

ROUND 1 QUICK QUOTES
June 12, 2026



GEORGE McNEILL (-7)

Q. All right, George McNeill, an opening 7-under 65. Tell us about your round today.

GEORGE McNEILL: I played nice. Was hitting it pretty good to start, kind of -- this is my first time here so I'm trying to obviously get my feet underneath me and figure it out. Practice rounds didn't play like today, so with all the wind and rain and dealing with what we had on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, today was a much different day.

Tom Gillis, who's caddying for me, he's a veteran player out here so that helped a bunch. He was giving me some good lines off the tee and then reading some putts. Missed a few putts, but I made a few putts, so I can't really complain too much.

Q. George, with the start of your season down in Florida with back-to-back top-10s and now moving into the summer months, you're setting yourself up for a nice run at the Schwab Cup. What's the mindset going into that?

GEORGE McNEILL: Honestly, I'm just trying to play like I have been. I feel like I played fairly well all year. I think Tucson was my worst event.

But again, all these courses are brand new to me so there's a lot of stuff that I'm looking at it and reading putts and greens. These guys who have been here year after year after year, it helps. So I'm just trying to play like I have been, get out of my own way.

I think I've been a little tight because I know my status. If I don't play well, I kind of go away. So I know I have to play for it every week, so I'm trying to keep that and not put too much pressure, but also it's in the back of my mind. So once I get comfortable and I know I'm inside the top-36 comfortably, I don't want to say I'm going to relax, but at least it's one thing off the table and I can maybe play a little more loose.

Q. You mentioned Gilly earlier. How important has he been?

GEORGE McNEILL: Well, Tom's been great. I've actually had three caddies kind of rotating this year, but all of them have caddied out here. Kenny Tolles, his brother Tommy plays or did play out here for a long time and he caddied for him.

Ernie Rose, Ernie's father-in-law who passed away last fall, but John Harris, who's won out here on the Champions Tour. All these guys have been -- they've caddied for me on the regular tour and now -- and they caddied out here on the Champions Tour. So having those guys as, quote unquote, veterans, I guess, Tom having the most experience with having played, but having all of these guys I think is instrumental with how I played and kind of



steering me around.

Showing up in these new cities, I don't know where to stay, I don't know where to drive, I don't know where the clubs are, I don't know where the locker room is. It's helped a bunch.

Q. What do you think of Des Moines? How did you take in the crowd and how fun was today just in general?

GEORGE McNEILL: Fun playing wise. There's a ton of people out here. These Midwest towns, last week in Madison, this week in Des Moines, a lot of people come out and support these events, which I think is fantastic. Some weeks we're kind of, you know, slow with the spectators, but obviously they know -- I guess this is the only kind of professional event in Iowa, so they come out in droves and give full support. I think for Principal and for their support and everything else, I think it's great.

Q. You've been rolling recently, second place last week, really strong round. I guess what's been working for you so well that's helped you be so successful?

GEORGE McNEILL: I mean, last week obviously was a team event. I played pretty well the first two days and played OK the last day.

But Kenny, Kenny Perry was my partner, he played -- I keep saying he played like it was 2008 when he was dominating on the PGA TOUR and winning a bunch of times. He played incredible.

It was a lot of fun. Obviously my first go-round in that event in the team format.

I'm just trying to, like I said, I've been playing OK, I just really haven't gotten any -- put a bunch of things together. Today, I don't want to say I did that, but I kept it in play. I hit it really nice. Missed a few putts, but they were more misreads, not really miss-hits. It's kind of what I've been doing all year, so hopefully I'll just continue on this trend.

Q. Walk us through 18 there, getting that par to stay in the lead.

GEORGE McNEILL: Yeah. Well, I thought I hit a pretty good drive. I guess it hit the cart path and went down on the tee on the right, so I got a drop from behind the stands. Didn't hit a great shot on my second and left it about four and a half or five feet short, but actually hit -- that was probably one of the best putts I hit all day, hit it right in the middle, so that was a nice way to finish. I wasn't aware that I was leading, but either way it's a nice way to finish.

