

GREAT EXUMA CLASSIC

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW

January 16, 2023



SHAD TUTEN (-8)

Q. An awesome day today, 5 under. Walk us through your round and what was going right for you.

SHAD TUTEN: Yeah, I did a lot right. I played to basically what I wanted to do pretty much the whole day and really yesterday, too. Hit a couple bad tee balls yesterday, but today I kind of kept it in play and kept it in front of me and made a couple extra putts today.

Q. Was there a difference in playing it yesterday afternoon versus this morning?

SHAD TUTEN: A little less windy. Basically the same wind, but a little tougher pins. So it plays pretty tricky on the island part of it. Again, I just tried to keep the ball in play and do what I do best and that's just kind of use my short game to my advantage.

Q. We know golf is like a finicky game. You've played out here, this will be the third time; missed the cut the first two times, now you're in contention. So what is the biggest difference do you think between this week and those?

SHAD TUTEN: Honestly, I just wanted to come here and have fun. I've had fun the other two times but I shot a million. It's just nice to be able to be in some heat and some sunshine and the wind. It's just really nice to be back in the Bahamas.

Q. Any cool stories from your offseason, anything fun that you did?

SHAD TUTEN: We went on a casino trip, which was pretty fun. It was my wife's first time going there and my first 10 minutes I hit a jackpot for over 5 grand, so that was pretty cool. She was playing the same machine, which she wasn't very happy about that.

Q. Was she playing it before you?

SHAD TUTEN: Oh, yeah, oh, yeah. I walk over and I'm like, hey, how ya been doing? She's like, I lost a hundred bucks in 10 minutes. Here I go, hit the button and it was five grand.

Q. Where were y'all?

SHAD TUTEN: She was -- we went up to Cherokee, North Carolina, to the Harrah's up there.

Q. Any sort of like prep golf-wise that you did to prepare for this season?

SHAD TUTEN: I played more than I usually would. We had good weather in Aiken and I got to play with all the guys up there a lot, so prep was good. I switched from my company to PXG, so it kind of gave me something to do, so it forced me to kind of be able to practice more. It turned out pretty good.

Q. Using your reflection from last season, was there anything that you wanted to apply and work on for 2023?

SHAD TUTEN: Yeah, my iron play was the big kind of iffy for me. My driver was always pretty good, I'm a great putter, but I just needed to hit more greens. That was kind of the focal point for me. It's going well so far, yeah.

Q. Last question from me is No. 18, so we know it can be a tricky hole, so the next two days that will be your final hole coming down the stretches. Walk us through what it's like to play 18 and what's your mindset on the tee.

SHAD TUTEN: Yeah, so for the first two days wind was kind of in off the right and I play a little draw off the tee, so it's kind of a pretty, you know, comfortable tee shot for me. And the layup, I've been playing it pretty conservative. I'm not the longest hitter, I just try to keep the ball in play and just keep going.

Q. That's not the first time I've heard people say just try and keep it in play here. I've heard about people hitting stingers or whatever they can to just keep it in play. What about this course makes you have to do that?

SHAD TUTEN: I mean, there's probably, out of the 13 holes that you hit either driver or something other than a par-3, there's probably 10 holes to where if you hit it left to right, you're in the pocket. So you kind of have to really force yourself to keep it in play in order to, you know, score out here.