

ROUND 3 QUICK QUOTES
February 17, 2024



WILL ZALATORIS (-12)

Q. Back in the Bahamas you were just so happy to be playing rounds again and talking about how you wanted reps and reps. When do you think you got to a point where you feel like you're close to where you are now? Like when did it kind of turn the corner?

WILL ZALATORIS: Yeah, it's still a conscious effort. Even though I've had some pretty good rounds and some nice stretches this week, it's still -- compared to '22 when I was kind of just putting things in cruise control and contending in majors, there's still pretty big changes.

I used to time things up with my hands really well throughout the golf swing, but it wasn't really that great on my back. Now I'm a lot more rotary, swinging more horizontal. Got both feet kind of flared out, which helps with not kind of locking up both hips so I can get a bigger turn.

I feel really good physically, most importantly, but like I said, it's just going to take a little bit of time to get used to it. I think being in contention is -- that's how you find out where you're at.

Q. Do all those changes, do those have any kind of mental change in how you handle a round, how you attack a course?

WILL ZALATORIS: Yeah, I think it's more of just really making sure that I get the feels behind the ball before I walk into a shot. I don't want to be standing over a shot trying to get -- having any swing thoughts. Just try to get over it, think box, play box type thing.

So really it's been really nice to really try to hone these feels and overdo them in the practice swings and then get over it and just go from there.

Q. We see you looking at the TV a bit, I guess. How do you feel about kind of getting in contention a little bit and what do you think you might need to kind of keep up tomorrow?

WILL ZALATORIS: Yeah, just keep doing what we're doing. Pat's playing some really good golf. Again, this is -- even though this golf course, like I said, the greens are the fastest I've ever seen them and there have been a couple small changes to the greens to add a couple of new pins, it's still got some teeth to it. You can't really fake it around this place.

I got away with a couple of really bad tee shots today and ended up making a few birdies



and a few really nice pars out of it. I've just got to keep doing what I'm doing. Whatever it adds up to, it is what it is.

Q. The other day I know you said no pain and you feel great, but is the recovery different maybe now that your back -- is there anything you're doing post round that maybe you wouldn't have done before?

WILL ZALATORIS: It's just a little bit longer. If any of us go play golf for three weeks in a row and we were to go see a chiropractor, if you're a right-hander, the left shoulder's going to get high, the right's going to go this way.

The difference is with me it could lead to something in my lower back. So I've just got to be really careful and make sure I go through all the protocols after the round.

It's really been pretty much -- like I said, I mean, I know guys say this a lot, but for me it really has been a team effort this week between Landon loosening up my right hip a little bit and my neck to get me turning around the corner a little bit better and Josh kind of found a little something in my setup, and I've been texting Troy back home. It's been a full team effort.

And I've actually got my sports psychologist out here today, so that was kind of fun. I told him my scoring average with him is around 64 and a half, so he's going to need to start traveling a little bit more.

Q. Your putting stats are very good this week, I think you're seventh in putting. With this new style, was it I'm going to give myself X amount of months? Was it you're committed to it for a certain amount of time or just going with how it feels?

WILL ZALATORIS: Yeah, the full story is I was -- after one of my surgeries I was going to be in the hospital for a couple days, so I was kind of just looking around. It was right around the time that Lucas was going on a tear. I had already ordered an arm lock from him and they ended up sending me a couple of broomsticks.

I had five months before I was able to hit balls. Really just being able to go out and just kind of screw around with it, it probably took three to four months to kind of figure out the blueprint for it.

It's just so simple. I get my setup correct and make sure my eyes are over the ball and just rock the shoulders. That's something that simple is really good.

And that's the same thing with the full swing. Even though there's changes, it's just simplicity. We don't need to overwork or overthink things, it's just commit to what we're doing and see what it adds up to.

Q. I notice also that your left hand is like very far from your chest.



WILL ZALATORIS: Yeah.

Q. Like some people you almost can't tell.

WILL ZALATORIS: Yeah.

Q. Is that a conscious decision that we're not going to go anywhere close?

WILL ZALATORIS: No. Actually, I tried the longer ones and I actually didn't like them. It gets me -- since it's a little bit shorter, it gets me a little bit more over the ball.

Yeah, I hear plenty of guys talking about broomstickers being maybe a little too close to your chest.

