



ANGUS FLANAGAN

JOHN BUSH: We would like to welcome Angus Flanagan into our virtual media center here at the 3M Open. Angus is the reigning Minnesota State Open champion.

Angus, first of all, we would like to ask you about that. Talk about winning that tournament and also having our executive director, Hollis Cavner, meet you there on the green to extend the invitation to you to play this week.

ANGUS FLANAGAN: It's sinking in. Probably today's really like the day doing all of this. I've had a couple phone calls with media people and been asked very similar questions and stuff like that and I've said kind of at the time I had no idea it was going to happen. I kind of heard rumors that there was going to be a surprise for me at the prize giving.

My caddie stupidly came up to me and said, "Hey, there's going to be something, but I can't tell you." So as soon as Hollis came up, I was thinking, oh, maybe it might be I don't have to prequalify, I can go straight into the Monday qualifier. But then I mentioned something how I was stuck here, kind of making it sound out like it's a problem when it's really not, and he used that in the speech that said, "Since you're stuck here, I'd like to invite you to the 3M Open."

At the time I had no idea. It kind went through one ear and out the other because I just couldn't process it with everything going on. It probably took me a good 30 seconds to actually realize like, wow, I'm actually playing against some of the guys I look up to, I see on TV.

Sunday night I was out here practicing and I was on the range and I was talking to Russell Knox, and I've looked up to Russell because he's from Scotland, my dad's from Scotland as well. then DJ turns up on the range and starts hitting balls next to me and I was just like, wow, I had to pinch myself a bit and say is this real? I thought I was in a dream still.

JOHN BUSH: And speaking of being sort of a local now after three years here in Minnesota, just talk a little bit about your career at the University of Minnesota. I know you were the co-medalist at last year's Big 10 Championship. Just talk a little bit about your success while being a Golden Gopher.

ANGUS FLANAGAN: So I've really enjoyed my three years here. My first year was really a struggle. I've never really been able to kind of have, is it five, six months of the year with the snow and stuff like that being cooped up in the winter. My freshman year was tough because obviously it's my first time getting used to hitting balls indoors, spending some time working on my swing. I've never really done too much of that, I've always been someone who's gone

out and played golf as much as I can. Everyone asks me about the weather in London. Most people know it snows probably for two, three days a year and the whole country shuts down and it can be the smallest dusting, but then you can have 10 inches here and the airport's still open and everything. So it took a bit of time to get adjusted.

Then we got a new practice facility my sophomore year that's really helped and I think that's how my game's definitely evolved. I got used to taking days off, taking like a month off in November as soon as the season's finished and just kind of getting my body ready for the long winter and practicing and stuff like that and just being able to enjoy spending time around the team and along those lines.

And then recently my success has obviously been pretty good. Obviously it's a tad annoying because our whole team was playing very well with COVID coming in. We were down on our spring break trip, everyone was shooting under par and it was really the first time that I felt like we could go out and compete with top-10 teams we hadn't really competed with before. Obviously we got the phone call one day saying we were going to have to go off the golf course, which was a bit disheartening, but it's the way of the world now and we've just got to kind of embrace it and take whatever we can kind of positively. I've taken quarantine pretty positively this year and absolutely grinded on my golf game, which I've never really done and now I'm seeking the benefits. Hopefully tomorrow can be a good day and I can tee it up with the big boys and compete.

JOHN BUSH: And speaking of that, before we open it up to questions, just fans watching on TV this week, what will they be able to see with your game? I know you're a long hitter, but talk about your game specifically and then also how it fits here at TPC Twin Cities.

ANGUS FLANAGAN: Okay. I'm long for my height and weight. I'm probably only 5'9" on a good day and 150 pounds after a decent meal, so pound for pound I would say I'm reasonably long. Normally pretty straight with my driver.

I don't know if you guys heard at the State Open, my driver actually cracked so I had to get a new head, so I'm still just getting used to that. So I was figuring out the last couple days how that's kind of evolving. It's the same driver, but it's just in the back of my head it's different, so I'm just getting used to that.

But I pride myself on having a good short game. TPC has big greens, so it's just kind of missing on the right side of the greens if I am going to miss. I normally kind of dissect golf courses pretty well. I'm quite an aggressive player, but I'm only aggressive when I can, like I feel confident about my game. If not, I just kind of accept that I'm a good putter and go like that.

So I would say what to expect is hopefully fairways, greens and some putts holed and at the end of the day we can try to add up a good score and go from there.

JOHN BUSH: That sounds like a great plan. We'll get started with questions from our

media.

Q. Angus, good to see you again. Last time I saw you was at that awards ceremony at the Minnesota Open. You kind of mentioned the emotion of that moment. What has it been like having the excitement build over the two, three weeks since to right now on the eve of playing a PGA TOUR event?

