

**PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW**  
**November 9, 2022**



**SAHITH THEEGALA**

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**DOUG MILNE:** Like to welcome new, relatively new Houston resident Sahith Theegala.

Sahith, thanks for joining us for a few minutes, making your second start in the Cadence Bank Houston Open. Just some thoughts on being back here and what life is like as a Houston resident.

**SAHITH THEEGALA:** Yeah, it's pretty cool. This is obviously the first time that it feels like a hometown game for me. Great job this year of just improving the course already, like the course conditions are really, really good this year and I think that's going to make for an even better tournament.

But I'm very excited because I'm going to have a pretty big turnout, family and friends and all that. It's just good vibes, stay in your own bed. It's a little far, it's probably a 40-minute drive with no traffic, like 50 minutes with traffic, but it's still close enough where it's like it feels completely like a home game.

Yeah, it's nice to have that little advantage of sleeping in your own bed. There's not many weeks, not many guys that can do that.

**DOUG MILNE:** You have a big group following you no matter where we go, so I can't wait to see what turns up this week. One more question from me, then we'll talk to these guys. Coming off a strong year, made it all the way to the TOUR Championship, come out this season, top-5 finishes in two of yours first four starts, so obviously you're keeping that going. How confident are you feeling about your game right now?

**SAHITH THEEGALA:** Yeah, I think I've said this so much that I just keep using it as momentum and I'm not really thinking about it too much. It's just kind of like the same progress I made last year and leading up into last year, I feel like I'm just trying to keep on that same trend and not really thinking about the results and stuff like that. Just want to make sure my game just keeps getting better and I'm working on the right kind of things.

Yeah, it was really great to start off the year like I did this year. It just kind of, because like everything that I accomplished last year was incredible. And then the best part of golf in my opinion is that it's just wiped off, you start clean slate again and you have some doubts and stuff creep in your mind like can I keep it up, can I kind of play the same way I was playing last year, and to start off that way just really kept my confidence high. And again, I just feel like everything's kind of a bonus and every week's another great opportunity. I'm very excited for this week and next week.



**DOUG MILNE:** We need to bottle that attitude, that's fantastic.

**SAHITH THEEGALA:** Yeah, hopefully I don't lose the attitude anytime soon.

**Q. Well, welcome home.**

**SAHITH THEEGALA:** Thanks, Dale.

**Q. Can you tell a little bit about your history? I read someplace that you had an aunt that lived in The Woodlands when you were a child?**

**SAHITH THEEGALA:** Yeah, yeah.

**Q. Can you just expand on the decision to move here from Los Angeles? Obviously I saw where you said it was really convenient, et cetera. Childhood memories, those kind of things, golfing memories?**

**SAHITH THEEGALA:** I think I just remember -- my dad's sister lived here for quite some time, I'd say if I had to guess maybe eight years, and it was during my kind of middle school, high school time. So I would come over during the summer and play a couple tournaments, hang out for a couple weeks. I remember playing the Junior Am at Carlton Woods, 2014. Stayed at my aunt's house and played a couple AJGAs at The Woodlands.

I know from them how cool of a place The Woodlands is, and I really liked Houston and just kind of the vibe. Then my college teammate was also from here. He lives up in The Woodlands, and he was a senior when I was a freshman. So I actually live with him now. His name's Fred Wedel.

So I had just like random connections to that area and eventually he told me about how good the golf is, how good the weather is and just like how easy it is to travel. I was having 10-hour travel days from California, so I've probably saved three days of my life just this year traveling out of Houston versus California.

Yeah, there's a lot of bonuses. Obviously the golf is great. I got a couple other buddies to move out in The Woodlands, now we have a really good group to play out there, too. Yeah, so the last six months has just kind of culminated.

**Q. What's your favorite course out there and what's your history on this course?**

**SAHITH THEEGALA:** Yeah, so I play out of the Woodlands Country Club and I play both the courses, the Nicklaus and the Player course and they're great. I'd say Player's my favorite of those two.

And then my favorite in the area is probably Champions Golf Club, that place is awesome. I know they had the U.S. Women's Open there just a little while ago. Yeah, that place is



really, really good.

And then out here, my only experience is playing last year. I came out here -- I didn't even come out here, I came out here Sunday, but yeah, that's my only experience on this course.

