



First-Round Transcripts | Simmons Bank Open for the Snedeker Foundation | Thursday May 5, 2022

José de Jesús Rodríguez (-7, Co-Leader)

City Plays From: Irapuato, Mexico | Turned Pro: 2007

Exempt Status (Season): Qualifying Tournament Finishers 11-40 and Ties (thru 2022)

Exempt Status (Tournament): Top 25 on Points List Upon Reorder

On his second round...

"I had a spectacular round, especially because I was bogey-free. We took advantage of all the birdies we had I'm super happy about it."

On if there was any particular shot that stood out to him...

"On the first hole, I missed the green and it easily could have been a bogey, but we ended up making birdie, so that kept us in a good momentum."

On missing the cut last time he played The Grove...

"I knew that I missed the cut last year, but one important thing for me was to believe in myself and to trust my game and keep making good shots."

On his best finish of the 2022 season, T3, coming after a missed cut...

"Sometimes you don't play good or you don't have a successful week, but you use it as an experience and a lesson and keep going... just play good the next one."

On the best part of his game is right now...

"I always try to put the ball in the fairway and today we were always in good shape off the tee. That was key for a good round."

On what it means to him to play golf in the United States...

"It has always been really important for me to play in the U.S., and since I got my visa I've been super thankful and just trying to take advantage of the opportunity from this great Tour."

On what it took for him to get to the United States...

"We wouldn't finish today if I told you everything. It's taken a lot of dedication. It's away from home, it takes a lot of family support. I have to fly back and forth to see my family and my two kids and try to make the best out of it."

On being in contention after 18 holes...

"It's a great satisfaction. We're just going to try to keep playing and trend in the right direction."

Tom Whitney (-7, Co-Leader)

City Plays From: Dallas, Texas | Turned Pro: 2010 | College: United States Airforce Academy
Exempt Status: Top 75 on 2020-21 Regular Season Points List (thru 2022)

On his round...

"It's nice to get off to a good start. I rattled off four birdies before my first bogey, and anytime you're ahead of the curve you're just more comfortable when the mistakes happen. I had a loose drive on No. 8 that went in the lateral (penalty area). I almost saved par but just barely missed that 10-footer. It's good to be in the so-called 'driver's seat' as far as my swing goes, and my focus out there, not a lot phased me. I didn't have any bad breaks and I just kept it in play all day."

On how his game suits this course...

"This is the first day we've had all year where it was just perfect weather and no wind... couple that with one of the best venues of the year, perfect greens, not a blade of grass out of place, it just gives me and a lot of other guys confidence out there. We can play good and aggressive golf because we're on such a good golf course."

On his start to the season missing five cuts...

"On my written down goal list I had 'miss five cuts or less,' and that went out the window pretty quickly, but I just had to stay mentally tough through that knowing that every season, no matter how many missed cuts I have, I'm in contention a handful of times. The cuts that I have made, I've proved that so far. Unfortunately, I don't like being patient in that regard, I would love to be in contention every week but I just stay mentally tough and trust that all the aspects of my game will line up."

On being in contention after 18 holes...

"I'm really looking forward to a nap. I had an early pro-am tee time and I'm staying 30 minutes away, so the alarm went off at 4:30 a.m. today and 5 a.m. yesterday. Just having a day off where I don't have many swings that I regret making out there just me confidence going into tomorrow's round."

On a shot that stood out to him during his round today...

"I hit a number of gap wedges today cost me making the cut last week, and I was missing everything long and left. My first reaction is to assume that it's me and I'm doing something wrong but it was the only club in the bag that was going left. I hit 100-150 shots with just that club on Saturday after missing the cut and I couldn't hit it straight, so I took it to the truck on Monday and low and behold it was one degree upright. That was a boost for my confidence just knowing that my swing is where it needs to be, the equipment was just a little bit off. I had three or four gap wedges today and none of them left the flag so that's a good feeling."

On his military experience translating into playing golf...

"Time management is a big one. Being able to focus and allocate my practice sessions and, when I'm out there, I don't have to be out there for five or six hours. I can get everything I need done in one hour and be intentional about what I'm doing. I feel like every year I'm getting better at not letting the things outside of my control affect me and my mental state. There's very few things that you can control out there, only the decisions you make and the swings you make. The ball could get a bad bounce at any time or a bump on the green, so I'm just trying to consistently get mentally stronger out there."



On if there was anything mentally different coming into this week...

"I always looking forward coming to Nashville. You can't drive a mile on a road out here and it not be scenic. Having the mindset of being surrounded in this beautiful area is uplifting and energizing. I'm staying with one of my sponsors this week that I actually met through the pro-am here last year. It's one of those weeks where I have a lot of aspects to look forward to."