

Second-Round Transcripts | VISIT KNOXVILLE OPEN | Friday, May 13, 2022

MJ Daffue (-11, T1)

City Plays From: Pretoria, South Africa | Turned Pro: 2012 | College: Lamar University

Exempt Status: Top 25 Official Points List at the time of the Reorder

On his round...

"It was interesting coming into this week. I've played well the past two weeks, I just haven't been able to put things together. I think I was pushing myself too hard, but this week I told myself 'I just need to relax and play the middle of the green.' I've been making a lot of birdies, but making a lot of bogeys, too. If I try to make 18 pars then more than likely I'll average five birdies a round. I've been hitting the ball really well this week and my proximity has been really close... putting really well. I put a lot of work into my short game and doing certain drills to work speed with my putter. I'm putting it together with eight birdies yesterday then four birdies and an eagle today. I'm trying to not get ahead of myself and hit the middle of the green then move forward."

On maintaining a patient mindset over the course of the weekend...

"I believe that I have a good grip on my mindset and how to handle it. This isn't the first time that I'm tied for the lead this season, I've been in this position quite a few times so I'm getting used to it. I'm trying to learn from my past experiences, I've seen myself be patient and today is a great example. I played pretty decent then played 5-under my last six holes, my patience paid off. I've learned over the past tournaments this season where I was in contention that I don't have to do anything special to win. I need to stick to my routines and stay committed and then trust in my ability."

On No. 6 after a near lost ball, but walking away with birdie...

"We were well within the minute but I hit a tree so we thought the ball was further up. I hit the exact shot that I wanted to. I wanted to hit driver short left of the green because the flag is back right, and it's a short hole so I wanted a 50-yard chip shot, which I did. The good thing about being in the rough is that you don't have to worry about the ball spinning so I knew I could land it on the front of the green and let it roll towards the back. I executed that hole (No. 6) well and I think it's better to commit than not commit."

On taking advantage of his opportunities after years of chasing status...

"It's a funny situation. My sports psychologist, Dr. McKay, told me something the other day and it's why I'm in the mindset that I'm in. He said 'Suckville. Even if you're playing great, it's easy to go into Suckville. It's like eating at the Ritz Carlton every night, eventually you're not going to like it. It's going to become normal.' I'm just trying to have a good mindset and be grateful. I've played very good golf the past four years, I just haven't had a lot of opportunities. When it comes to my stroke average, my coach keeps telling me 'if you keep shooting five-under, eventually it will be good enough,' so that's been my mentality. I have a goal to win the stroke average for the season so I'm not even worried about winning. Scottie Scheffler won stroke average in 2019 and he's done good. I'm trying to find a way to get the ball in the hole quick."

On his performance on No. 7 and 8 and the patience he had to maintain..

"The younger me, as in last week, yes. I hit a good putt on No. 7 but got a horseshoe and then No. 8 I hit it to six feet and then missed. It's more about knowing that I can't be hard on myself, because my ability to make a lot of birdies puts a lot of pressure on me. The putt on No. 7, when it lipped out it just is what

it is. On No. 8, I didn't hit a good putt so I told myself 'everybody misses every now and then, just stay patient.' Then I hit it 370-yards off the tee on No. 9 and had a wedge in, so if you can stay within yourself it will make a big difference, it doesn't matter who you are as a player."

On No. 17 playing difficult this week...

"You have the long fescue right and left, plus it's a par 5 converted into a par 4. Even though its downhill, 520 yards, it's still a tight tee shot because of the trees on the left. This golf course is designed in an a way that you can't land the ball short of the green and then run it up, because it's into the grain. Today I had three shots where the flag was in the front and I thought if I hit it just short it would bounce up, but it stayed. On No. 17, you have to protect not going long, but then if you land it short, it stays. I hit pitching wedge in today and most players will hit 9 or 8 iron in. They're getting creative with the pin locations."

On his birdie on No. 9..

"The tee shot isn't that hard, it was playing down off the left. For me, none of the bunkers are in play so it's just about making good, solid contact on the ball. I knew the back-left flag was getable, especially with a lob wedge, because if you land it past the flag everything comes back. My putt turned a lot but I committed to the line and it was a good role."

On if he has any superstitions with it being Friday the 13th...

"No superstitions. I was born on Friday the 13th of January and my wife was born on Friday the 13th of September so it's a good day for us. Today is still a good day."



Anders Albertson (-11, T1)

City Plays From: Atlanta, Georgia | Turned Pro: 2015 | College: Georgia Tech
Exempt Status: 75 Points Leaders from the Korn Ferry Tour Regular Season

On his round...

"I played consistently today, I think the biggest difference is that the greens were so fast yesterday afternoon and then today I struggled with the speed to make putts. I hit 16 or 17 greens, so I had a lot of looks but I just didn't make as many putts, but that's going to happen sometimes. Hopefully tomorrow I'll be playing in the afternoon because I had it dialed in yesterday and would like to fall back on that speed."

On playing with Akshay Bhatia and Erik Barnes...

"It was my first time playing with Akshay [Bhatia] this week, he was really fun and nice. He has a great game. Yesterday I got hot and today he got hot, lots of birdies in the group. Erik [Barnes] has been playing so well all year, only guy to make every cut. We had some good vibes and I felt like every hole someone was making a birdie. It was good."

On staying comfortable despite overcoming injury and having a different caddie this week...

"I had a check-in talk with my mental coach last night and was reminded of my game plan coming in. On Wednesday night when everyone is at even par, it doesn't change anything, even now when I'm leading the tournament it doesn't change anything. I can refocus on just playing the golf course no matter where I'm at and being aggressive with the game plan I have. If I win a tournament, I win, and if I don't, I don't. In the past I've thought in a way that made it difficult for me to play my best and I think now I'm getting out of my own way because I'm not feeling all the extra stuff that comes with what every shot means. I just play the shot in front of me as freely as I can and stay kind to myself afterwards if it doesn't go well."

On having perspective from the difficult times and carrying that mindset with him...

"I think it's a common problem to make a big deal out of a shot, for whatever reason. There's been people in my life who have been able to speak to that and help me realize that, so I'm grateful for the team around me. There are constant reminders of what my main goal is here. For me, I have to realize that no one here can affect me. I don't have to guard them. It's a unique sport. I go take care of myself and my game then look up at the end and see where I finish and try to not get in my own way along the four days. I did that in Lake Charles, Louisiana. I walked off No. 18 and asked my caddie 'where did we finish?' and we finished fourth. I had no idea. It's been the first year that I've been able to focus in and enjoy my time out there and root for the guys I'm playing with and there are enough birdies to go around for everybody."

On how he got to the point where he figured out what works for him mentally..

"I'm trying to be the same person off the course as I am on the course. For me, trying to put on a persona of a competitor, I don't think I really understood what that looked like for me for a long time. I can be really intense but I don't have to try to beat everyone around me. It's important for me to genuinely be able to wish well for other people that I'm playing with and not just try to win because I'm getting lucky or getting by. That's how I've been over the last few years but I've learned from that. As a human, how could I come out here and just try to beat everyone? Who am I to do that? There's now a lot more peace and kindness to myself if something bad does happen. I'm really enjoying the five, or hopefully four and a half hours as opposed to the grind of every shot and what's on the line. This has



been the first year that it's really sat in this way. I'm just really thankful to be able to be more at peace daily, no matter what day it is."