Q. You don't have that problem?

WILL ZALATORIS: No. I know I'm pretty wiry and may have a drapey, you know, pullover on or something like that and someone might make a comment, but it's a full five, six inches away. Again, it's just whatever works and it's just what felt good.

Q. Psychologically, kind of what are the challenges to returning to playing Sunday golf after being away for a while?

WILL ZALATORIS: Yeah, this is what -- this is what I've missed. I mean, this is go out and play, enjoy being at one of my favorite golf courses we play on Tour. This is my favorite regular season event that we have year in year out. It was the first PGA TOUR event I ever played in 2015 after winning the Showcase and it's a pretty special place.

If anything, you know, whatever happens tomorrow, it is what it is, but I'm really excited of where I'm trending. No. 1 is always making sure that I'm peeking for the majors and I think we're pretty far ahead of schedule.

Q. Do you typically not get nervous before weekend rounds or anything like that?

WILL ZALATORIS: No. I mean, I think the part that's funny is I sleep terrible after Sunday nights after the tournament regardless if I'm in contention or if I win. I always find that funny that I sleep great Saturday night no matter if I'm in the lead, final group of a major or whatever, but Sunday I'll be up till 4:00, 5:00 a.m. just wired, trying to get the adrenaline kind of calmed down. We've got some work to do tomorrow to go get this one.

Q. (No microphone.)

WILL ZALATORIS: Yeah.



Q. Back to the putting just for a quick second, when you talk three or four months of finding the blueprint, how did you find it? Was that trial and error, YouTube?

WILL ZALATORIS: A lot of trial and error. I talked to Sam, the CEO from LAB a little bit about the different ways of how guys use it. The real blueprint that I think the guys that have switched to that really like it are the ones that are kind of copying Adam Scott.

So I feel like that's basically, you know, I've tried different head weights, I've tried different lengths, but like I said, I had five months basically before I was even able to hit a golf ball and going out messing around. So one day it was terrible, so what, come back the next day and try something different.

We still looked at other options, too. I love what I'm doing, there's no question about it, but I think it's -- like I said, it's just been something that's just simplified everything that I'm doing. I just make sure that my eyes are over the ball and I just rock it and that putter's working straight up and down pretty much on a straight line.

I think the biggest change really is just trying to get comfortable with the speed of the greens, especially putting with that heavy of a head. Putting on really, really fast greens, the ball's going to shoot off the face pretty hard. I feel like maybe before if I had a putt that was two feet downhill, I may be looking closer to four now just to be comfortable with it and I can be more confident with the stroke.

Q. I'm just curious since every person who's spoken to the press this week says Riviera's their favorite course, do you have a second favorite?

WILL ZALATORIS: Man, Memphis.

Q. So we'll ask you in Memphis what's your favorite course and it will be --

WILL ZALATORIS: Yeah, probably Memphis. Yeah, no, Memphis and here always. This was my first Tour event I ever played in so it's special no matter what.

Q. Will, the TV cameras used to, when you were putting with your other putter before, used to focus on those low shots and there was kind of that half difference. Did you focus on correcting that path or did this putter correct that?

WILL ZALATORIS: It kind of did it to itself. I mean, you know, anytime that I got really off, especially with the short ones, I was really struggling with my back.

You know, I kept it rather quiet for about two years that I was kind of battling it week in, week out. Even through '22 when I went on my run, I mean, hopping out of the car at the U.S. Open in the final group I was hurting pretty bad but I'm not going to say anything about it.

Like I said, this one, this one, using big muscles just makes it so easy. You know, still, like I



said, it took me five, six months of work. So if guys say like hey, this is something that's -- you know, I don't know about this, I don't know about that, like it doesn't mean that, you know, it's better for somebody else. It's just, like I said, I just -- I personally, I wouldn't call having the back surgery lucky, but having that time off to just work on it made it really easy.

Q. And you made a couple long ones this week earlier in the week, you made some long ones. How good does that feel as far as getting that speed down and was -- were lengthy putts an adjustment?

WILL ZALATORIS: Yeah, definitely. I think because, like I said, my eyes are -- basically my neck is 90 degrees over the ball, so when I'm looking up at a putt and I'm looking at something from 50 feet and you're looking out of your left eye, it looks like it's a hundred yards away. We've been spending a lot of time at home working on lag putting and so far it's paid off.

