

U.S. Open Championship 2018

Sunday, June 17, 2018

Tony Finau

Flash Interview

THE MODERATOR: Next on the flash podium is Tony Finau, Tony was plus 2 today and plus 5 for the Championship.

TONY FINAU: Thanks.

Q. Had to have been one of the best plus 2s you've ever shot. It was tough out there, I imagine.

TONY FINAU: Yeah, it was tough. I don't know what it is with this golf course. I can never get off to a good start. It was a shaky start this morning or this afternoon, my first five holes -- I guess first four holes. But it was that way every round. I don't know what the deal was. I couldn't get off to a good start any of the rounds.

I was proud of the way I fought and, you know, had an outside chance coming down the stretch. I gave myself good looks, 15, 16, 17. I hit some good putts that didn't go in. Sometimes that's the rub of the green.

Unfortunate what happened on 18, but to post my first top five in a Major this week is pretty cool.

Q. On this golf course, where you see some of the top players in the world going home before the weekend, what does it mean for you?

TONY FINAU: My game is built for championship golf. I make a lot of birdies. Sometimes the cost of making birdies, sometimes there are some mistakes, which kind of bit me in the butt this week. I think I had four doubles throughout the week. So kind of unfortunate there.

But my game seems to bode well on tough golf courses. I have a pretty good Major Championship record, and something I'm definitely pretty proud of.

Q. What was the key to getting you back on track after the slow start?

TONY FINAU: Just know there's still a lot of golf to be played. I played so well yesterday. I told myself it doesn't matter what kind of start we get off to today, whether it was a great start or a bad start, there's going to be so much -- it's going to be such a long day out there. So many things can happen. There's disaster waiting on every hole.

So, you know, honestly, I'm a pretty mellow guy. I don't really panic when I play. So even though I got off to a



bad start, it kind of serves me well when I just kind of do my thing and just try and fight back.

Q. Tony, (no microphone) what experience means. He's played in a ton of these things before. To now have a tournament like this under your belt, where you have been in the hunt, you're right there, right on the end of Sunday, what does that do for you in terms of your confidence that you can come out here and prevail and win a Major Championship?

TONY FINAU: It's huge for my confidence. This is the first Major Championship where I was really in contention. I've had a couple of top ten finishes, but not really anywhere near the leaderboard or near the top. This is the first time I got a taste of the final group, and coming down the stretch, having a chance to try and catch Brooks, it was a lot of fun for me.

I hit some nice shots and had some opportunities. But, you know, it's a huge part for my confidence just moving forward, knowing that I've been there, been in that situation, and I have the game to play against the best players in the world on some of the toughest courses.

Q. Back to back, what Brooks just did, it hasn't been done since Curtis Strange did it in '89.

TONY FINAU: Incredible. It's a reason why he's the champion. When I looked at the scoreboard all day, just chasing him all day. Incredible player. The way he can strike a golf ball is incredible, honestly.

So, you know, he's playing with a lot of confidence, and you're the champion until proven otherwise. He definitely played like the champion this week.

Q. How did the spotlight of the final group live up to what you expected, and how do you feel like you handled that?

TONY FINAU: It was great. It was everything I expected. The cool thing is it's the first final group of a Major. It's not the first final group I've been in in a golf tournament. So I think I tried to use some of the experience to my advantage.

But I knew I was playing pretty well coming in. I like the mentality I have playing tough golf courses, just staying patient with myself. I know I can go on runs on any golf course. I proved that to myself this year out

here, even on a tough golf course.

Even though I started behind the 8 ball, I knew I could get on a run. I just needed to cap off a birdie sooner than later. I was able to do that on 5 and kind of ride some momentum throughout the round.

Q. What was yesterday afternoon like for you, Tony, in terms of posting your number and then seeing everyone kind of come back to you?

TONY FINAU: It was nuts. When I finished, I was in tenth place. D.J. had just teed off when I finished. To be honest, I was expecting him to, you know, maybe give a couple back. But I would never even have dreamed of being in the final group and playing -- my first time playing in a Major in a final group. I didn't think I would have been leading under any circumstance, honestly.

But the golf course was playing extremely tough yesterday afternoon. Watching the guys come back to me was crazy. But, you know, that's Major Championship golf, and sometimes you post a good round early.

I mean, we saw Tommy Fleetwood today. I don't know what time he finished, a couple hours before we did, the final group. Seems like you get off to a good start early, and you can kind of run with it on these type of golf courses. Myself and Danny did it yesterday. Fleetwood did that today. Ran himself right up the leaderboard and just about won the golf tournament.

Q. You're trying to win a Major this afternoon, but two top tens in Majors will put you in the Ryder Cup discussion. Have you had any thoughts about that?

A. I haven't thought about that much. I just came off the green 20 minutes ago. Reflecting on the week, it's a cool thing. It's a goal of mine to be on the team. I haven't won this year. That's something I want to do.

But hopefully, just proving to the captains, whether I play myself onto that team or not, that, you know, I step up on the big stage and I can compete.

Q. Thanks, Tony.

TONY FINAU: Thanks, guys.