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First-round interviews

AN INTERVIEW WITH PATRICK SHEEHAN

THE MODERATOR: We welcome first-round leader, Patrick Sheehan after his 8-under, 62 today.

Quite a round there, Patrick, looking over your birdies, all 11 of them, and just two of them were from less than ten feet. It's amazing.

You start off with seven birdies in your first eight holes, just talk about your day.

PATRICK SHEEHAN: Well, I mean, I got off to a great start. I hit the fairway on the first hole, which is no easy thing to do. I hit in the front bunker and hit kind of a crappy bunker shot and made a nice 15-footer from off the green actually. It was only about an inch or two off the green. It was a good start.

The next hole I hit two good shots in there, it was a 15-footer on two and knocked it in.

And then it started getting crazy from there. I parred 3.

4, I chipped in from right of the green. It had to be 50 feet away.

And 5, what is No. 5? I hit it in the left rough and just trying to get it on the green somewhere, and I put it out in the front. 40 or 50 feet again, whatever, 55. That one went in. I'm like wow. People are going crazy.

We go to 6, I hit a horrible drive right under trees. I chipped it out, was trying to get it to the front edge of the green, it ran a little past the front, I had to chip it from a half mile away and the thing rolls in.

At that point, I'm apologizing to my playing partners, it was so ridiculous, they were all going in. It didn't matter.

The next hole I hit 2 pretty good shots and made like a 20-footer.

8, I finally hit one close and made a putt.

9, I hit a horrible drive left into the second bunker and had to chip out. I bladed that one through the fairway into the other bunker, and the ball had so much spin on it, it kind of drilled itself a little hole, so I had to chip out from that bunker, made 6. It was a horrible tee shot.

I'm walking off, oh God, the wind is kind of taking away from me. I started off on 10. I don't know how long that hole was. That was a bomb too. 40 feet. It was unbelievable.

11, I hit 2 good shots, and a nice bunker shot and had a tap-in birdie there. And I was like, well, right back to where we were.

From then on in, I played actually pretty good. I just wasn't making the putts.

I birdied 13, the par-3, I hit a good shot in there.

14, I hit two good shots.

15, I hit another bad drive left and was lucky to get out of there with par. I made about a 12 or 15-footer for par there.

16, I hit a nice shot in there, had about a 15-footer and made that.

My caddy is sitting there, we got a shot at 59 if we birdie the last two holes.

17, we were thinking, well, two birdies makes me 59. It didn't happen, but that's all right. It was a good round.

THE MODERATOR: It was a very good round. We will open the questions right off the bat.

Q. So it sound likes you left a few shots out there today?

PATRICK SHEEHAN: I didn't leave a thing out there. I mean I got everything out of that I possibly could have and more because I didn't hit it great. I didn't drive it great. It was just weird how everything just seemed to be going.

Q. Have you ever had a day bizarrely good, sometimes you guys have bizarrely bad days, have you ever had anything that good?

PATRICK SHEEHAN: Not in a tournament. You go home and play a round like this. You play with your buddies and take them for all their money and it's fun. But I've never done this in a tournament. It is kind of a strange. I couldn't do anything wrong for a while today. It was crazy.

Q. How many times did you actually use the putter now on the front 9?

PATRICK SHEEHAN: Well, the putt on one was technically not a putt, I made it. It was technically a chip-in, according to the stats, because it was off the green. I think, God, 8 or 9 putts on the front. It's on the stat sheet probably. I don't even know. I putted from the fringe on the first hole and I chipped in twice. I had maybe two 2-putts on the front. 8 or 9 putts, I don't know.

Q. Had the putts not been going in the chip-in, what could you have possibly scored, you think, maybe an average day putting, no chip-in?

A. Well, I definitely feel like I stole about four or five shots today with some of the stuff that was going on, 2 chip-ins. Everybody chips in now and then. Usually not twice in the same day. And making putts that long is something that -- occasionally I'll do it. I did it at Wachovia. I was driving it terrible there. I was making bombs there for a few days. I definitely felt like I stole a couple today though.

Q. Did you have any indication on the putting green, anything like that was going to happen, or did it just kind of get going once you made a couple?

PATRICK SHEEHAN: Well, I've been putting really well. I putted really well at Wachovia but didn't hit it well that week. Last week I hit it better but couldn't make a putt at the Nelson. I've been stroking it well.

I've been fighting the driver the most, I'm still fighting it today, because I missed a few drives today that were just dead. That's got to be fixed for the rest of the week. I will not get away with it three more days out here.

Q. When you have a day like this, where you feel like you've stolen several shots, do you walk away? Is it all upsetting feeling? Is it a feeling, well, I didn't hit it? Do you feel like you are that much up on the field because you stole the shot?

