

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW: KEVIN SUTHERLAND (-8)
September 1, 2017



DAVE SENKO: Well, Kevin, thanks for joining us. An 8-under 62, which is your best round here at Canyon Meadows. Maybe just talk about your day. It was almost a perfect day to play.

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: It was a perfect day to play, or is a perfect day to play. Yeah, the greens are great. Some of recepting, some greens are a little firmer than others. But there's not much wind. It's a little bit swirly, but it's easy to figure out. The greens are perfect. So if you drive the ball in the fairway, which I did a pretty good job of today, you're going to have a lot of good potential opportunities for birdie and I had a lot of them today. In fact, I don't think I missed a green today. I think I hit every green and I had a lot of really good chances early, and I didn't even -- I made a really long putt on 14 and then all of a sudden on the back side they all started going in.

DAVE SENKO: Maybe just go through your birdies on the front nine starting at No. 1.

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: No. 1 I hit a driver and an 8-iron from like 170 I think, around that area. I made about a 10-footer there for birdie.

No. 3 I hit a hybrid off the tee and hit a 54-degree sand wedge to again about 10 feet and I made that.

DAVE SENKO: The par 5.

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: Driver, 3-wood on the fringe. The pin was all the way back left and I was front right so it was not an easy up-and-down. I hit a nice chip to about six feet but I got below the hole so it was a fairly easy putt and I happened to make that one.

DAVE SENKO: Par 3.

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: Next hole I hit a 7-iron to about six feet. Again, I was just in the right spot, just straight up the hill pretty much. Broke a little to the right but it was just in a perfect spot up the hill.

DAVE SENKO: And 7 and 8.

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: 7 hit a driver, 8-iron. That was a little longer, probably 15 feet. I was just on the back fringe. Actually, you know what, I did miss that green. I was on the fringe, but it was like uphill. As 15-footers go, it was fairly straightforward and I happened to make that one right in the middle.

DAVE SENKO: No. 8.

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: No. 8 I hit a 3-wood off that tee and hit a 7-iron to about four feet.

DAVE SENKO: And how long was that putt on 14? You said you made a long putt.

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: 14 I hit a 7 off the tee and I made 35, 40 feet. It was the longest putt I probably had all day for birdie and it was one I made.

Q. Kevin, a lot of people out here think this course could be pretty gettable for you guys, you could go really low. Agree with that, especially after an 8 under today?

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: Yeah, I think for the most part it's that way. Again, like some of the courses we do play out here, you need to drive the ball in the fairway here. Obviously if you're hitting in the trees, most likely you're going to be underneath one of those trees and you'd be hoping to get the ball back in the fairway. So getting the ball in the fairway is paramount to any kind of success out here, but if you happen to do that, you're going to have a lot of shortish irons into greens. The greens are, for the most part around a lot of the holes are fairly flat so you can have a lot of good looks. I think the scoring here's been good here over the years if I remember right and I don't think today's going to be any different.

Q. Did you think that one on 9 was going to go in?

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: No. I pulled it a little bit from the get-go. I thought it might hang on, but it looked low to me all the way so I was never -- it might have looked better from a different angle, but it always looked like it was going to be a little low. It was a good putt, though. It was the right speed, just a little low.

Q. I know they fall or get matched quite a bit out here, but when you're standing over a putt on 9 to tie the course record, is that something you're cognizant of?

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: I had no idea, I had no idea. I'm not sure I know any of the course records on this tour, so I would say no. If I would have known, I might have tried to hit it a little higher.

Q. Dick's, right?

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: Oh, I do know that. I shot 59 there, so I assume that's still the course record. Yeah, I had no idea.

Q. Did you do anything special earlier this week? Have you gotten to see anything in Calgary or anything like that?

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: Actually, I did the opposite. I normally get to tournaments -- you know, like when we play in Seattle I usually come in on Monday. I was thinking about going to Banff but I ended up going home. I went back to Sacramento. I came up here

Wednesday late afternoon so I got a couple two and a half days at home, which was kind of nice. I took advantage of that opportunity a little bit. Honestly, I usually come up here, I love coming up here, but my son's birthday was on Monday so it gave me a chance to go home.

Q. Kevin, you're kind of known as a guy who can go low, you can get on a roll. Are you kind of feeling that, have you been feeling that coming into this?

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: You know, I've been playing well. I've been playing well all year but I've been playing very well for the last three tournaments. Yeah, I feel like I'm playing well, I feel like my game's in a really good place right now. I'm hitting a lot of good quality iron shots which is giving me a lot of good opportunities. I've had a lot of mid 60 rounds of late, so those are always good.

Q. Starting early, did you feel pretty good being able to start nice and early and maybe post a good score?

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: It was nice to get out early today. The weather was perfect, nice and cool, which was something that we haven't had a lot lately so it was nice to get a nice cool day out here. It was nice to get out early, but I didn't feel any different than I did any other day. It was just another day at the golf course and it was a good day for me.

Q. Kevin, this stat that you have the same number of top-10s this year as Bernhard, do you look at that as a point of pride that you've been close so many times? Do you look at it as frustration that you haven't converted one into a victory? How do you kind of balance that?

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: Well, I'm very pleased with how I've played. The fact I have 12 top-10s is a good thing. I have not felt any frustration with the fact that I haven't been able to win out here. I've been playing very well. I've been very, very close. I think I got three seconds this year and I haven't felt any sort of frustration about it at all and I think that's been a good thing. It's allowed me just to keep playing good golf. I feel if I keep playing good golf, eventually it's going to happen but I can't -- getting frustrated about it is not going to make it a better thing. It's not going to make it better if I'm frustrated. It's not going to change happened because I'm frustrated, so I just choose not to be.

Q. I suppose on this tour if you're tied in anything with Bernhard Langer, it's probably a good sign?

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: I would say being tied with Bernhard Langer on any tour is a good thing, but especially on this tour.

Q. How do you approach tomorrow morning?

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: The same, the same as I did today. The reality is that we just talked about this golf course, how the scoring's good out here and stuff. You know that

you're going to have to keep making birdies. You're still going to have to be aggressive, you're still going to have to post at least mid-60 rounds. So it doesn't really change your mindset at all. You know going in the winning score's still going to be at least mid teens so that's kind of where you know you need to be. I know I have a lot of work ahead of me. The fact I'm 8 under today is great, but I need to do that again. It doesn't really change the focus on what I need to do.

Q. Do some golf courses you need to be much more aggressive than others?

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: Oh, yeah, there's no question some courses lend itself to being more aggressive. This course is a little bit that way. One of the reasons why the scoring's good here is you can be aggressive knowing that around the greens you have a pretty good chance of getting the ball -- having a good chance of getting the ball up and down. It's not like it's real severe around the greens. So, as a result, you end up being really aggressive because you know that the penalty for missing a shot, short-siding yourself isn't so bad. Yeah, I think the golfers, the guys out here are going to be aggressive tomorrow like they are today and like they will be on Sunday.

DAVE SENKO: Thanks, Kevin.

KEVIN SUTHERLAND: Thank you.