

PETER MALNATI (-8)

Q. Peter, congratulations on a great round of golf. For the most part, stress-free except for 16 and 17. Talk to me about the up-and-downs that you made on 16 and then almost made on 17.

PETER MALNATI: Yeah, the one on 16 felt great. Actually, it was a deceiving little pitch after I hit it so far right. I saw you walk it off, I have no idea how far it was. It was farther than I thought obviously, but to make that putt felt awesome.

And then 17 I stuck with my game plan, I was determined to be aggressive off that tee if I could carry the bunkers on the right. I hit a bad one. That feels awful to make a bogey on that hole because you really feel like you hit a good drive on that hole, you turn it into a relatively -- not easy, but a par-4 that you can take advantage of and I made a 6. So that stunk, but how can I complain about much? We're on the island of Bermuda and I sure played great.

Q. Now, I tell you the reason I asked you that. You're like, I made all these birdies and you asked me about that bogey, but here's the reason why I ask about it. To answer your question, it was 40 paces to the front edge of the green, that pitch.

The reason I ask you about it is because while you were waiting to hit your shot, what a great moment looking over at your wife and child. I thought that was pretty cool and that probably lifted your spirits up to make that closing birdie.

PETER MALNATI: 100 percent. I mean, honestly, she said they were going to try to come out today, and with everything in the world right now and this island is doing a phenomenal job with their testing protocol and keeping everyone safe, I just didn't know if it was actually going to work for them to get out here. So coming off that disappointing bogey on 17, I hit a nice drive on 18 and before I even get my yardage or anything, I see my wife and boy standing out there. It just brought a huge smile to my face. I smile a lot, but nothing makes me smile quite like that. To see them and then to finish with that birdie, I'm a happy man right now.

Q. What a phenomenal round. You've been playing so good, you've got a lot of confidence, Peter. What is it that's trending with you right now?

PETER MALNATI: I don't know. It's funny, I felt like I worked really, really hard and smart during our shutdown period and then I came out when the Tour started up again and played terrible.

I kind of -- I mentor a few of the others, one in particular, a golfer at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville where I live and then a couple of junior players in town. I mention to these guys, I'm always telling them, hey, hard work pays off, it just doesn't always pay off as quickly as you want it to. I give that advice, but I was getting very impatient with it myself.

It's really cool now to see, I think a lot of this hard work that I did over this time when the Tour was shut down is really starting to show now because I was trying to get a little more consistent with my ball-striking, especially off the tee. Starting in the Dominican Republic four weeks ago at Corales, I really started to feel comfortable with my driver and that's just carried over all these weeks.

From there I feel like I'm always going to be a decent wedge player. I worked really hard on my putting to get it back to the level where I want it. So if I can drive the ball well, the game starts to feel easy to me. It's never easy, but it starts to feel easy if I can drive it well. So I'm just in a nice little stretch right here where it all feels good.

Q. I'm going to focus on the nine birdies you made today before the bogey at 17, plus the bogey at 17, you birdied the last, but out of the nine birdies, which one was your best in your opinion?

PETER MALNATI: Yeah, that's a good question. You know, I started par-par on 1 and 2. Both those holes you feel like you could get some birdies, so it feels like a slow start to start par-par. On No. 3 I made like probably a 25-foot putt and just beautiful, right in the middle of the hole. That just to me is like, okay, I'm still going. Because I had two weeks off after the momentum in Sanderson and then at the Shriners, I had two weeks off, so to make that putt I'm like, all right, I'm picking right back up. So that first one was big.

Q. You were just telling Kevin at PGA TOUR Radio that some inspiration on the last couple of holes. Just talk us through 17 and the birdie on the last.

PETER MALNATI: Yeah, so 17 was just a matter of I really -- I decided in my practice round if I can hit it over the bunkers on the right, I'm going to hit driver and be aggressive and turn that par 5 into, you know, more or less a par-4. But that's a very tight area and it was a calculated risk and I hit a bad shot, I pulled it and hit it in the water.

So from there I did my best, but ended up in a funky little spot, made bogey. I'm like, got to be the easiest one on the course if you drive it well, and I made bogey.

So hopped back in the present, hit a good one after 18 and I'm walking up the hill on 18, I look over to the right and I see my wife and my recently turned 1-year-old boy and it just made my day. I'm always in pretty good spirits, but to see them, and it's the first time Hatcher's on the golf course. He was with me in Mississippi, but he wasn't allowed on site. It's the first time he's been on a golf course since THE PLAYERS or before. So that was really awesome to see him. And to cap it off with a birdie, perfect ending to the day.

Q. You shot three rounds of 63 or better in your last three starts now. Fatherhood seems to fit you well, or is it just something else that's going on with you?

PETER MALNATI: Yeah, I think it just comes back to that first answer. I'm driving the ball well. My strengths that have kept me on Tour for as long as I've been here have been wedges and short game and putting and I've worked hard to make sure that those are still sharp. I'm starting -- my long game's starting to click a little bit and get a little better, so that definitely is what's going on here right now.

But I tell you what, the fatherhood, having the absolute best wife and mother in the world there to take care of our little boy and just to be a part of it is -- that makes all this a little easier because I just know I'm going home to that and they love me whether I shoot 63 or 83, so makes it easier.

Q. Finally, it's your first trip to Bermuda in this tournament. Your first impressions of the golf course and the island in particular?

PETER MALNATI: Yeah, what an amazing place this is. You can just tell that -- yesterday I played in the pro-am with four locals and there's just a demeanor here on the island of calmness and it's a relaxed nature. It's obviously visually stunning, gorgeous, beautiful, but it seems to have a nice spirit to it. I love it and I'm very comfortable.

And the golf course is, you know, just like week in and week out on the PGA TOUR, we play the best golf courses in the world and we're playing one of them right here in Bermuda, so it's really cool.