**Q. You were already living here last year?**

**SAHITH THEEGALA:** No, I stayed --

**Q. So it was not a hometown tournament last year?**

**SAHITH THEEGALA:** No, but the thing is I ended up staying for like 10 days last year at the same place. So I stayed at my buddy's house and now I moved into my buddy's house. Then the year before I did a Monday qualifier and I just came out here and practiced and just kind of lived with those guys for like two weeks.

**Q. Can you tell us what his name is again?**

**SAHITH THEEGALA:** Fred Wedel.

**Q. Who do you spell his last name?**

**SAHITH THEEGALA:** W-E-D-E-L. And the guy who owns the house is Matt Eschenburg. He's a -- he teaches golf now, but he also used to play.

**Q. Which neighborhood are you in?**

**SAHITH THEEGALA:** We're in Creekside by -- just south of Creekside. I don't remember actually.

**Q. You said you had some other players come over, move with you. Who else did you get you said up at The Woodlands?**

**SAHITH THEEGALA:** Yeah. So a couple of my childhood golf buddies, Blake Petrill and Derek Castillo, they got out here. And then another teammate, Clay Feagler, he's out at The Woodlands, too. So we've got a good crew, and there was already a good crew out there. Steele, Fred, Jose, there's a lot of guys that have Korn Ferry, and Bronson. And guys on Tour, too. Patrick Reed's out there. There's a lot of guys out there, so it's cool.

**Q. You know the PGA TOUR is changing the schedule next fall. Will you have a tournament to play here next fall or will you be playing here next fall?**

**SAHITH THEEGALA:** Sorry, can you repeat that?

**Q. I said the PGA TOUR is changing their schedule for next fall.**



**SAHITH THEEGALA:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Q. Do you think you'll even have a tournament to play here next year or do you think you'll be playing here in the fall?**

**SAHITH THEEGALA:** Honestly, I have not looked at the schedule for next fall. I just kind of looked at the schedule for next spring kind of. I haven't looked that far ahead. But yeah, if there's an event in Houston, I would love to play.

I know like the insides of the schedule and then what the fall's going to mean for us next year and moving forward, but I think it's too early. It obviously depends on how I play the rest of the year, too.

**Q. What represents a great season for you this year? You can talk about winning four majors and all that, but what's realistic for you?**

**SAHITH THEEGALA:** Yeah. So I've got that question a lot obviously about just kind of my goals and what I want to accomplish this season.

My answer is I just want to get better in kind of every aspect of the game if that's possible, at least working towards getting better and just trying to stay as healthy as possible. Just because of the kind of, I guess the, I don't know what you would call it, but the trajectory I've been on, like I don't even want to put certain ceilings or I don't even want to say like, oh, my goal is to win. Obviously everyone's goal out here is to eventually win and that would be fantastic, but I'm not too worried about it at all. I just think a successful season this year is trying to stay healthy throughout and get better in every part of the game and feel like I've made progress. I know if I just keep putting that work in that the results are going to come.

**Q. Did you grow up a Dodgers fan or did you become an Astros fan?**

**SAHITH THEEGALA:** Baseball is probably the sport I follow the least. I love sports and I've watched every playoff sport possible, but even watching the Astros was pretty cool obviously living in Houston now.

Yeah, I am a Dodgers fan. It did hurt to -- I'm happy for the city of Houston because now I live here, but yeah, it hurt to see them win a little.

**Q. What would you rather have, a win this week or a 2,000 online rating on chess.com?**

**SAHITH THEEGALA:** Oh, man, a win, a win this week. But I say that because I know how much work both of them takes and obviously winning on PGA TOUR takes a lot more. But I'm not discrediting chess at all, it is the second hardest game I've ever played and you go down just as much of a rabbit hole doing that stuff as playing golf, but yeah, I think I'd take



the win.

**Q. Does the LIV Tour thing affect a player like you? Do you give that much thought? Obviously you grew up wanting to be a PGA TOUR player and now you're --**

**SAHITH THEEGALA:** Yeah, I think no matter what everyone feels about either tour, whatever opinions they have or thoughts they have, I think it affects everyone whether they want to admit it or not.

