

MARK O'MEARA (-8)

Q. So eight straight birdies?

MARK O'MEARA: Yeah, I think that might be a record for me, to be honest with you. Maybe one other time in my career I made eight birdies.

Look, I played well on the front. I hit some good drives, I hit some good iron shots, I made the putts that you would hope to make. And then I hit a 3-iron to about two inches on hole No. 7, birdied 8, and then 9 I hit a big curling putt.

To be fair, I had chances on the back nine. I had a birdie putt on 10. 11, I really didn't. 12, I did. 13, I did. 14, I made a good save. You know, bogeying the last hole, I hit a poor drive. If you pull it and draw it off that tee, you're going to be in the water and that's what I did. But I was proud, I hit a good 4-iron for my third shot and I felt like I hit a good putt but it just came up just short.

Anytime you shoot 7 under, I guess you can't be too disappointed, but certainly when you're 8 under after nine holes, you would like to do a little better.

Q. You're not the first one to hit it in the water on 18.

MARK O'MEARA: Yeah, no, 18's a tough hole. It's a very demanding hole. You've got to get up there and trust your swing and you've got to hit a good drive. There's plenty of room out there, but you've just got to hit the shot and I didn't. But it's the first round, at least it's a good round. Gives me a chance to hopefully play well on Saturday and Sunday and hopefully play well on Sunday afternoon.

Q. What club did you hit off the tee on 18?

MARK O'MEARA: I hit driver. Yeah, it was into the wind, so it's playing pretty long. I think it's 465 or 470, so I've got to hit driver.

Q. Do you have a particular strategy on that hole?

MARK O'MEARA: Not really. I think you've just got to stand up there and try to hit a straight ball or maybe a little bit of a cut. I drove the ball pretty well all day, so it was disappointing not to hit the better drive on 18. You know, I felt fairly decent over it, but I just hit a poor shot.

Q. How have you been playing coming into this week?

MARK O'MEARA: I've had mostly 32nd to 37th finishes my first three tournaments. My preparation for this week was riding my snowmobile on Saturday in Park City. I rode my sled on Monday up in the back country and I never hit a ball last week.

A lot of times if I come off of riding my snowmobile or I come off of a steelhead trip fly fishing, swinging the fly for steelhead, I usually play pretty good. So if I stay home and practice all week, I usually don't play as well. So I'm just that kind of a guy.

I think, though, in any tournament, whether it's this tour or any other tour, you have to putt well to be in contention. I made some nice putts when I needed to out there on the front nine and I just needed to make a few more putts on the back nine.

Q. The guys were saying the greens were a little slow.

MARK O'MEARA: Yeah, no, no, they are, they're a little bit slow. In fairness, there's a lot of slope on some of the greens. That 18th green's got severe pitch from back to front. There's just not a lot of easy putts on that last green.

A lot of holes, 16's the same. But we have such good weather and the course is in really pretty good shape, so you just have to go out there and play a little better, even tomorrow.

Q. Mark, any nine-hole stretch in your career, do you remember that --

MARK O'MEARA: I don't think I've ever had eight birdies in a row. Maybe, maybe one other time, but I think seven's kind of what I've had in my career one time, seven, so I think today is a first. It's kind of neat, you know, at 62 and still competing and playing a great game, and to make eight birdies in a row, any day you do that's a good day.

Q. You tied for most consecutive birdies on the Champions Tour.

MARK O'MEARA: Yeah, that's kind of cool.

Q. You're one of five to have done that.

MARK O'MEARA: That's kind of cool. And I hit a good putt on 10. I had it about 12, 13 feet behind the hole and I hit a good putt, it just missed on the low side. Tomorrow's another day. Today's history. I'll go putt a few, get something to eat, hang out, and hopefully tomorrow I can play just as well.

Q. Given the conditions out here, do you think it's going to take a really low score to win this tournament?

MARK O'MEARA: Yeah, I think so. I mean, these guys are so good out here still. They still play so well and there's a lot of wedges in your hands because of the par 5s. If you're

accurate with your distance control and you putt pretty well, there's no reason you can't shoot a good score out here. I wouldn't be surprised if the winning score isn't 17, 18, 19 under par.

Q. What's your outlook then heading into the weekend?

MARK O'MEARA: I mean, tomorrow, my key for me is to drive the ball well, put it in the fairway. If I do that, I've hit my irons pretty well, just try to make some putts. If you miss a green, try to make sure you get the ball up and down. Try to eliminate bogeys and eliminate a big mistake. Listen, all you can do is the best you can do.