

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW
March 30, 2023

M.J. DAFFUE (-4)



Q. Well, let's start from the end and work our way back. Talk to me about 18.

M.J. DAFFUE: Yeah, it was good obviously. I hit a pretty nice drive, didn't get the kick left and just off the fairway. But I thought it was kind of a jumper lie and it was right at the max of my 7-wood and I said I'm going to hit it. If it misses left, it's fine. It came out really nice, finished just over. A little tricky position, but I had it once before today, kind of like a little blade with a gap wedge and I told my caddie, I said I'm feeling this one.

Same thing on 17, I hit such a nice approach shot and stopped it right on the knob and I called Tertius and I said I'm fancying this one and also obviously made it.

It was a good day. I didn't necessarily have all my good ball-striking beginning of the round, and obviously with the rain and everything it was kind of tough, you know. So I've been in positions like this and just told myself like keep grinding. Obviously played hard and just had like a U.S. Open mentality and worked out well.

Q. I know you play golf for a living, that's outdoors so you're used to weather issues, but on a day like this with the start, stop, start, stop, do you have to do something a little bit extra to keep your focus?

M.J. DAFFUE: Yeah, we've had it a few times. I've learned and I've had to train myself to just kind of switch off. I have the family here this week and the fog delay was right when I started my warmup, so it wasn't a big deal. I knew that when play started again, I just need to start my warmup again. So worked out well. Obviously it's going to be a long few days trying to catch up, but we should be fit enough to do it, right?

Q. (No microphone.)

M.J. DAFFUE: I don't know. I mean, obviously that's how golf is. The first hole I hit a nice drive and I judged a lie out of the rough straight into the wind and thought it was going to be a jumper with pitching wedge, came up short right, which is the spot to be. Hit a really nice chip, but there was a little bit of water out there and I didn't get the grab and skidded over and went into the bunker, so made a double.

Then obviously finishing like that, sometimes like last week I hit a hole-in-one, you just make a good swing and then the results, you know, you've got to let go of what the result's going to be and just focus on the process. That's just how golf is. Takes away in the beginning, gives back at the end.



Q. Your short game was excellent, you got up and down eight out of nine times, only 22 putts. M.J., the wand was working.

M.J. DAFFUE: Yeah, I've made a few switches. I got a putting lesson from Hall of Famer Goose, Retief, like the week before Valspar and I was top 3 in putting there. Worked with TaylorMade trying to find something that really complements what me and Retief worked on.

And started implementing AimPoint, figured out I'm really good with it. A lot of guys are doing it. Just kind of took away the whole like I'm trying to make the putt or am I reading it correct. If you do AimPoint and you find, hey, that's the spot, you stand over the ball and you roll it towards the spot. It's taught me that I'm not reading enough line on my putts so I've been missing it on the high side, so it's been going in more often.

Overall short game, it's good that it's improving because I haven't hit the ball as good as I usually do. It's nice to have days where you can make up.

Q. And you played collegiately at Lamar so you've got a little Texas blood in you, right? This would be kind of a special place to win?

M.J. DAFFUE: Yeah, yeah, exactly. I lived in Texas for like, I mean, man, like 14 years now. So we're in Houston now, so it's kind of a home game. I've played here before, I love San Antonio, I love this place, awesome golf course. Like to me it's like a perfect test. Obviously today with the wind, it was even better. Yeah, Texas blood, I love everything Texas. My son is 2-and-a-half and he's a little cowboy, so yeah, everything's good.

