

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW: ANIRBAN LAHIRI
May 5, 2016



Q. Well, a lovely round of golf today, Anirban Lahiri, 66 today. You're looking at that scorecard, how happy are you after that?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: Very happy, especially to finish there on the 18th with a good solid 4. Anytime you have a bogey-free card, it's fantastic.

Q. You mentioned on 18 but what about the fact that you played the Green Mile 1 under. We know you've had some difficulty with this golf course, that must give you some satisfaction as well?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: Yeah, absolutely. I think it does help a little bit that 16, 17 played downwind. Those holes can be really, really tough, but obviously made up by 18. So happy with the way I hit it, hit it close and just kept it solid.

Q. Has this performance kind of been coming for a while, have you been waiting for everything to click into place?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: Yeah, I think it's come but it's not come together over 72 holes. But I feel like my game's gotten better every week that I've played. I went through a stretch last week I think 40 holes without a bogey just to finish but obviously last week was different. But it's nice to be back going.

Q. And first full season on the PGA TOUR playing in the United States, good finish and consistent finishes, 55 in the world as well, but I guess after this round do you have goals and aspirations that you want to achieve over the next few months?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: I think just for the standards that I set for myself, I've played mediocre or average golf the last few months. I definitely feel like I should be competing more consistently and I think my game's been there, but like I said, it hasn't got together. But it's nice to get off to a good start and hopefully translate to a good Sunday.

Q. That's some great playing. The first time you played this course competitively and you shoot 66, how does that happen?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: I think I've been leading up to a good solid round. I've been playing good golf, but I just haven't been consistent and I think I've just worked on some of the stuff that my coach and I worked on the week after the Masters when I took a couple of weeks off, so I think it's beginning to come together and it's showing.

Q. You go bogey-free and make a couple of great birdies at 15 and 16. How big were those in the course of the round as you get towards the end of the 18 holes?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: Well, I think just with the way the course was playing, especially in the morning, it was windy, it was rainy, it was freezing and I wasn't going very far and you just had to keep chipping away. Just towards the end it was nice to make a good putt on I think it was 15. 16 helped that it was playing downwind, wedged it in there close. Nice par save on the last hole. Pretty happy with the way I finished up.

Q. Yeah, especially that save on 18 to close out the round. That was a tricky little putt that you had there, about 11 feet down the slope for par?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: Yeah, there's not too many easy putts out here. You've got to be very attentive to the slope but there's also a lot of green. I was a little bit at sea when I came out on Tuesday but obviously feeling right at home now.

Q. Conditions this morning, cool, somewhat windy, cloudy, but it didn't bother you, you go bogey-free out here at Quail Hollow. What aspect of your game did you lean on the most?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: I think just starting out the round it was really cold and windy and rainy. It was just keeping the ball in good positions. There were lots of 4-irons and long irons coming into those par 4s today and just leave it on the right side of the hole and take your chances. Played pretty solid the whole round.

Q. One round does not a tournament make, you can't win them on Thursday, but when you get a good number like you did today what does that do for your outlook heading to round 2?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: I feel like I've been really close to my A golf for a while now. Just one or another aspect has been kind of off a little bit, but it's nice to have everything come together. It's not an easy golf course, especially in the conditions it's playing so I'll take anything in the 60s and to go bogey-free is special.

Q. Six birdies and no bogeys, you birdie three of the par 5s, is it kind of steady as you go today and try not to make mistakes?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: Yeah, I think the whole idea was just to put it in good spots and take your chances when you get them. There's a lot of holes out there that are playing really hard and there's a few that are playing downwind and you just have to take advantage, like 10, 16, 17. Pars are good on some of those holes, but when they're downwind you have to try and just take advantage because coming back to the clubhouse it gets tough.

Q. You average 290 off the tee, that's obviously a nice weapon to have on a course that's playing as long and perhaps a little slower that it will later in the week?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: Yeah. I mean you do need to carry it a long way, especially as soft as

it's playing. But if you're not in the fairway, then you've got no chance, especially with the way the fairways shape around this track. You could even be on the edge of the fairway and might not have a great angle in. So you have to keep that in mind and sometimes lay back or sometimes be a little more aggressive and try to figure out your play and just plot your way around.

Q. What would a high finish mean for you this week because you have a career one top-10 on Tour? A finish at this golf course in this event means a lot to a lot of players. What would it mean to you?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: Yeah, it kind of helps the fact that all these events are new events to me. I've been playing a lot of professional golf over the last seven, eight years, traveled quite a bit. So it kind of helps when you come to an event and you don't quite understand the magnitude of what it might mean to a lot of the players because it's new to me. But obviously the only top-10 that you just mentioned was a fifth at a major last year and I haven't really played that much golf on the PGA TOUR. Having said that, I definitely feel like I've got the game to compete and win. So I'm just going to be looking forward to getting into a good position some Sunday.

Q. With your membership this year, were there any surprises? Your first year on the PGA TOUR, what do you take from it so far?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: Well, I won't say surprises, but obviously the golf courses are brand new. I'm quite comfortable. The staff are fantastic. I know most of the guys from playing in most of the world events anyways. But no, I've just gotten more and more comfortable. Just moved base here to avoid traveling 20 hours between events, so that's helped a lot as well. I'm just getting more and more comfortable and used to being out here.

Q. What made you come to Charlotte, particularly this year?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: It's a funny question. This year for me has been a bit odd in terms of my status. I get into a lot of events off my world rankings, I get into a lot of events off my Presidents Cup status. But because I had to go through Web.com finals last year, I don't get into some of the regular events. So I'm just trying to schedule my season as conveniently as possible and Charlotte was just perfect. I came up here last year for one of those Web finals in Davidson and I played really well there, so I think this area likes me.

Q. I know you've told this story before but there's only a couple of public golf courses in India?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: Yeah, you don't get as many golf courses, and any good golf course, I mean world class tournament golf courses in India, I would probably say Palm Springs, Florida by themselves have more tournament courses than all of India put together. Just to give you perspective, it's not that big. But having said that, it's huge, huge potential, lots of talent, lots of young guys who are knocking on the door and breaking through despite that

fact. It's encouraging to see it grow. As long as it keeps growing, I'll be happy.

Q. How difficult is that to have so few resources at home and yet craft your game and cultivate it and get to where you are?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: Well, I think there's a whole bunch of countries, it's not just India but there's a lot of countries which are not huge on golf but obviously there's going to be a few of us who love the sport enough and want to work hard enough and dream big enough to want to come here and play here and try to win events. I think I'm just one of those guys. We are a minority but there's a few of us.

Q. A lot of talk about the Olympics this week. What would it mean if you won a medal, any medal?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: It would be huge. I've said this earlier in the media, how many people watch the Olympics in India. I would say eight or nine out of 10 people. How many people would watch the Masters or The Open Championship? Probably one out of 100. So just in terms of eyeballs, just in terms of popularity, in terms of just making people aware of the sport or having the government take a stronger initiative to promote the sport, it would be massive. I think the Olympics is a huge stage for India in terms of golf.