

ROUND 3 QUICK QUOTES
April 6, 2024



AKSHAY BHATIA (-15)

Q. Akshay, another good round, one away. Just what you felt good about today?

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah, I hit it solid, iron play was still really good. A couple short, you know, a couple short game shots that I wish I could have probably executed a little bit better, but you're never going to get everything up and down. I stayed patient all day today, hit a lot of good putts. Speed was a little better today, which was nice. I made a lot of those key three-, four-, five-footers.

Q. You said you mentioned keeping the ball in front of you was really strong today. How much did that do for you just to kind of keep yourself calm?

AKSHAY BHATIA: I was never calm today and it was the hardest thing to deal with. It's just so hard, you feel so tense and all these things in your stomach, your mind can kind of go one way. I kept to my game plan. I tried to talk as much as I could to my caddie. That wait on 18 was honestly a blessing in disguise, just kind of relaxing a little bit, not worrying too much about that tee shot. I played it pretty nicely.

Q. How confident are you with keeping your mental part -- you've talked all week about how important that is keeping that in check. I know you're nervous, you said that. Do you feel pretty good though about where you are with it?

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah. I mean, I was talking to my psychologist last night and even this morning, just all the stories that what could happen, what if I lose the lead, what if this lead goes to 10. So many things are in your mind.

There's a couple things that he told me that really stuck and I just truly stuck to what I was trying to do this week start of the week and my goals for future months to come. Whether I win tomorrow or not, it's closer to my goal of where I want to be in a couple months.

Q. I saw you writing something on your wrist before the round. Is that related?

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah, it is. Whatever it may be for the day, I write it on my wrist. I just, I look at it all the time. It's funny, a couple people saw it I guess and said it, so it's pretty cool.

Q. Is it something you can tell us what it is?

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah, it just says "race my race." I'm just going at my own pace, focusing on myself, keeping the blinders right in front of me. I look at that all the time because you can get caught up in a lot of things out here and if I'm just kind of doing my own



thing and trying not to let outside stuff bother me, then I just can focus on myself and whatever the outcome is, it is.

Q. Do you think you would have been able to do that six months ago?

AKSHAY BHATIA: It's hard to say.

Q. You've grown a lot.

AKSHAY BHATIA: I've learned a lot, especially last week I learned a lot, what I could -- what kind of held me back from winning the golf tournament. So just being in this position, being in contention a lot more, it helps you understand what you need to do to kind of get it done.

Q. What would winning this tournament mean for you?

AKSHAY BHATIA: Just, you know, if I win, that's great. I mean, it gets me closer to my goal. Yeah, it doesn't mean the world to me. I didn't grow up playing on the PGA TOUR necessarily to win just PGA TOUR events, I grew up playing and dreaming of winning majors. That's kind of my main focus for the years to come.

Q. (Inaudible) you spoke with this morning?

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah.

Q. Can you explain generally what you two are working on right now?

AKSHAY BHATIA: Just a lot of life stuff. I've struggled a lot with a lot of just -- not golf but just life. At my age, it's so hard being 22 out here. This lifestyle may look great from the outside, but it's a lot more to deal with, a lot more factors go into just the business side of it. I'm just going to work my way around it, try to figure out what path works for me and just try to stay true to that.

Q. I'm a bit struck by how open you are about the anxiety of your work. I think a lot of professionals resist that sort of openness, but you seem to embrace it. Why is that?

AKSHAY BHATIA: I'm just true to myself. I've never had an easy life growing up, so anytime anyone sees that, oh, this kid's making a ton of money, he's playing on the PGA TOUR, he's won on the PGA TOUR, that's just not it. There's so much more to it than just the golf.

For guys coming up from PGA TOUR U or Nick Dunlap, for instance, winning on the PGA TOUR, like there's going to be a lot for them to learn and hopefully being peers with them, it kind of can help them along the way and kind of grow up faster.



Q. Does it help you somehow to talk about it so openly?

AKSHAY BHATIA: I don't know. I mean, I'd rather speak it to someone than not at all. I love sharing my story, I love being honest and whether I get hate for it or not, doesn't matter. I just -- it's kind of who I am and who I try and be.

