

Second-Round Transcripts | The Panamá Championship | Friday, February 4, 2022

Taylor Montgomery (-8, Solo Leader)

City Plays From: Las Vegas, Nevada | Turned Pro: 2017 | College: University of Nevada-Las Vegas
Exempt Status: Top 75 in 2020-21 Regular Season Standings (thru 2022)

On shooting a bogey-free round and how he felt today...

"It was good. The last two days, I've hit a lot of good shots and a lot of bad ones, but I've been really good off the tee so far. Just have to clean up a few wedges, but that's being picky. I mean, it's so hot out here. It's sometimes hard to think."

On one thing that worked better today compared to the first round...

"Definitely putting. I've got a couple new drills putting and it's felt really good, especially with greens that I struggle on like thick Bermuda. But I've done a really good job the last two days."

On the course playing tougher in the second round than the first...

"Yeah, each day there are a couple holes where the pins are harder. You have to pick and choose your shots that you want to be aggressive on. I have a local caddie this week and he plays out here all the time, and he's helped me a lot with green reading and shots into the green."

On saying before that he just wants to have fun with the game...

"Yeah, I've definitely been having fun. There's been a lot of joking around the last couple days, so I think that's helped."

On what celebrity he'd choose to play with at the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am...

"I don't even know who's in the tournament to be honest. If I could pick (anybody)? It'd probably be Bill McClain, my sponsor. He's helped me out before golf and during golf, and he helped me get a lot of guys, sponsor-wise, to start my golf career."

On how he plans to spend the rest of the day off...

"Not much, maybe just a shower and watch TV or something."

On dipping his hands in ice water to cool off...

"My hands sweat so much. Well, I sweat in general here like crazy. Sometimes I go through two or three gloves a day. Dipping in the water just helps. [Laughs] It just cools them off. It cools your body down."

On the course conditions yesterday compared to today...

"Yesterday during the afternoon, the conditions get a lot drier and firmer. This morning, some of the approach shots were spinning back so the greens were pretty soft. Some parts of the greens get firm in the afternoon, some don't, so it gets really tricky where you want to land it."

On if the temperature and humidity are much different than yesterday...

"Oh yeah, both are terrible [laughs]."

Jimmy Stanger (-7, T2)

City Plays From: Tampa, Florida | Turned Pro: 2017 | College: University of Virginia
Exempt Status: Top 75 in 2020-21 Regular Season Standings (thru 2022)

On his performance in the second round...

"I grinded well. Today was a really good day of not having your best stuff and getting through it. Still in contention going into the weekend so I'm happy about it."

On the differences between yesterday and today...

"Probably just what I was working on. Iron game was not near as sharp as yesterday. So where yesterday, I had a lot of 10-, 15-footers for birdie, today, I had a lot of 5-footers for par. Trying to get up and down from everywhere... it was a good stress test, and we're in a good spot for the weekend."

On how he plans to spend the rest of the afternoon off...

Man, I'm tired, so I'm going to go back and take a nap. I do have some work to do so I'll probably head to the range here for an hour and then head back, take a nap, go to the gym. Just try to get the body ready for another hot, long day tomorrow.

On how he marks his golf balls...

"I mark my golf ball with the initials 'H.A.' They're for my childhood best friend growing up, his name's Harris Armstrong. From five years old when he moved into my neighborhood to when I was about 12 years old, we played golf every single day together. We played Greater Tampa Junior Golf tournaments. We played beginning stages of Florida Junior Tour events, U.S. Kids World Drive Chip & Putt – all that stuff. When I was 12 years old, he was 11 years old and he came down with what was spinal cord or brain cancer kind of right at the top of the spine. Unfortunately, it kind of took away his golfing abilities for about a year, and he passed away a year later. Since then, I've always marked mine with the initials 'H.A.' and kind of feel like I'm playing for him. I know I wouldn't be out here as a professional golfer if I didn't have him as a friend to grow up with and to hone my skills with for seven, eight years."

On his involvement with the BirdiesforHope initiative...

"BirdiesforHope is a whole, long story so I'll try to shorten it. Again, it's that idea of my dream has always been to play pro golf. I have a note that I wrote when I was seven that said I wanted to be a professional golfer and play with Tiger (Woods) in the Masters (Tournament). It's always my dream. I turned professional in 2018 and you play it for two years, don't quite have the success that you're hoping to have but still have a good amount of success and you realize golf doesn't fulfil. Since then, I wanted to give back in some way. I realize there's a lot of people following this tour, a lot of people following me, and I don't want to take that for granted. Started BirdiesforHope with the idea that I want to take that attention and point it to something better than just hitting a white golf ball in a hole. BirdiesforHope is a charity that I started that for every birdie I make on the golf course, I donate 10 dollars to build churches and hope centers around the world, and I get other people to partner with me as much as they want to. The reason I got involved with churches and hope centers is because we partner with the organization International Cooperating Ministries, or ICM. The partnership with them comes back to my little sister, who was adopted from China. When we adopted her from China in 2001, when she was 11 months old, ICM partnered with my family to build a church in China. So that's where that connection was when I was thinking about how to give back. Went straight to that idea in my mind and asked them if they'd be interested in doing something unique and special and they were all for it."

On his sister and her involvement in golf...

“She plays golf at Wheaton College. When we're back home, we get to play a good amount. It's a little cold up in Chicago for her to play golf right now. She was texting me last night and saying it's like we're on two different planets. I think it was negative-10 degrees in Chicago and it's 95 degrees here. We get to play a good amount over winter break and then unfortunately during the summer when she's home, I'm traveling a lot. But, whenever we get the chance to, we're out there hitting golf balls and having some fun together.”

On if he thinks his golf career is something he hopes she can look up to...

“I hope so. Again, I think golf is important in a sense, but what's far more important is what you do off the golf course. There's a lot of time that you're spending not between the ropes, and what you're doing there really matters a lot, especially to your little sister, who sees you in your best and worst moments.”