ANGUS FLANAGAN: The one thing I would say is I'm probably going to need a power pack for my phone. My phone has been blowing up. My phone's been pretty good with battery, but recently it's been dying at 3:00. Everyone's been messaging me, wishing me luck, wondering what I'm doing, what equipment stuff I've got and whether I'm getting new things and things like that.

So it's nice kind of having all those people surround me and obviously text me, stuff like that, but it's been tough keeping on top of it because I'm always someone that doesn't really use my phone too much. I like to be myself and just kind of stay out of all of that, but recently I've had to kind of pick up and reply to people and stuff like that because I've never really had so many people texting me before. So it's just getting used to it.

It's a different life in doing all of this. I'm really, really enjoying it and it's all a learning experience and that's pretty much what I'm taking this week as if I play well, I play well, and if I don't, I've got two or hopefully four days of learning experiences and the whole week as well. Definitely, I'm looking forward to it.

Q. Do you, I don't want to say "like" is the wrong word, but there's not going to be any fans out there, but does that help you in a way to kind of keep the magnitude of this event from feeling too big? I know you probably would rather have a crowd out there. Does it maybe help that your debut is a strange crowd-less situation?

ANGUS FLANAGAN: I think it is, I definitely think it helps. My and my dad were talking about it and my dad said it's basically a college event that you play in with a couple TV stands around. We've played college events before which have been broadcasted and stuff like that. There is no difference, but it's probably just a college event with some of the top players in the world playing.

So I've just got to kind of cancel that out and just do my own thing and just focus on the week. I've got Tom, my best friend, on the bag, so me and him are going to have a blast together And at the end of the day just hope we can play well. But as I said earlier, it's definitely a learning experience and I'm absolutely loving every moment I have out here at the moment.

Q. Angus, sorry if you addressed this, I missed the very beginning of your start here. How familiar are you with this course from practicing with the Gophers and how different is it the last couple years after Lehman made the changes to it?

ANGUS FLANAGAN: Actually, the first time I played it was last Monday. I had never really been out here. I missed a couple qualifiers just to kind of rest up getting ready for tournaments. I actually had never played here.

So last week, Monday I played, so I played Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday out here 18 holes and it was -- I thought this was one of the toughest courses I ever played when I first came out here. Last week the weather wasn't too good in the evenings, it softened it up and it was blowing 25 miles an hour every time I played. I remember hitting a hybrid into 9 from 225 yards and I'm thinking this hole's only 460 and this is going to be a tough week, but then it dried out and I played there on Monday and actually only had 8-iron in. It's just crazy how it can change in a week.

But I'm getting used to the course. I'm going to play nine holes this afternoon with Tom Lehman and Eric van Rooyen. Just to see kind of how Tom designed the golf course would be a good way of going about it because what I think could be the right way of playing it, he could be like, hey, man, I designed it for a hybrid off this hole or 3-wood instead of hitting driver and that's the widest part and that's the way the green sits and stuff like that. I'm looking forward to playing with them and just seeing how they dissect the golf course and just looking forward to it.

Q. Did you know a sponsor's exemption was in play at the state Open or did it come as a total surprise to you?

ANGUS FLANAGAN: It came as a total surprise. I said earlier that my caddie kind of said there's a surprise for you. I had been talking with Hollis throughout the week and he had been watching me play and I just had kind of little conversations with them. He came up on the green at the prize giving and I was thinking maybe he's just going to skip me through the prequalifying and put me into the Monday prequalifying, but then at the end of it he said since you're stuck here, you can -- I can play in the 3M as a sponsor's exemption.

And at the time it just, it felt so surreal, I had to kind of pinch myself and say is this really happened or am I in my bed at 10:00 at night, falling asleep having a crazy dream. So it's definitely something I would love to thank Hollis for. I keep seeing him every day out here and me and him are having very good conversation and stuff like that. He is a wonderful man and I'd really like to thank him for everything he's done for me because he's made some of my dreams come true. And hopefully this can be the reality, talking to you guys every week in a couple years because that's what I want to be doing every week.

Q. So, staying on the subject of the course, how do you prepare for an Arnold Palmer-designed course?

ANGUS FLANAGAN: Is that for -- what do you call it, is that for the Royal? At golf courses, I don't really look at how the design of golf courses, I kind of look at how it suits my game and where I can really use the advantage of my length and my accuracy off the tee.

A lot of guys will be hitting irons off some tee boxes because they don't like the look of it, whereas I really trust myself in hitting fairways and being able to dissect and by having shorter irons in and wedges in some cases, like the second hole there is a good example. It's a very narrow par 5 with water right, but the way I look at that hole, if I hit it in the water, I'm only going to have 170 yards in and I can still make par, whereas I actually played that hole very well, I managed birdied it.

