

ROUND 4 QUICK QUOTES
April 7, 2024



AKSHAY BHATIA (-20, won in a playoff)

Q. Akshay, congratulations. You slept on the lead for three nights in a row, Denny McCarthy threw a 28 at you on that back nine. What are you most proud of in how you handled everything that came your way this week?

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah, I just stuck to my game plan. I played great today, I kind of got the goal that I had in mind today.

And Denny played unbelievable. You've got to give him credit. It's hard because he's one of the best putters out here and when you see him get hot, it's scary because I had a six-shot lead going into the back nine and all of a sudden we're tied going into 18. Of course he makes that putt and man, what a crazy day.

Q. And then we saw you favoring your shoulder on the 72nd hole after the celebration. You called for a trainer. What happened?

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah, so this shoulder I've had some issues with and yeah, when I made that putt and I kind of raised my arm, it kind of came out of socket and went back in. Thankfully he was still around and taped it up good and it felt good hitting that wedge shot. I appreciate Aki very much.

Q. Ten years ago you played in the inaugural Drive, Chip & Putt National Finals. With this win you're on your way to the Masters. What are you most looking forward to as your life comes full circle?

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah, just celebrating. This is awesome. It's hard to win out here as it showed today. My mom's birthday was on April 1 and her wish was to get into the Masters, so I hope I make her proud.

Q. Akshay, it's a simple first question: What just happened over the last 25 minutes or last two hours? What an incredible drama-filled finish that was. Congratulations, but an interesting show to say the least.

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah, Denny played unbelievable. It's tough, he's one of the best putters out here. Yeah, it's scary how good he played. To shoot 8 under on the back is like unheard of. You think he might miss one, but it was awesome to see that. It made me feel like, OK, I really need to step up here, I can't just cruise in.

I did such a good job just coming out, sticking to my game plan. I still had to shoot 5 under to just get into a playoff, so it was pretty crazy.



Q. You've talked so much about how much you've learned from failure. You didn't fail at all today, but Denny charged at you, your shoulder pops out in celebration, you had to deal with a lot to get this win. Can you describe what that was like to deal with that?

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah, I mean, it's hard. I felt so uncomfortable all day today. I got off to a great start and kind of just tried to stick as much as I could to my game plan, but when you see someone charging at you and you're playing with him, it's really hard because you feel like you're just slipping away.

And like, you know, this golf course, there's so many hard shots and the wind direction was so different today. It was just incredible just to be able to be in this position.

Q. Professional journey started a few years ago, you've now won twice out here to be the first Drive, Chip & Putt participant to ever make it back to the Masters. You said you were tired, seven weeks. I think you're going to play eight weeks now. What an incredible run this has been.

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah, no, just keep on going, I guess. It's pretty crazy, but it hasn't even sunk in. I'm looking forward to eating some good food tonight and you know, getting over to Augusta tomorrow.

