

2015 US Open Championship

Thursday, June 18

Quick Quotes

Henrik Stenson

Quick Quotes From:
HENRIK STENSON

Q. Special round to shoot 5-under in a U.S. Open. How did that feel?

HENRICK STENSON: I'm very pleased with the day's work. I guess I can maybe pinpoint it down to three things. Mentally I was in a good place. I kept very level headed and focused and good patience out there, which were a few of the things I set out before the week to try and keep. It's going to remain the same for the remainder of the week. That's going to be one of the hardest things to keep going even if things aren't going your way. Today obviously it did for most of the day, so that makes it a bit easier. That's really one of the things I need to try and keep in mind for the rest of the week. This is one day out of four and we've got to keep at it if we want to be there on Sunday afternoon. Ball striking wise, I hit some real quality shots out there. I set up a lot of birdie chances. I was inside five feet for the first three holes and started off with two birdies and missed the shortest one. One from three and a half feet down the hill and almost left it short. I had it a few putts on that putting green before I went out and it was lightening down towards the holes. I thought it was going to be really slick and barely got there from three and a half feet. It kind of throws you off at times. Like I said, I followed out with two good birdies on 2 and 3. Unforced error second shot on 6 led to bogey. I was way off to the right with my drive on 7, but I managed to hit a lovely pitching wedge to about six feet and make birdie on 7. 8, I was in the hay and back and forth a little bit. So you are going to have a couple bad holes out there. All in all, I played solid. Gave myself some nice birdie chances coming in and just rolled a couple of beauties in from 14 and onwards. Pleased with the striking and putting the way I played the round.

Q. Anything out there surprise you at all?

HENRICK STENSON: I was expecting it to be a little bit more gentle today. We've got perfect conditions, just a light breeze. There were a few of the par-3s that were playing shorter. I expected it to be easier today and tighten that as we go along. The USGA can make this place as hard as they want to, especially if you get



a bit of wind and start tucking those pins away and play it longer. That could be a real monster. So I think it's fairly expected. We're going to see it more and more as the week goes on.

Q. (Inaudible)?

HENRICK STENSON: The putting green all week, the one down here has been burnt. It was like a cricket pitch when we came here on Sunday. That one was definitely quicker than the greens on the course. There's a few of them that are struggling a little bit, 1 and 4 in particular are a little iffy and some other ones aren't quite good. You are going to get a little bit of a difference sometimes, but then again you got so many putts that are different anyway. You can't read much into the previous one when you're hitting the next one. You have got to treat them on your own and go with your feeling. My feel and touch was really good today. I made some great long putts and made a couple of 15, 20-footers for birdie and holed out nicely. It was a good day on the greens for me.

Q. What was your feeling about the crowds out there today?

HENRICK STENSON: It's such a big property. On that golf course as well, the crowds are going to be further away and a lot of them are going to be up in grandstands. It was good crowds out there. You are never going to get it the feeling of it being packed on every hole. It's a course where you have to watch from a bit of a distance. A pair of binoculars is not a bad thing when you're coming here to watch.

Q. (Inaudible)?

HENRICK STENSON: He's doing okay. He potentially broke his wrist yesterday there on a fall on 16. It was not good for the threesome that teed off at 1 o'clock. Gallacher's man went down and couldn't caddie today. My guy is in a cast, so it's -- it's dangerous out there. That's all I can say.

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Press Conference

Henrik Stenson

An Interview With:
HENRIK STENSON

BETH MAJOR: Good afternoon. Welcome to the 2015 U.S. Open at Chambers Bay. Very pleased to have with us first round co-leader Henrik Stenson, who recorded a 5-under, 65 on Chambers Bay track this morning, finishing with four of five birdies on his last five holes. Can you talk a little bit about your round and how you were feeling out there today.

