
HP CLASSIC OF NEW ORLEANS
English Turn Golf and Country Club
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Final-round leader quotes

AN INTERVIEW WITH VIJAY SINGH

TODD BUDNICK: We welcome 2004 HP Classic of New Orleans Champion Vijay Singh. Vijay, back-to-back Monday finishes for the fourth time in your career that you've one on a Monday. What's up with the Monday finishes?

VIJAY SINGH: I don't know. I think it's a good day for me, I guess. I don't think it's got anything to do with Monday. It's just a coincidence that I played well.

I have patience out there. Like the front nine, nothing wasn't happening. I was just 2-under and everybody else was way ahead. And I said just keep ongoing, you know, there is another 9 to go, just play a solid back nine and see what happens, and putts started going in, and throwing an eagle here and there and all of a sudden everything is changed around.

Six shots back after 9 and winning by one is, doesn't happen that often?

TODD BUDNICK: Talk about the 7-under 29 on the back to win, final round 63, the best final round by a winner this year; talk about the charge.

VIJAY SINGH: I don't really think it was a charge. It was just playing, you know. I think everything started off on 11 when I hit 2 good shots in front of the green and putted from there.

And I made a good putt on the next two holes. That kind of got me really going.

And then a good putt again on 15 for eagle. So all of a sudden from six back, I'm only two back, or rather one back, and then I had a great second shot on 16, tap in birdie there.

And then what a putt on the last. I had a great lie from Tanaka. He was just to the right of me, and he just broke left, so I thought go ahead, you know the line just make a good putt.

TODD BUDNICK: Questions?

Q. What did you do during the rain delays this week, how did you kill the time?

VIJAY SINGH: Well, there was not too many times that I was over here. I played my first round of golf with no rain at all and then I left. I think the guys that were starting in the afternoon the first two days they got the -- they had to wait a lot. And I just went back, and one whole day of doing nothing, working out and swinging my club in the room, you know, going to a casino here and there.

Q. How did you do in the casino?

VIJAY SINGH: That's very personal, I think.

Q. Is that why you needed the 29 on the back nine?

VIJAY SINGH: But it didn't bother me as much as I guess it did the rest of the guys. I was kind of disappointed not to finish our round yesterday, or Saturday. I thought we had a lot of good weather there, but there was a lot of bad lightening around. But all in all it turned out pretty good for me I guess.

Q. Did you ever come back more than six in the last nine holes ever to win?

VIJAY SINGH: I don't think so. As I said it doesn't happen too often. But it's not easy to catch unless you shoot like what I did and the leaders don't do anything. Ogilvie, what did he shoot on the back nine. Even?

TODD BUDNICK: Even.

VIJAY SINGH: So all he needed to do was make a birdie or so and he is still in the lead. But, no, I guess not.

Q. Is 63 your best final round to win?

VIJAY SINGH: I think so. Probably on the U.S. TOUR, yes. I have had low rounds before, but on the U.S. TOUR, yes.

Q. Did you watch his shot on the 18th, Ogilvie?

VIJAY SINGH: I'm sure I'm going to watch it on the Golf Channel later on today.

Q. You didn't watch it while it was happening?

VIJAY SINGH: I had no clue, no.

Q. Vijay Singh if someone told you on No. 10 you have to shoot a 29 on the back nine, what would you have told them?

VIJAY SINGH: Sure. I mean it's not easy to go out there and shoot 29 in any day, you know, especially not on the final day. The conditions were not easy. The wind started picking up. I played well and putted well. My putter has a lot to do with it, too. I made some really nice putts.

Q. You say you fixed your swing after the front nine, I heard you say that?

VIJAY SINGH: It wasn't broken. It needed some adjustment to it. I was pulling my drives. I pulled it a few holes out there. The second hole, I pulled it on the sixth hole, fifth hole, just little pulls to the left side.

And on the tenth hole, you know, the driver was pulled as well.

So I kind of thought about what I was doing and what I do when I pull, and just thought about it, and had a good shot on 11 and that kind of got me going.

Q. Last week you talked about how well you were striking the ball?

VIJAY SINGH: Yes.

Q. Now with this week, have you ever had a better stretch?

VIJAY SINGH: Well, you know, I scored really well this week. I was very patient. Striking the ball is pretty much the same as last week. The conditions were different. It was windy. It was wet. It was dry the first two days. I guess I played the same golf I did last week but I just managed to keep very calm all week this week and not really expecting much out of it. I think I had a great second day over here. That 65 I shot the second day kind of got me back where I needed to be.