But the way that I look at golf courses is just where my game suits and where I can attack and where do I have to defend and go middle of the green. The last couple years I haven't really looked at golf courses in that sense, but probably in the last year I've really focused in on where I can make the birdies and where the holes are that I have to just kind of grow old for 21, because most guys at 21 like to fire at every pin, but I've got to be kind of growing older in some cases and going middle of the greens and stuff like that.

Q. What's the first thing you look for the first time you see a course?

ANGUS FLANAGAN: First time I see a course I like to look at where the widest spot of the golf course is, like where off the tee I visually like the look of. If it's the widest part, great; if it's not, then I just have to go with it and trust kind of the last 18 years of my golf and hopefully I can stand up and hit a golf shot.

I'm very open minded arriving at new golf courses and I know there's more than one way of playing golf and there's no right way. People do it so differently. Like nowadays you have guys like Jim Furyk who are still out there competing and you have guys like Bryson who have tried to take the distance game to a completely different level and they're all competing every week.

So I just go out there and just try and enjoy it and stuff like that. at the end of the day, if I like the golf course, I like it. If I don't, I have to be a bit for defensive and try to take the ways of my game in trying to make the birdies where I can and just kind of take that for granted.

Q. How many drivers do you have on site here just in case?

ANGUS FLANAGAN: In terms of how many drivers I'm hitting on the course?

Q. No. How many drivers do you have on site that you brought with you?

ANGUS FLANAGAN: I only have one, but lucky the Titleist guys are here so if there is a problem with one, I can definitely talk to them about it. They've been very good to me this week.

I'm just looking forward to being able to tee it up with the best and hopefully the driver doesn't crack this week, but the one that cracked last week was probably a year old. I needed a new one, so I'm kind of -- I'm not happy that it did crack during the round, but I'm happy that I could get a new one that I can trust at the moment.

Q. Is there anyone in the field that you particularly wanted to meet?

ANGUS FLANAGAN: There's so many guys that I kind of wanted to meet. I think a lot of guys have been like "who's this kid" because I'm 21 but I look like I'm 15. So they're probably wondering who's this guy, like is he one of the guys' sons or something like that. It's quite funny when I go on the range. There's a couple guys that I see on Tour and their heads turn and they're like, oh, Minnesota player, I wonder who that is.

I would say the guy I really wanted to meet probably would have been DJ with everything he's done, or Brooks, but in terms of a guy that really surprised me in terms of being one of the nicest guys that I met on Tour is Russell Knox. He rubbed off on me in a really good way and now every time I see him I have a nice conversation with him. He's a very, very nice guy and he gave me some very good kind of ways of playing golf and how there's obviously more than one way to play and stuff like that. It was definitely nice talking to him and knowing that I do have the game, and I was hitting balls next to him and everything like that.

There is no difference in my game compared to the others. Everyone has this view I think of, oh, like ams are going to struggle and things like that. And I don't want to jinx myself, ams have done well in the past, I just haven't really been given the opportunity to play in front of the best players in the world. Hopefully my nerves don't get the better of me and I'm going to try my absolute greatest so that doesn't happen, but if it does, it's just a learning experience and hopefully in a couple years when I do turn pro and hopefully I can be on the PGA TOUR with these guys teeing it up every week, the nerves won't get the better of me.

JOHN BUSH: Angus, you mentioned earlier playing with Tom Lehman this afternoon. Have you played with Tom before and is he someone with the University of Minnesota connection that you've looked up to for a little while?

ANGUS FLANAGAN: I've never actually played with him. I've met him a couple times. I've been fortunate enough to stay at his ranch down in Arizona my freshman year for a couple weekends just to kind of get out of the snow and stuff like that. I actually never played with him, so I'm super excited to obviously play with him.

Obviously having Erik around as well is honestly one of the best things that's happened to me. I teed up yesterday with him for nine holes and Tom and myself, we were out there with him and his caddie, Feely, and Tom was getting very good notes off Feely and I was talking to Erik about everything. Tom said at the end of the day we all hit it the same, but this course is going to turn into a putting competition. So I've just got to get used to the greens and just kind of the breaks and everything like that.

Last night I was playing Call of Duty with Feely, so it's kind of crazy how that can change in the space of a day. It's so nice having those guys. I'm super excited to play with Tom, especially this afternoon because he did the redesign. As I mentioned earlier, I just want to see the way I might think a hole should be played, just to see kind of -- he has tons of

experience, he's won majors and stuff like that. So I'm super excited to see how he plays the game and I'm just excited to play with him, and I think he has his son on the bag, so I'm looking forward to that.

JOHN BUSH: Angus, we can't take thank you enough for your time this morning. We look forward to watching you play this week.

ANGUS FLANAGAN: Thank you very much. Thank you for your time, I've very much enjoyed it.