot of par 4s that are really challenging.

I mean, they brought the tees up a little bit today. So it kind of made it a little easier. They can stretch it, and it's going to be a tough test.

Q. Vijay, you said coming over to this Tour, there was just sort of some building confidence coming from the PGA Tour to this. Can you speak to that? Just why is that, A? And, B, do you have a comfort

level here because in some ways, the guys you're around or guys you maybe know better than on the PGA Tour?

VIJAY SINGH: I think I'm more uncomfortable here than comfortable. I'm more comfortable on the regular tour. I know the golf courses. I know where to go. I know the guys there as good as I know the guys over here.

I'm uncomfortable over here because golf courses are very new, and you always expect to play well. Every time I tee it up here, if I don't win, I'm really disappointed. So I put a lot more pressure on myself, and that's not very good, you know. My caddie just told me, you should come here and feel like it's -- you know, you're on a break. Maybe you're going to play well because you just don't play your regular golf when you come over here.

I force myself to play well over here instead of just playing. So my attitude this week is just go and play and see what happens. Probably that's why I play well.

Q. Could you talk about your history with this course? Had you ever been over here to play it before this week? Also, as a followup to that, this being Jack's course he grew up on, if you've seen memorabilia and if you have any feelings about playing the course where Jack really learned the game?

VIJAY SINGH: Yeah. I heard a lot about it before coming over here. I never played it, but everybody I spoke to -- the U.S. Open qualifying was here a few times. I spoke to Mark today, and he said he's played here quite a few times. It's one of his favorite golf courses, so I was always looking forward to coming here and playing.

Everybody said it was a tough test, and it is. It's a very tough test of golf. And any time Jack loves a golf course, it must be good. I mean, it's a good golf course. It's a golf course that you never get tired of playing, I think.