

**ROUND 1 INTERVIEW  
NOVEMBER 11, 2021**



**RUSSELL HENLEY (-5)**

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**Q. Russell, off to a great start, 5 under. Just a few comments about the round and what you felt good about.**

**RUSSELL HENLEY:** Yeah, made some nice putts, feel like the greens have settled a little bit since last year. I feel like they're rolling true and felt like I was hitting my lines on the greens and felt pretty good with my driver, made a little adjustment from last week when I kept hitting it into the thick trees and hazards in Mexico, so felt better with the driver, which got me in play.

**Q. You've had a remarkable run in Houston of shooting lots of low rounds. Is there something in the water, the air? Two different courses.**

**RUSSELL HENLEY:** I lived in Charleston for seven years and we played bermudagrass just like here in Houston and a lot of wind in Charleston. So I guess just kind of felt comfortable with playing in the wind and the bermudagrass. Yeah, I'm not sure. I mean, yeah.

**Q. I guess you could say it's coincidental because you're talking two different courses.**

**RUSSELL HENLEY:** Yeah, two different courses.

**Q. Can you reflect on the two courses and how they fit your game differently? You clearly won on the other one and you're in good position here now.**

**RUSSELL HENLEY:** Yeah, the other one I felt like I hit a lot of greens and always knew where to miss my shots going into the greens. Just feel like I limited a lot of my mistakes and didn't feel like I had to press to make birdies.

Here, I don't really feel like I have much of a choice in terms of pressing, I feel like you've got to hit fairways, it's the only way to give yourself good birdie putts. I'm not really sure I mean, wish I had a good answer.

**Q. Can you reflect a little bit on the championship? As I recall, you started the day three or four strokes out of the lead and won by three.**

**RUSSELL HENLEY:** Yeah, yeah, I had a great Sunday. I just, I felt like I'd been playing well for a while at that point when I won a few years ago. I just tried to go play to win. I was kind of tired of finishing 15th or 20th and felt like I had the game to do it and it all just kind of

came together.

**Q. You had 10 birdies that day.**

**RUSSELL HENLEY:** That's right, yeah.

**Q. I'm assuming you've maybe not done that probably too many times?**

**RUSSELL HENLEY:** Yeah, probably not too many times. Anytime you make 10 birdies on Tour, it's a good day.

**Q. I just want to ask in general about being back in front of fans, this course. There were a few fans out here last year, but this is the first time a lot of fans have been able to be allowed. What's that like to have them back, and does it feel like old home, or what's it feel like?**

**RUSSELL HENLEY:** Yeah, seems like people are excited to play. I don't ever really have a huge following watching me, but I mean, you see kids out in the practice rounds and the pro-am yesterday. I saw just people out, excited to watch golf and be outside. It's great to see. We're ready for it.

**Q. And what do you think of this course in general?**

**RUSSELL HENLEY:** I like it. I think it has a couple holes that I don't like as much, but I think, you know, overall I feel like it's pretty fair and I just feel like hitting fairways is really key.

**Q. How about the elevated greens and stuff? How about 15, what they're trying to do there, trying to create the stadium atmosphere out there at 15?**

**RUSSELL HENLEY:** Yeah, that's cool. I think you've got to be careful with that hole. If it gets into the wind and you play the back tee, I feel like it can be borderline questionable of, you know, fair in my opinion depending on where you put the pin location. Today I thought it was in a good spot, the wind's down. I just think that's just a tough hole. You know, it is a short par 3. Like I birdied it today, but you can be not very far off and be looking, trying to make a 4. It's a tough hole, it can be.

**Q. The ball-striking stats, especially the strokes gained approach, has really improved the last two seasons. What's behind that?**

**RUSSELL HENLEY:** Yeah, I don't know. I think I've just found a way to practice my ball-striking to where I don't feel like I'm trying to fix anything and can kind of stay consistent with it. So I kind of -- I feel like with the irons, I feel similar day to day, and I'm working on trying to do better, same thing with the driver. Today was really helpful with the driver to, you know, kind of have a little more of a plan with how I've been practicing it.

Yeah, honestly, I didn't even -- I didn't know I was that highly ranked in approach to green for a while there and somebody said that and I actually had to look it up. I knew with my wedges last year was really good between 50 and 125 and I practice those all the time. So I would say just consistent practice.

**Q. Any coaching change or swing change, or just that practice?**

**RUSSELL HENLEY:** No, no changes. I use a TrackMan and I just, I use -- it throws me out random yardages and try to hit it and guess what I hit it and see what it is. It's constantly giving me feedback and throwing curveballs at me with the TrackMan. It's a great way to practice.