PATRICK SHEEHAN: Well, I mean, for the most part today, I hit a few bad shots, and I feel like I got away with some of it. It still wouldn't have been that bad a round if those weren't going in anyway. It might have been 2 or 3-under or something.

But I definitely feel like I need to go to the range and straighten out the longer clubs because I would love to be able to keep this up, the putter. I mean, obviously, not making a handful of 40, 50 footers every day. But my stroke feels great. If I can get the longer clubs straightened out, and maybe get some putts closer to the hole, I really feel like I'm putting well, which is a great feeling. It's a great equalizer.

Q. Have you thought about maybe you could use your putter as one of your longer clubs?

PATRICK SHEEHAN: I'm thinking about it. From 100 yards in, maybe.

Q. Of your chip-ins, what was toughest lie or situation you had there? Were you set up pretty nice both times, or you got a little extra challenge on one?

PATRICK SHEEHAN: On the fourth hole, it was just off the green about a couple of yards and it was past the pins. The chip broke about six or seven feet. When I hit it it was just coming over this little knob and it was just trickling, and I was like good, it's going to be a good shot, and the thing just kept trickling into the hole. It wasn't an easy shot but something you would expect to make three on.

The one on 6, it was about a yard or 2 off the green, and I basically chipped it with a 5-iron. I mean rolled it like a putt.

Q. (Inaudible)?

PATRICK SHEEHAN: Not in the bunker.

Q. You alluded to outside you felt horrible on the driving range, you come off, you do that, you put together a round that you do, how much confidence does it give you for the rest of the week that you are able to kind of shake all of that off and do what you did today?

PATRICK SHEEHAN: Well, I mean I still had a great round today. I'm not going to dwell on the fact that I've been driving good, you know. I still feel great out there. Just a little something small, and I just got to go out and work that out on the range.

Everything does feel pretty good. You know, I just got to be a little straighter off the tee for the next three days.

Q. All of the chips you had, what happened on 18 there, you still had a chance to save par, what happened on 18?

PATRICK SHEEHAN: 18, that was the hardest chip I had today. One thing that's very difficult to do is try to bump a chip shot through Bermuda grass. It's almost impossible. I had a downhill lie so I couldn't go high with it. The ball was sitting on the hill like that. I had to hit the shot I hit. Just a very difficult shot. If I got it within ten feet it would have been good.

Q. Patrick, the chip-in on four, what did you use for that shot, what club?

PATRICK SHEEHAN: A lob-wedge.

Q. What were you thinking when you came off of 9 after the double bogey, and then farther on, when did you exactly start thinking possibly 59?

PATRICK SHEEHAN: Well, I mean, I was really disappointed walking off 9 because I hit a bad tee shot and kind of made a mess of the hole from that point. All I was trying to do was chip it out and I ended up having to chip it out twice.

But, you know, when I made the putt on 10, you know, that got me kind of perked up again. And making birdie on 11, got me right back where I was and made a couple of birdies from there.

When I made the birdie on 16, I started thinking -- I forgot this was a par 70. You only play two par-5s. I didn't hit a good wedge on 17. It certainly crossed my mind on 17 tee.

Q. Do you remember the last time you birdied all four par3-s?

PATRICK SHEEHAN: Did I birdie all four par3-s? I don't even know.

Q. Yes?

PATRICK SHEEHAN: I don't think I've ever done that.

Q. And the second part, last year you finished second, you finish third, fourth, you got yourself in position a lot, what do you think is the thing that will get you over the top?

PATRICK SHEEHAN: Well, all of those great finishes I had last year, every part of my game was good during those weeks.

I've had some weeks this year, I've played well. I have not played well for four days. That's the whole trick out here is to do it for four days.

You know, I played really well at Bay Hill this year. Everything was going pretty well for me that week.

It's just, for me, it's been consistency, and my good weeks are when everything is going well. You know, some weeks your putter is great. Some weeks your driver is not. Last week I drove the ball great and putted lousy. This week I'm making putts and didn't drive it that great. It's just the way the game is. Hopefully I can straighten out the longer clubs and keep putting this well because I love this golf course, and I love playing it, and it can be no fun to play it if you're really not striking the ball well.

Q. You come out, you birdie seven of the first eight holes, the one where you take a par is a pretty tough hole. When you get there, uncork the ball, were you surprised to see hey, how come that didn't skip over and miss that bunker, that's the first thing going against you, were you surprised to see something go the other way? Everything had been flowing your way before that.

PATRICK SHEEHAN: No, usually, when you have days like this, a lot of things do go right. But the holes I played poorly today. I pretty much got what I deserved. I got away with one on 15 because I made a 12 to 15-footer for par. It was a really hard bunker shot.

I certainly didn't leave any shots out there. I definitely got everything out of it. I possibly could have.

Q. Who were you playing with?

PATRICK SHEEHAN: Olin Browne and Tim Clark.

