

# 2015 US Senior Open Championship

Tuesday, June 23  
Press Conference

## Dave Bunker



THE MODERATOR: Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to welcome Dave Bunker into the Media Center at this 36th U.S. Senior Open. Dave is a decorated amateur player, has won 16 tournaments in his native Canada, played in multiple Canadian Opens on the PGA Tour and qualified for this Senior Open at Worthington Hills Club in Columbus, Ohio, shooting 69 to earn medalist honors. You've played a lot of tournament golf, but you're playing in your first USGA Championship this week. What are your hopes and expectations for the week?

DAVE BUNKER: It's my second USGA event. I played Mid-Am at Kiawah Island a few years ago. I'm hoping to play well, hit the ball solid, and see what happens.

THE MODERATOR: Last month you turned 50. You'll be the second youngest player in the field.

DAVE BUNKER: A rookie, a kid.

THE MODERATOR: How does it feel to be the young guy again?

DAVE BUNKER: It's nice. I just recently turned 50. And to be a kid again, back out playing with some older players is nice.

THE MODERATOR: And a couple of guys you played with this morning were Corey Pavin and Scott Simpson, past U.S. Open champions. What was it like teeing up with a couple of major champions?

DAVE BUNKER: That was pretty awesome. You don't really expect it. And then I saw Corey come up to the tee, and Scott joined us on the back nine. It was really, really a good time today. I had lots of fun.

THE MODERATOR: It just kind of fell into place that you ended up playing with those guys.

DAVE BUNKER: Yeah, I had no idea. I booked my tee time two weeks ago, and I just happened to end up with two major winners. It was awesome.

THE MODERATOR: You're also a full-time physical education teacher at Lawrence Heights Middle School in Columbus. Twenty-five years you've been up there.

DAVE BUNKER: Twenty-five years, I've been at the same school. Started my career there. Hopefully will finish it there as well.

THE MODERATOR: What drew you to teaching, and what has kept you in it for the past quarter century?

DAVE BUNKER: Both my parents were school teachers. You just kind of fall into sometimes what your parents were doing. It worked out perfectly for me. That's what I wanted to be ever since I was a kid, and I can see myself retiring as a teacher as well. It's a really rewarding job.

THE MODERATOR: Does that give you a little time in the summer to play some golf?

DAVE BUNKER: Yeah, two months off in the summer to play golf is an added bonus.

THE MODERATOR: And do you teach any aspects of golf in the phys. ed. classes?

DAVE BUNKER: I don't really teach a lot. We do cover it every once in a while if I happen to get the right group of kids. We're a big basketball school and football school, so spend most of my time coaching touch football and basketball. And then a regular phys. ed. program within those parameters.

THE MODERATOR: I guess I would be remiss without bringing up your last name, Bunker. I'm sure you get that a fair bit. How much does that come up when people see Dave Bunker is playing in a golf championship?

DAVE BUNKER: It took about three minutes before Corey said something and about a minute before Scott said something when he joined us on the back nine. It happens more often than you might think. So, yeah, when it works out that I'm a golfer and my last name matches up with a hazard in golf, people want to talk about it.

THE MODERATOR: I'm sure. Let's open it up to a few

questions. Pete on the right.

**Q. Dave, have you played in any other professional events at all? Canadian Open or anything like that?**

DAVE BUNKER: I've played two Canadian Opens, 2010 and 2011. I played one mini tour event in Florida as an amateur. That's my only three exposures to professional golf.

**Q. Does playing with professionals, does this put more pressure on you, or does it make you feel like, hey, I could free swing here, and whatever I do is whenever I do?**

DAVE BUNKER: Yeah, I think the second part is more true for me. I'm here to have fun during the week. It's a bonus for me to qualify and come here. For it to be a U.S. Open is open, and I'm just here to have fun and just try and play as well as I can and hit the ball as well as I can and see what happens.

**Q. Dave, in recent years, a lot of initiatives to grow the game, what have you, trying to promote golf as a healthy endeavor. From a phys. ed. teacher's standpoint, do you think kids would be well served to get into the game?**

DAVE BUNKER: Yeah, there are two or three programs within Canada, golfing schools, programs, starting programs that kids can get involved in. I think the big stumbling block is getting courses to host the kids and get them out. That's a big stepping stone that needs to happen in Canada, just to get the kids out. Hitting the ball around the backfield at your school is fine to get them started, but they need to have that access to par 3 course, shorter courses, then on to real courses. I think that's the next step is to get course owners and course professionals to understand that part. In the U.S., I know The First Tee program is awesome and really doing well in places. I think Canada could do well learning from programs like that.