You know, it's hard to say, I have had a lot of stretches where I have hit great, you know -- my ball striking has been really good. But when you do that, not necessarily you win. There has been weeks when I hit really good shots, putts may not go in. You have bad days with a putter, or bad weeks with a putter. You are just not going to win. But the last two weeks I struck the ball well and I putted nicely. If you do that, you are going to be right up there and you are going to win the tournaments.

Q. Where did you start watching the scoreboard or did you?

VIJAY SINGH: It was all over the place. I looked up after 9 holes, and I said well it's over, kind of. But then, you know, I made a birdie on 11, 12 and 13. 14, didn't do anything coming in there and all of a sudden I said I got a chance. That eagle putt on 15 got me close. If I had made a birdie there, I may still not have won. I think they kind of tightened up the guys behind me as well.

Q. A nice approach at 16, also?

VIJAY SINGH: Yes, that was a really good one. I wasn't aiming that close to the hole, I was aiming just left of that and the wind took it closer.

Q. Why have you been spending so much time practicing long irons on fairway bunkers, are you practicing that shot or is there something about hitting out of a fairway bunker that's good for you practice your swing?

VIJAY SINGH: I think it's good for everything. It's good for balance. It makes you aware of where the golf swing is, you can't rush it and ball striking. At the same time you learn how to hit long bunker shots.

Q. Have you always done that?

VIJAY SINGH: Pretty much, I have done it from a very early age. I was in Asia, we used to do that a lot. Playing the European TOUR I used to go to Asia and do a lot of that out of the sand.

Also when you do it near the beach, it's kind of like very relaxing as well. You hear the waves in the background and just hitting the ball it kind of takes your mind away from everything but what you are doing. That's how it started.

Q. Are you a goal setter before every year?

VIJAY SINGH: Not really. My goal is always to go out there and play the golf I want to play. I practice very hard and what I want to do. If I'm happy with the way I'm striking the golf ball, it doesn't matter if I win or not. Obviously at the end of the day you want to win a golf tournament.

If I strike the ball the way I want to, everything is going to take care of itself. That's my goal. That's how I think.

But in recent times you kind of start thinking about the Majors and if you can pull one or two Majors in there that would be great, and that's what you kind of look towards every year.

Q. Do you look at your rankings?

VIJAY SINGH: I do, and I get reminded about it a lot. So I don't have to look at it to know where I stand. People talk about it a lot. I mean, yes it's always good to know where you stand. You are not going to lose any spots winning golf tournaments. But it's very hard to catch Tiger. His points are so high up there and he is not -- when he comes out, he always performs very well. So I got to keep winning five or six events a year just to get close to him.

Q. Has he made you better, I think?

VIJAY SINGH: I don't think so. His performance, obviously, fired up a lot of players, you know, to perform good, to play good. But, you know, he hasn't made me any better. I have done it all myself, and I practiced and did my own thing. Tiger is obviously is a great player, and his standards are really high. I guess that's how we all want to do, want to be.

Q. Do you think Phil winning a Major will make him a better player so to speak?

VIJAY SINGH: I mean he is already a great player. Phil has won 24 tournaments, not by playing badly. He is a great player, always a great player throughout his career. Maybe he is going to be more relaxed. Maybe he is going to win a lot more tournaments. For instance, this week, he has taken two weeks off and straight in the middle of thicker things. So he is probably going to win a lot more now.

Q. Did a Major help you, your first Major?

VIJAY SINGH: I wasn't expecting to win the first Major I played in that I won. It was out of the blue. I just played well that week. I wasn't ranked anywhere in the world at that time. But once you win a Major, it kind of gives you that extra boost you need, extra confidence. It's a great -- how can I say -- it just lifts you up, a few steps higher than where you have always been. It kind of carries you up. You are in a different league than when you are just winning normal golf tournaments.

Q. Do you have the same swing thought last week that you had this week?

VIJAY SINGH: Pretty much. I always have the same swing thought. I don't have one. I have a few of them and it comes and goes until one is needed at that time. But, yes, pretty much the same.

TODD BUDNICK: How about your birdies? 2.

VIJAY SINGH: 2, yes, I hit a driver, 6-iron, left of the green, chipped it stiff.

7, I hit a driver, 6-iron there too. I hit about ten feet.

11, I hit a driver, 3-wood, 2-putted from 25, 30 feet.

12, I hit a 7-iron about 20 feet.

13, I hit a driver, sand wedge, maybe another 15.

I hit a driver, 8-iron, on 15 to about, again, 15, 20, foot; made that.
A driver, wedge on 16 to about a foot and a half.
And 18 I hit a driver, 9-iron, 30 feet, I guess.
TODD BUDNICK: Thank you.