

**ASTARA GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP**  
**Presented by Mastercard**

**ROUND 3 INTERVIEW**  
**February 11, 2023**

**KRIS VENTURA (-10)**

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**Q. Kris, great birdie there at the end to take the solo lead after 54 holes. Just walk us through today and I guess how big that putt was there on 18.**

**KRIS VENTURA:** It was certainly nice to finish with a birdie. Just started the day pretty rough, I guess. All of us started with bogeys. It wasn't easy, so you had to be smart out there. Little by little I started getting back those shots, so I'm really proud that I was able to fight back and shoot under par.

**Q. Yeah, walk me through the course today. Scores weren't super low, you shot 2 under and that puts you in the outright lead. So what was it that made it so tough?**

**KRIS VENTURA:** Just depends. The greens were firm and fast and yeah, you can't be too aggressive, you have to play really smart and take your birdies -- there's only a couple holes where you can make some easy birdies. Other than that, just almost play to the middle of the green and make an easy par.

**Q. So so far in 2023 how have you felt about your game? If you can assess it overall, how's it feeling now this season?**

**KRIS VENTURA:** It's been feeling good lately. Obviously last week wasn't the Sunday I wanted. Yeah, I'm just happy where my game is at and just kind of build on that and hopefully finish better tomorrow.

**Q. Talk about last season a little bit. There was a little bit of a stint where you struggled a little bit with your game. What was going on? How did you come back from that to that season?**

**KRIS VENTURA:** Just once you got out of position off the tee, it's hard to hit it close, so then you're really just trying to make the easiest par you can make. Even then it's pretty tough. It may look like we're grinding out there, but we're just playing smart.

**Q. And your game as far as like last season goes, have you noticed any big changes?**

**KRIS VENTURA:** Yeah. I mean, obviously last year was very tough for me, not the year that I wanted, but I've made some big changes and I'm excited about it. It's almost like if last year didn't happen, I wouldn't be where I am today. I look forward to continuing to play good.



**Q. The only other time you've held the solo 54-hole lead is at the Pinnacle Bank Championship where you did get it done on Sunday. Can you pull anything from that moment and apply it to this week?**

**KRIS VENTURA:** Sure, yeah. I mean, you always want to remember the good moments. I've been in this position before, so I think if I do my job tomorrow, I'll have a good chance.

**Q. If you could pin it on one thing, what's the key to getting it done tomorrow on the Lagos course?**

**KRIS VENTURA:** You know, just play consistent, make easy pars. It's going to be a grind regardless, so if you can not spend as much energy trying to grind for par, then if you can make a couple birdies here and there, you should have a shot.

**Q. What's something that you've learned about yourself in your professional career? I mean, you went to the PGA TOUR, you come back and you're grinding, so getting after it. What's something that you've learned, you're proud of yourself that you've done or anything along those lines?**

**KRIS VENTURA:** It's been tough. Obviously played on Tour a couple years and it's really tough to go back, but I've learned some really valuable things and I don't think I would have if I hadn't gone down. I think long term this will be good for me.

**Q. And overall, I guess, just how it feels having the solo lead going into tomorrow?**

**KRIS VENTURA:** It feels good. It's more fun to see all the kids running around and wanting balls and hats and gloves, that's been the fun part. It's a pretty good crowd.

