

**ROUND 1 INTERVIEW**  
**September 21, 2018**



**JERRY SMITH (-7)**

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**CHRIS RICHARDS:** Jerry, congratulations on a great start. Let's go back to the first tee and the atmosphere. Describe the atmosphere and then the crowd support that you experienced throughout your round.

**JERRY SMITH:** Well, it was a wonderful atmosphere. It really felt a little bit like a different tournament, I mean, than we're used to. I was a little surprised at how receptive the people here were for us. They did a great job. I mean, everything I've seen so far, you know. I was in here for media day and to see the golf course and how different it is and the grandstands, I knew it would be well attended. Just a really good look out there, very pleased with that. I really knew the golf course would kind of hold its own with all this wet weather.

Yeah, it was fun playing with Tom. I got to do it a couple years ago in Des Moines myself, so kind of knew a little bit what to expect. And Calc being a Nebraska guy as well, it was great. I think it helped -- I feel like it helped maybe me a little bit, I don't know, just seeing how things played out. You know, I enjoyed being in the middle of it.

**CHRIS RICHARDS:** Tom mentioned the putter was your friend today.

**JERRY SMITH:** Yeah.

**CHRIS RICHARDS:** Is that assessment true?

**JERRY SMITH:** Yeah. I mean, I really -- I've been driving the ball decent here of late and I drove it pretty well again today. With my irons and especially when you've got the ball in your hand and you're teeing the ball up and the par 3s, I just hit a lot of really, really poor, you know, iron shots today. It wasn't like I was hitting a lot of things close and it was an easy 6-under round, I mean other than maybe say there on 18 I finally hit a good approach. I made two long eagle putts and I would say that was -- that really kind of kickstarted me on No. 4. Then I made a few good short ones there early on just to keep things going. But the two eagles, definitely. Besides that, I know I made two or three other putts that were outside of 20 feet.

**Q. Can you talk about that putt on 4? It seemed like you were, I don't know, I'm not going to say shocked, but maybe surprised a little bit that that went in?**

**JERRY SMITH:** Well, yeah. You know, that was a good 60, 70 feet, I think. About halfway there I felt like the speed was pretty good, and then just as it kept climbing the hill, first it felt like it might be a little too aggressive and firm, but as it went up there it just seemed to slow down. And then when it did catch the hill breaking left there, you know, it looked like it was

going to go in. But I was glad -- it did hit the flag going pretty good, so I'm thinking the flag helped it.

**Q. It was in the center all the way, wasn't it?**

**JERRY SMITH:** It was center, yes.

**Q. To play in that first group and obviously Tom being from South Dakota, you all kind of have roots around the midwest, these parts. Did that kind of help to have those eyes on you? Tom said it was kind of different pressure that you felt. Did it help to have the eyes on you?**

**JERRY SMITH:** For me, I know when I play in Des Moines I do feel a little added pressure. You want to do well. Obviously it's a goal to win in front of your home crowd, so to speak. So for me, you know, I mean I'm not from here, but I feel close by. I just used it as a -- I used it like I've been there before with the experience in Des Moines. Yeah, for me I think it helped keep myself a little calmer.

Once you hit that first shot and get out there, you kind of -- you know, a lot of that stuff does go away. I know Tom and all of us, we put added pressure on ourselves when we are playing in front of the hometown. I saw last week, Tom Gillis, who's had a couple of great weeks out here and got an exemption in Michigan where he's from, it's just difficult. He didn't play very well. I don't know why it happens more times than not like that. We all want to be that Cinderella story type thing, but it usually doesn't work that way.

**Q. Apart from the putt on No. 4, was there a point in the round where you thought, wow, I could put together something pretty nice today?**

**JERRY SMITH:** Well, I wasn't really thinking that way at really any point. I thought it played difficult with the cool weather and the wind out there. I was just trying -- honestly, I was just trying to hit some good shots and I really wasn't with the irons. Like I said, I'm definitely going out to the driving range and try to work on something because I just really didn't like the way I hit them today.

You know, just the putter was the big difference for me, I just felt good with it all day, especially say outside of 10, 15 feet where I felt like I was a lot. But just trying to hold together.

The eagle I think -- the two eagles that I made, at the time those really kind of got my round started and then kept my round going back there on the 12th hole.

**Q. Your media day experience, did that inspire you today?**

**JERRY SMITH:** Well, it was nice to come over here. I know Greg Conrad from Des

Moines, he was their old tournament -- the Principal tournament director. Yeah, I know Hollis and his group, so I know a lot of people involved with the event. Like I said, Sanford's been wonderful, and the people on Tuesday night, it's just been fantastic. It's unfortunate with the weather, but we'll have some good years down the road, I'm sure.

**Q. You mentioned not being that happy with your iron shots, but on 18 you ended up on a pretty good note, put it right up there. That's probably, I'm guessing, one of your easier birdie putts of the day. Just to end on a good note there, how important was that for you to take that momentum going into tomorrow?**

**JERRY SMITH:** Yeah, it's important. The two best iron shots I hit today were on 9 and 18 and they were both 9-irons and I had a good yardage, I guess. I was comfortable with the shot and both those approaches I hit rather close. But besides that, I just was not happy at all with a lot of the approach shots.

No question, I mean, making birdie there at the last was definitely a good finish after making a really poor bogey back on the one that they shortened today, 14 I guess. So yeah, we'll go with that, we'll try to keep the putter -- maybe sleep with the putter tonight and hopefully I'll find something on the range.

**CHRIS RICHARDS:** Thanks, Jerry. Good luck tomorrow.

**JERRY SMITH:** You got it.