It's great for the players because it's making the tour more competitive and Tour's more competitive and it's better for the players now. There's more opportunity than ever. Yeah, I've said before, PGA TOUR is my focus and obviously grew up wanting to play on the PGA TOUR and dreamt of all that.

But I have no problems with the other stuff going on. It's just I think it's been made a little bit a bigger deal than most -- honestly, a lot of the players in my -- that I've talked to have not -- I mean, it's great for the players.

It's just unfortunate that -- I will say the unfortunate thing is all the top players in the world aren't playing together anymore. Like we all want to play with Cam and DJ and those guys that are some of the best players in the world and there's no denying that, so it's unfortunate that the talent pool's split a little bit, but I really never give it any thought other than when I'm asked questions about it.

**Q. And you would never -- this is a really good field.**

**SAHITH THEEGALA:** Great field, yeah.

**Q. You're missing a couple guys that might have been here if it hadn't been for the LIV Tour.**

**SAHITH THEEGALA:** Sure, maybe that's the case, but there's just too many good golfers especially in this day and age that the next guy up is going to go ahead and fill that spot and a guy that maybe hasn't had a chance to be that superstar is going to step up into that role because of that. There's just too many golfers, too many good golfers. There's never going to be a lack of superstar power on the Tour.

**Q. With it being kind of a home game like you mentioned, does your routine change at all since you're staying at home or do you try to keep pretty consistent to what you always do?**

**SAHITH THEEGALA:** I try to keep it pretty consistent. Honestly, even living in California last year, like all the California events kind of felt like a mini home game even though I only stayed home one time, I think.



Yeah, I try to keep my routine the same. It's a little bit harder. I feel like for some reason the last couple days I've spent a little bit more time at the course than I normally would, but yeah, routine's pretty much been the same. Feel like I've still eaten out every meal, or eaten here every meal.

Get up at the same times and try and sleep -- it is a little bit harder to sleep earlier. I usually do a really good job of sleeping on time. Here it just feels like too relaxed, like I'm just chatting with my roommates or on Monday I was watching Monday Night Football and stuff like that. But I think it's more of the same, yeah.

**Q. Who will you have out this week? You mentioned the group.**

**SAHITH THEEGALA:** Yeah, just a lot of friends from up in The Woodlands. I know Matt, he teaches, he's a really good teacher, top-50 teacher up at Augusta Pines and he has a bunch of his kids that I've just hit balls with a few times that are coming out. I have some family. I have an uncle and a grandpa, they've never watched me play golf, so this is going to be their first time.

**Q. Where do they live?**

**SAHITH THEEGALA:** In India. They're here for a couple weeks, I think.

**Q. It's like a family reunion, then?**

**SAHITH THEEGALA:** I'm actually not even sure why they're here. I haven't really talked to my parents about that, but my parents just came back from India, so they came with them. My mom's not going to be here, but my dad will be here.

**Q. One final thing, because obviously the people of Houston are still getting to know you, can you talk about your golf provenance, how did you become a PGA TOUR golfer and why?**

**SAHITH THEEGALA:** Yeah, obviously everyone has their own story and mine was I wanted to play golf since I was a kid just watching on TV with my dad. I was like kind of the only one in my family that really played sports. Obviously everyone has that dream, but I definitely saw it become a reality in college. I was like, am I good enough to even try to do this let alone even get to that level? I feel like the progress I made in college was really big for me.

And the kind of the advice I've given a few younger guys is like as long as you feel like you're making progress to a certain goal in college, it doesn't really matter where you start kind of thing and I feel like that was so important to me.

Yeah, after college, I was like, this is my dream and my passion and that almost like put less pressure on me. Like I know it's very -- there's a lot of pressure to meet those dreams and



goals and stuff, but for me it was almost like I have this chance to do it, it's like why not try and do it. It's easier said than done and there's a lot of other aspects to it. I think just having that mindset just freed me up so much.

**Q. But your dad wasn't a golfer, but you watched golf on TV?**

**SAHITH THEEGALA:** Yeah, he'd watch every sport on TV. He still watches cricket, basketball. I think he starts watching football now, too.

**Q. What part of India is your family from?**

**SAHITH THEEGALA:** They're from kind of south central, Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh.

**DOUG MILNE:** Sahith, thanks for your time, we appreciate it.

**SAHITH THEEGALA:** Thanks, Doug