HENRIK STENSON: I want to rank it. It was good. No, it was a good day. I was striking it nicely, which led to a lot of birdie opportunities for me. I felt like I was really keeping my patience and a level head out there and very focused on the things that I wanted to be focused on. And then finished off with -- it was a good day on the greens in all, but especially the last five holes. I hit some beautiful putts and managed to slip a few in there. It was a good way to finish the day. And good shape, one day out of four done, and we're right there with where we want to be. It's still a long journey until Sunday afternoon, of course. A good start always helps. Looking forward, I just got to do more of the same of what I did today and hopefully I can continue to post some good numbers.

Q. How important do you think it was for you to come out here a couple of months early and just walk the course, as far as getting a mindset for the course and how it plays?

HENRIK STENSON: Yeah, it definitely helps to know what you're up against, especially on a challenging golf course like this one. And, yeah, there's been a lot of talk about the course and I'm sure that's going to continue, depending on how you view it. It certainly helped me to settle in, knowing -- having a plan in place and knowing what to expect. So that was certainly worth the trip. I'm here to do my best and to do a good job out there. Regardless of whether you like all the holes, you like some of the stuff on this course, I'm here to do a good tournament and a good championship. So just keep your head down and keep on going, that's what's going to get me in a good spot.

Q. Along those lines, did you like it the first time



you saw it?

HENRIK STENSON: It's different. Of its kind, it's one of the finest (laughter). It is a links course with some extreme features, there's no two ways about that. We've got some big banks, we've got some massive runoffs and fairways that are really sloping in areas. Like the 8th hole, hit a nice 3-wood down the middle, just trying to hit a nice fairway finder, but it turned into a rough finder. So, yeah, there are some extreme features on this course, I think everybody can see that. And then it's more down to how you're going to play those, and make sure you don't get tricked out by them. I put a good plan in place with my caddie who only got one hand to caddie with now, since that fall on the 16th tee box yesterday. We did a good job out there and I was very pleased with the way I performed.

Q. Would you give us a quick update on him?

HENRIK STENSON: We wanted to -- I ended up practicing a little bit more than planned yesterday and I was going to play nine holes. We got with Stephen Gallacher and another player and we cut across from 3 to 16. I hope I was allowed to do that. And Lord, his famous words coming down the third, which was a bit of a climb to get down on safe ground, he said, I hope I don't fall this week, that would make it a good week. Then walking off 16, both feet in the air, got trapped with a wrist under the bag. He's in a cast now. It might be broken and stuff in there or just torn ligaments and stuff. So, yeah, he's not in a good place with the hand, but he managed to caddie and did a good job for me anyway. I had to caddie for him a little bit, as well.

Q. Is your finish kind of a sign that you got real comfortable out there and that you kind of got a feel for how the course was playing?

HENRIK STENSON: Yeah, just really the way it started I hit it close on 1. I got a little baffled by the pace on the 1, coming off the putting green, I almost left it short from 3 feet down the hill for birdie. So I set up a lovely birdie opportunity that turned into a par on the first. But then I holed out from 5, 6 feet on 2. And then I hit a lovely wedge to about 3 feet on 3. Striking-wise I got off very strong. And then I hit a couple of errant shots on 6, 7, 8. But other than that, I kind of felt like the course was playing -- you could attack still. I normally stop my ball pretty quickly, and I still felt like I could do that. I think it gets firmer in the afternoon or more wind and it dries out, then you've got to start thinking you might

need to land the ball 5, 10, 15 yards short of the hole. Now I can still play attacking shots with some shorter clubs, thanks to good tee balls. I was still playing fairly attacking into the greens and left myself a good number of birdie putts and got on a roll with the flat stick and rolled a few in on the last couple of holes. I felt like the course was playing the same most of the day.

Q. Obviously played a good round of golf today, shooting 5-under par, I'm curious to know what do you think is the biggest challenge for you at this golf course and playing it, moving forward?

