

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW
November 18, 2021



RUSSELL HENLEY (-8)

Q. Russell, how would you assess your round out there today?

RUSSELL HENLEY: Pretty steady. Made most of my putts inside 10 feet and hit my driver well, kept it in front of me. The one time I had kind of a tough par putt or somewhat of a par putt, I made it.

Q. With these courses when the weather's like this and it's just a perfect day, sun's out, not a lot of wind, do you expect to kind of go low on these courses?

RUSSELL HENLEY: I think I feel like I have to. It seems like today there wasn't a breath of wind, just barely anything and it's rare here, so I knew there was going to be low scores. I feel like the pins were in somewhat gettable spots if you're in the fairway.

Q. You've popped up a lot this year, you've played some really good golf in spurts. How would you kind of assess how the whole year's kind of gone for you?

RUSSELL HENLEY: I've definitely played the best golf of my life probably the last year and a half, two years and I'm kind of having to relearn how to finish tournaments a little bit, just haven't been the most confident guy under pressure coming down the stretch. I feel like last week was a pretty good building block for me and played pretty steady on Sunday. Just going to try to keep doing it. I feel good with every part of my game, I think it's just a matter of just believing it a little bit more.

Q. Last question, where do you need to find maybe that belief you maybe had a few years back possibly?

RUSSELL HENLEY: I think I put myself in position so much more now than I used to. You're not always going to close it out and win a tournament, so I think it just comes from experience and I think this game is not always the best for your head. It can be stressful. There's not a big difference between playing really well and playing average out here, it's a fine line. I think we just, we all put a lot of pressure on ourselves, so I think my belief in my game kind of comes in waves. I go through months where I feel great about it and I go through months where I just don't feel good about it. I wish I had a good answer for you, but it's golf, it's a hard game, it's hard to always feel good about it.

Q. Russ, congrats on a great opening round, eight birdies, no bogeys. Everything was working for you today, wasn't it?

RUSSELL HENLEY: Yeah, I felt pretty steady, hit it really well off the tee, gave me a lot of

shots from the fairway, which you've got to get them in the fairway here to attack some pins, and feel like my putting as well, I was hitting my lines, had some nice reads. Didn't really put myself in too much trouble.

Q. The conditions were very favorable. I haven't seen it quite like this maybe ever.

RUSSELL HENLEY: Yeah, I've never seen it this calm, but the greens were perfect on Plantation. I'm sure they're the same at Seaside. You can get after it if you're hitting it well.

Q. You're a University of Georgia guy, you've played here a lot for the SEC Championships. Is that an advantage for you Bulldogs?

RUSSELL HENLEY: I think so. I mean, I played Seaside a lot of times. The more you can see that course, the better. There's a lot of, you know, little small swales and things you need to know about. I've played in a lot of wind, too, a lot of different winds, so it's definitely helped.

Q. And tomorrow the wind should pick up a little. That's probably what you're expecting at Seaside, right?

RUSSELL HENLEY: Oh, yeah, I think it's going to be hard the next three days. I think it's going to be a lot different than today.

Q. Tell me this, a football question. You're a Georgia guy. For your Bulldogs, is this the year? You're going to be undefeated going into the SEC Championship, we know that, right? Is this the year for the Bulldogs?

RUSSELL HENLEY: I hope so. Everything looks good for us. I think we've got to stay healthy and we've got to play well under pressure. I think Alabama is always going to be hard to beat and I think it would be awesome to start with winning an SEC Championship. We've had a heck of a season and everything looks pretty good.

Q. How big is that going to be, Alabama-Georgia?

RUSSELL HENLEY: I've been nervous thinking about it all year. When you play great, you've got to play against the best teams.