Q. Guys you know pretty well?

PATRICK SHEEHAN: One of the nicest guys out here.

Q. He must have given you a little bit of?

PATRICK SHEEHAN: Oh yeah. Yes, I apologized to him on the sixth hole after that chip-in. It was crazy. He was like, don't ever apologize for that.

Q. Were either of them having the opposite of a day like today?

PATRICK SHEEHAN: Both of them. Both of them. It looked like on 6 and 7 that -- sometimes when you play with guys that are just, you know, can't do anything wrong, that kind of will carry over to other guys. They both birdied 6 and 7, I think. And it looked like they were going to jump on and just ride it with me. I will tell you though both played well on the back. And neither one made a putt. You can see how frustrating it was for both of them. It's kind of why I apologized because they were playing well and not scoring. And I'm playing pretty good and making everything. It's got to be frustrating to watch something like that when nothing is going your way.

Q. No threats?

PATRICK SHEEHAN: No, no, Olin, too nice a guy.

Q. Did anyone say anything funny to you during the day?

PATRICK SHEEHAN: Not really. Tim kind of kept away from me. Olin and I were talking about our swings walking around. Nothing goofy. Olin was rooting for me. We walked up 18, he turned around and started clapping on the green before we finished. Nothing crazy.

If it were one of them, I wouldn't have said a word to them, I would have just let them go.

Q. No. 9, when you went bunker to bunker, it looked like you kind of surveyed the situation, did you think about trying to fly that to the green? I know you said the ball drilled down. It looked like you and your caddy talked about it?

PATRICK SHEEHAN: My third shot on 9 was -- I had no chance -- I would have felt -- I felt like I had no chance to hit it on the green. I don't know why it was. It was basically a fried egg. What we were trying to do is chip out to get a good yardage to the back ledge, so we can spin it off the ledge. That pin up front, right near the water, the greens are firm enough, it's hard to get it close, so the ledge is the best way to try to get it close, to try to get it to a good yardage so you can use the ledge.

Q. Do you feel good about the decisions you made there?

PATRICK SHEEHAN: I don't think I made a bad decision. It was poor execution more than anything.

Q. One of your college teammates just broke through and won?

PATRICK SHEEHAN: Tim Petrovic.

Q. I wonder has that had any affect on you, whether it gave you a boost or a thought?

PATRICK SHEEHAN: It was good to see. I know Tim very well. Jerry has won twice out here. I know those guys very well. I mean I'm happy for Tim. He played great. I also know -- I don't think Tim is any better than me as a player. Yes, it makes me fell like, yes, if Tim can do it, I can do it. I'm just as good as he is. A lot of guys probably feel that way. Ted Purdy, last week, played great. He won. He was a first time.

So everything falls in place, I think, with your first win. For Tim it did. James missed that last hole on regulation to win it outright from five feet or so. Tim made a bomb in regulation to get into the playoff. Things just fell in place for him. I think that has to happen as well to win.

Q. You sort of come close to speaking about this, the second shot on 17, and especially 18, were you trying to be aggressive and trying to hit it close?

PATRICK SHEEHAN: Yes, 17 we had a lousy yardage for the club. We could have tried to swing harder at a sand wedge, or tried to chip a pitching wedge. I tried to pitch a pitching wedge because Val didn't like the sand wedge, because it would have been a pretty hard sand wedge.

That's my tendency thought, when I hit a little shot, it's a pull.

But at the point I wasn't aiming at the pin either. The wind is blowing left-to-right, just get it 20 feet or inside, you are putting so good, give yourself a chance. That's all I was trying to do, I just didn't hit a very good shot.

18, God, we had 118 front, we probably had 150 to the hole, and I hit sand wedge. We got to the ball and I was fortunate enough to have a swing but the ball was going to come out like a missile and it did. I hit a sand wedge and the thing went about 160 yards, a flier out of the rough.

Q. You said earlier that you didn't think you ever birdied all par-3s. Have you ever had 11 birdies in a round to your knowledge?

PATRICK SHEEHAN: Yes, the most I ever shot was in a Golden Bear tour event down in West Palm Beach. I shot 51, 11 birdies, no bogeys at a place called Abacoa (phn.)

Q. (Inaudible)?

PATRICK SHEEHAN: I was so far behind I finished like third. I was in the back of the pack starting the day.

Q. Have you ever had any encounters with Patty Sheehan, the similarity of names ever cause a bit of aggravation for you?

PATRICK SHEEHAN: No, I met Patty last year here. I think it was here. Did she do color commentary on the telecast? Was it last year or the year before? I met her. She is a nice lady. A real nice lady. We talked just a little bit. We didn't talk about the names. But I get asked every day on the road, are you related to Patty, at least once a day on the road.

THE MODERATOR: Everybody good? Thank you.

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