**Q. Dave, when I was in school, when we'd come back from summer, we'd have that first day of class, and they would say, what did you do on your summer vacation? What are you going to tell your students when you come back and tell them what you did on your summer vacation?**

DAVE BUNKER: Well, it's actually not summer vacation yet. I'm actually missing the last week of school here. But, yeah, I'd say most of them know what I do in my spare time because they've seen me in newspaper articles and playing the Canadian Open from before, and just seeing some stuff on the web. So they know what I'm doing. But, yeah, it's a nice added bonus to have a summer vacation traveling around, playing tournaments in different places.

**Q. Do you view this as the highlight of your career. I know the amateur events you play in in Canada are very important, but where would you rank this?**

DAVE BUNKER: I would say it's up there. My first Canadian Open, I played at home, a course 20 minutes from where I lived, and I played the golf course lots of times. And to have all my family and friends see me play in that international championship was a great experience. And then to get another chance to do it again. But this is pretty special as well. You look around, and I played with Corey Pavin and Scott Simpson today, and you just go in and have lunch, and I couldn't name all the players you watch on TV that I've seen over the years, and they're all here. This is something very special.

**Q. Dave, what is your experience with USGA qualifiers over the years, and was this something that you had circled on your calendar, the 2015 U.S. Senior Open, knowing that you'd be eligible?**

DAVE BUNKER: Yeah, this was actually something special that I wanted to at least attempt to qualify for. I knew I was turning 50, and I thought, okay, I'll give it a try and see. My wife and I are going to fly over to the UK in the summer, and I'm going to try a Monday qualifier for the British Senior Open as well. So hopefully things will go well then as well.

**Q. How long was the trip down from Toronto down to Columbus, where you tried to qualify?**

DAVE BUNKER: It's about a seven-hour drive from there to Columbus. For me, that timing worked the best for me. It was on a Monday, and I could sort of work it in my schedule to get down there for that qualifier.

**Q. Dave, you said you booked your starting time for today for practice two weeks ago. When did you find out that you were going to be playing with those two U.S. Open champions?**

DAVE BUNKER: When they walked on the tee.

**Q. What was your reaction?**

DAVE BUNKER: A little bit of surprise because you never know who you're going to be with. I guess a pleasant surprise. And then Corey was looking around for Scott because he was supposed to play all 18 with us but figured he'd only show up for the back nine. So I figured he was going to join us on the back. But it's nice to have that happen.

**Q. How do you feel your game's matched up with them? Now you're surprised by the fact these two U.S. Open champions show up with you. What was the first shot like, and then how did your game stack up with them, you think?**

DAVE BUNKER: My first shot was pretty good. I kind

of stumbled a bit the first couple of holes, but I held my own the rest of the time. I think I hit some good shots today. I was happy with the way I played.

**Q. You have twin daughters, correct?**

DAVE BUNKER: Correct.

**Q. And they both were swimmers at Cleveland State, correct?**

DAVE BUNKER: Yes.

**Q. How do they feel seeing their father now playing in a national championship since they were competitive athletes also?**

DAVE BUNKER: Yeah, I think it's kind of in our family. My wife was a very good athlete as well, and my daughters just kind of fell into swimming. I think they're just as proud of me, I think, as I was of them when they were swimming.

**Q. And then also, going back to your last name, are there any stories you can share with us over the years where your name came into play and it kind of became a funny moment?**

DAVE BUNKER: I can't think of anything other than there's always those shots of me that photographers have taken over the years with me actually in a bunker hitting the shot, and it's always Bunker in the bunker sort of thing. That's about all I can think of really.

THE MODERATOR: When I was doing a little research for this, I went to ratemyteacher.com, and I saw that some people described you as the best teacher ever, someone who always encourages students. Someone actually said they almost got in trouble for having Chapstick in their pocket. Are you a strict teacher, or what's your philosophy?

DAVE BUNKER: I would say I'm pretty strict. I guess being a phys. ed. teacher, safety is always first. You want to make sure kids are safe in the gym and safe with what they're doing. So I want to make sure the rules are well explained, the expectations are there. I would say that, yeah, I'm probably pretty strict, but I like to also, like you said, encourage and see them do well.

THE MODERATOR: Doesn't look like there's too many other questions, but just want to say, as far as the USGA style guide goes, we conduct championships, not tournaments. We have hole locations, not pin positions, and we have bunkers, not sand traps. So you've passed that test, and best of luck trying to pass the test this week that Del Paso throws at you. Best of luck.