

THE BAHAMAS GREAT ABACO CLASSIC AT THE ABACO CLUB

ROUND 3 INTERVIEW
January 24, 2023

BEN SILVERMAN (-13)



Q. Another great round today, leading as a sponsor exemption. How would you sum up just the week to this point in time?

BEN SILVERMAN: Man, I'm extremely happy. I was just in the first place very grateful to be given the opportunity for the sponsor exemption. I feel like I deserve it, but I'm very, very grateful. This morning one of the tournament committee guys was giving me a ride up for me to restart my round, I was like, hey, thanks man, I appreciate the invite.

Q. When did you get the call that you were going to get a spot?

BEN SILVERMAN: It was like around end of November, like around Thanksgiving. I was very pumped.

Q. And as a past champion being in this like five to 10 year category, what was your like outlook on the season as a whole when you're sitting there in November before you get a call?

BEN SILVERMAN: My goal is to get back on the PGA TOUR by '24, so it was really just do whatever I can to try to get a start on this tour, reshuffle and give myself a full year of opportunity.

Q. And last year I think you had like half a season. Did you have to like Monday and shuffle in? How did that happen last year?

BEN SILVERMAN: I Mondayed into this tour and April was my first event. It was kind of late in the season. The reshuffle had just happened so I didn't get in until June to another tournament. It was just, didn't quite have the flow of a season, didn't make enough points. Had some good tournaments but not enough to keep my card.

Q. How difficult is it to go like week to week kind of trying to figure out like if you're going to have enough points to get in, if you're going to have enough points to climb the reshuffle? Like what's that like from a mental standpoint?

BEN SILVERMAN: Yeah, it's a mental -- it can be a battle not knowing when you're going to get a start. I've just tried to take the attitude of be ready whenever the opportunity comes up. So I've been training, practicing just as hard as if I have a full season and the opportunity

came, so I feel ready.

Q. What's the one thing that sticks with you about your win from 2017?

BEN SILVERMAN: It's hard to say, I was so flowing, kind of like blacked out during that tournament. I had two back-to-back 9-under rounds. Just knowing that I have the ability to do it really, it gives me a lot of confidence.

Q. What's the mentality going into the final round with the lead? Does it change anything from kind of the prep for this week?

BEN SILVERMAN: I just want to keep doing the same thing I've been doing. I've been relaxing when it's not time to practice and then when it's time to practice I've been really focused. Just trying to be -- working on being in the present moment a little better. Yeah, just keep doing that shot to shot.

Q. We were talking to Rafa earlier, he said coming up 18, started getting nerves again. Does it set in at all, all right, got to keep it going?

BEN SILVERMAN: It's there all day, I'm just working on shaking it off here and there. The thoughts come in and I just have to refocus and focus on the one shot -- I might be on the fifth hole, I can't think about the last hole yet. The thoughts flow in, so I just have to set them aside and get back to work.

Q. I know Zach asked about the sponsor exemption, but any specific connection with Josh or Brooks or these guys?

BEN SILVERMAN: ISCO. Yeah, they're connected with ISCO and I've been on Team ISCO for about five years now.

Q. What -- you know, when did it click in for you that you said I've got to get my PGA TOUR card by 2024 and then coming out here and saying I have to take full advantage of the opportunity I have? I mean, was there a talk with yourself or a moment you remember where you said yep, I'm doing it, this is going to happen?

BEN SILVERMAN: Just I know that I'm good enough and I feel like I let a little bit too much time go by since I've lost my PGA TOUR card back in 2019. So it was more just a mental shift of bearing down, like OK, we're going to change some things, we're going to refocus and work as hard as we did when we first got on Tour and then keep that going for the rest of my career really. It was a mind shift really.

Q. And what's the biggest thing you think you've changed?

BEN SILVERMAN: Working hard on the mental side right now just as much as physically, I'm trying to do that. If I'm putting in putting for half an hour, I'm trying to put in mental side

for half an hour, too. Just keep working on that stuff.

Q. And who would you say has been like the most like crucial member of your support system as you've continued this journey and dropping in some different categories and things like that?

BEN SILVERMAN: There's a lot of people, but it's my wife, like no question about it. She's the No. 1 fan and I talk to her about literally everything. I was feeling nervous yesterday and called her, I'm like I've got butterflies, just I know what I need to think, but just tell me again.