



72nd U.S. JUNIOR AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIP – Player Quotes

July 15-20, 2019, Inverness Club, Toledo, Ohio

Akshay Bhatia, of Wake Forest, N.C. (1-under 70)

Q: Walk us through that eagle on 13.

AKSHAY BHIATA: I think I hit 3-iron off the tee. I had 228 or something in the first cut, kind of above my feet. Hit 4-iron to about 35 feet and made it. Kind of kick-started the round.

Q: How many drivers did you hit today?

AKSHAY BHIATA: Off the top of my head, five. Four or five maybe.

Q: On 13, did you just think 3-iron was the right play?

AKSHAY BHIATA: Driver, there's no advantage to it. 3-iron, it's downwind so it's not like if I hit 3-iron I'm going to be way back or anything. I hit a good shot there and I was glad to start the round cookin'.

Q: One word to describe the rough.

AKSHAY BHIATA: Brutal. Yeah it's really hard to judge. You can just get some really bad lies; you can get some really good lies. You get so many differences in shots that it's hard to judge for sure.

Q: You're clearly a favorite here. Do you feel like you have pressure on you?

AKSHAY BHIATA: No, I'm just here to play my game and do what I want to do. And hopefully the end result, if I play decent, if I play well, I should get it done. But it's cool because a lot of the new kids come up to me and ask me what my experiences have been in U.S. Juniors and what to expect. And I just told them to play their game and just have fun because it can be a long, long week. And you know if you wear yourself down by getting upset at some bad shots, it really pays a penalty.

Q: You came close to winning this event last year. What would it mean to you to win this year?

AKSHAY BHIATA: A lot. It'd definitely be something I could check off my list of wins. That's kind of the reason I came back here. I had a few options just to play either an amateur event or this. And I really wanted to do this just because the outcome last year.

Q: What are your initial thoughts of Inverness?

AKSHAY BHIATA: It is so pure. The facility, the staff, everything that Inverness has provided for us has just been amazing, something that we don't take for granted. Just overall, it's a great test of golf. You're never like, "Okay I have an easy birdie opportunity here," it's like "Okay now I have to put myself in a position to get myself a chance at a birdie."