HENRIK STENSON: Well, we don't know what the conditions are going to be like. The wind might pick up throughout the week. Certainly if we keep on posting some red numbers, I'm sure we're going to see a few of those tee boxes moved back, and potentially some tricky pins as we move along throughout the weekend. It's a golf course that can be set up as difficult as you want to set it up, and if you get help with the elements it can be really tough out there. Staying patient, really. Because I think with the extreme undulations and so on, sometimes you hit a lovely shot in and you can get a bad bounce and end up in a bad spot. And other times it's not as good and it filters back into the pin. You've got to take the rough with the smooth and keeping a level head is going to be the key to success.

Q. What was your biggest challenge today during this round?

HENRIK STENSON: Well, I lost a bit of momentum before Augusta when I got sick and I just had to try and play some tournaments and trying to work on my game at the same time. And just staying committed to what I want to do with my swing and my ball-striking. And that was one of the big things for me focusing on that today and staying committed. And I did that really well. Obviously there were some shots I didn't do it as well. It was a big step forward how I was hitting it today compared to earlier in the week, that's for sure.

Q. Whatever your first impression was when you came here the end of April, how much, if any, has that impression changed when you got here for the tournament and the weeks leading in? Was there a time when you said you can do well around here?

HENRIK STENSON: Because it's so depending on the setup, I would say, and how it plays, scoring-wise got no idea. It's more from experience knowing that a par on every hole, on any hole is good at a U.S. Open. At the end of the week normally level par is where you want to try and be. And bringing that mindset, that kind of grind and try to make as many easy pars as possible. Even on some of the easy holes sometimes it's easy to get drawn into trying to attack at the wrong place and you end up making a bogey or double and

then you're going to kick yourself for the next couple of holes. So just keeping that patience and focus, really. But it definitely plays a bit firmer and faster than it was in April, even though I didn't play, it was more firm and burnt now than it was in April. So I think some of the holes played longer when I started playing practice rounds than when I was walking it. It's a challenging course.

Q. Was there any point yesterday that you thought you might have to get a different caddie?

HENRIK STENSON: Well, I mean that's a thought that I've had many times when I played with Gareth (laughter). No, I mean, of course I was worried. He took the fall and I asked him if he was okay and he said he was okay. Because I know especially carrying a bag and if you take a fall, the first reaction you put your hands out to try to save yourself. And like he did, he got his wrist in a funky position. He said he was okay, but he was a little quiet. And then five minutes later, it just started getting black and blue up the lower part of his arm. So we knew something wasn't right. Went to ice it out on the 17th tee box straight away and then he went to see the physio. He spent a couple of hours at the emergency room getting it x-rayed and, yeah, he's in a cast. But, yeah, I asked him, obviously, if he couldn't have caddied I would have had to get somebody else and unfortunately I believe that's what happened to Stevie Gallacher, because his man went down a couple of holes later after we left them on the third green, I think he strained his ankle on the 6th or something. So it's definitely dangerous with those slopes and the grass gets shiny and lays down. It gets a bit like ice skating out there. So I'm sure the spectators are going to have to watch themselves, as well.

Q. With all the elevation changes is it going to be physically challenging for some of the players, especially maybe older players to walk?

HENRIK STENSON: I'm not that old.

Q. I meant there would be an advantage to you.

HENRIK STENSON: Yeah, despite being a little bit older, I'm in pretty good shape. I was happy when I started playing my practice rounds, I'm in good shape and healthy again. It's a challenging walk, as well. There's a lot of steep climbing and I'm sure there will be some tired glutes by the end of the week.

Q. Is it possible to follow golf as a spectator on this course in the traditional way that's followed?

HENRIK STENSON: No, there's a few courses we play, St. Andrews is not the best spectator course, and this one is a little bit of a tricky one, as well. I think you want to walk a few holes and then find a good spot in the grandstand. There are steep banks and I'm not

sure if you're allowed or can walk around all the holes. It's definitely a place to bring some equipment so you can see from far, that's for sure. But it was still a good atmosphere out there, there was lots of good crowds in the grandstands. I enjoyed playing it, it was good fun.

BETH MAJOR: We certainly enjoyed watching. Very well played today, opening round 65. Thanks for joining us.

HENRIK STENSON: Thanks.