

# 2015 US Senior Open Championship

Tuesday, June 23  
Press Conference

## Michael Allen



THE MODERATOR: Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to welcome Michael Allen into the interview room. Michael is playing in his sixth U.S. Senior Open. He has three top ten finishes, including a fifth place finish in 2013 at Omaha Country Club. You've won twice in each of the last three years, including victories in the Alliance Championship and the AT&T Championship last year, and you finished ninth in the Schwab Cup rankings. You've had a consistent start to this year, no wins, but three top fives, and nothing outside of 28th place in 11 starts. So you've played pretty well. How do you feel about your game heading into the Senior Open?

MICHAEL ALLEN: I felt really good about it. This whole year, I've played really well. I started out with a short putter that I won the AT&T with, which is the first time I'd used my short putter. Then I went back to my long putter and got my stats up. It was a little bit better. And now I'm back to a short putter. That's kind of that up and down thing, but overall I've been playing great. I've had a couple of weird things happen this year with some losses, so I didn't really win tournaments. I hit a wrong ball in Des Moines on about the 12th hole the last day, where I was in contention. And you know this timing thing earlier in the year in Insuperity. It's been frustrating, but overall I've played really well and feel great about how I'm doing and looking forward to this week.

THE MODERATOR: Why go to the short putter this week? You said you've been back and forth a little bit, long putter, short putter, and now the short putter again.

MICHAEL ALLEN: When we played last week just outside of Boston there, I played great the whole time. Tee to green, I was in position for the most part, and really I just didn't putt well. I missed a lot of kind of good birdie putts the last few days, a little frustrated with it. So I just thought I'd give it another change. A breath of fresh air is always a good thing.

THE MODERATOR: Two years ago in Omaha, it was about this hot outside, and we talked a lot. You were

the leader through each of the first three rounds. What can you build off that experience of leading in the U.S. Senior Open for the first three days and take that into this year?

MICHAEL ALLEN: It's one of those things, you drive back and go, man, I'm leading the U.S. Open. It's one of those great experiences you have in life. I know I can do it. I know my game is good enough to do it. You've got to be able to finish them too. I certainly wasn't up to the challenge last time. So I just really look forward to the opportunity to do it again. I love coming in here and having you actually ask me a question or two. I notice you always set up right next to a pool. Is there a reason for that? Other than that, I love the opportunity. I love coming out here and competing in these great championships. To me, it's an honor. Hopefully, this year you still want to talk to me towards the end of the week because I'm playing well. That's what we're here for. I've prepared hard. I'm as ready to go as I can get and looking forward to the challenge.

THE MODERATOR: That would be great. How does your neck feel? I know you had a neck injury that week. You were dealing with some treatment on that. Is that all healed, feeling better?

MICHAEL ALLEN: It's not actually all healed, and it's kind of been acting up a little bit over the last few months. It was weird because after the Schwab Cup that year, I stayed around San Francisco and got opinions and X-rays and MRIs from six, eight different doctors that week. Miraculously, a month later, it was gone. It's kind of been gone for a while. There is some issues in my neck, but in the end, it hasn't really bothered me. I kind of treat it, trying to be a little better with it all the time. It wasn't an excuse then, and hopefully it won't ever be one again. I'm ready to play, and I think all my body and injuries are pretty good.

THE MODERATOR: Now, you grew up in San Mateo, about 100 miles from here. Have you ever been to Del Paso before this week to play the course?

MICHAEL ALLEN: You know, I have. I came here about five years ago for U.S. Open qualifying, the year I was qualifying for Pebble Beach. Back then, there wasn't any rough like there is now. I thought it was a really good golf course then. Of course, back then, the

young kids that really bombed it really did well out here. Number 1 they're hitting the irons into and things like that. But now the rough is like that, it's a completely different golf course. It's just in spectacular shape. So I've got a little experience, but not much out here. Like everybody else, trying to figure it out and trying to find the best lines on the fairways and get myself to the green sooner than anybody else.

**THE MODERATOR:** You played a practice run this morning. It's a longer course, par 70, 7,000 yards. You need to stay out of the rough. That seems to be everyone we've had in here has said the same thing. You've always been one of the longer hitters on the Champions Tour. And this year, your stats are a little better in driving accuracy as well. I think you're in the top 15. Does that give you a bit of an advantage this week?

**MICHAEL ALLEN:** Without question. Out here, the key to this golf course for me is driving the ball well. When you drive the ball well, especially some of the medium range ones, you can get some nice shorter irons into them and make some birdies. Some of these longer holes, if you're not in the fairway, you are laying up, and there's no question about it. This course is really about you've got to drive the ball well, and I think that's one of my strengths. Hopefully, that will fare well.

**Q. Michael, looked like you were playing yesterday with your teacher, Mike Mitchell. How cool is it to have him in the field with you?**

**MICHAEL ALLEN:** It's fantastic. He called me up when he made it, and he was driving back, and he was like I made it, I got in. It was so great because this man, Mike Mitchell, has so much passion for the game. That's where he's helped me as much as anything. He's given me a lot of great tools with my technique and all that. But his passion for the game is second to none. So to see that -- then we were talking for a while, and we hung up. You could hear him already on the phone with somebody else, telling them. He's so excited to be here. His game's pretty good. We played today too. He's playing all right. I hope he can get the confidence. He said the other night, well, hopefully, I can make the cut. I said, you can win too. You can compete. Don't let yourself go before you even tee it up. But he's helped so many guys, like John Cook and Glasson and all these guys out here. He knows what it is and all that. It really makes it fun. We're having a great time every evening going out, and it's great to have him. He's helped me too. I should be playing pretty good with him there every day.

**Q. Your record in this championship is pretty darn good. What is it about this championship that brings out the best in your game? Is it the setup?**

**Is it playing for a national title? What gets you motivated?**

**MICHAEL ALLEN:** I think it's kind of a little bit of everything. It is a national title, USGA Championship, so we don't have any bigger in the game. But definitely on the Champions Tour, this is the best tournament we play in all year. They get fans out. You get a nice atmosphere here. But also, it's really fun to come out. It's like when I was a kid, going out and playing Olympic Club. I loved going out and playing the golf course. It was just fun. The challenge of different shots and all that went into it. Whenever you play great courses, that's kind of what it is, that challenge. So the setup, they get really great golf courses to play, and some are a little underestimated. You haven't really heard of them as much, the public. They come in here, and they set it up, and they made this thing just a wonderful golf course. I don't know anybody I've played with or talked to that doesn't go, man, this thing is just set up great. The fairways aren't too tight, but they're extreme when you miss them. So to come out on the first day and go out and try to beat this golf course is what it's about. That's what always gets me fired up. It's what I really enjoy doing and love the challenge.

**Q. Kevin Sutherland is a member here. You were a member at Olympic Club when you played in the 2012 U.S. Open. What kind of emotions do you go through when you're playing at your club in a national championship?**

**MICHAEL ALLEN:** For me at Olympic Club, it was really the highlight of my whole career. In the end, I didn't finish as well, but I had a chance. Everybody in the media was so nice to me, building it up. So to me, it was great. And it was for me that opportunity to play in front of all the friends I always wanted to play with, and the reason I started playing. Kevin is an experienced, great golfer, and now he's in his homeland, and it's extra -- it's nice, it's comfortable because you're around. I don't know if he has to buy an extra 50, 70 tickets like I did. I had to buy a lot of my friends. (Laughter). So it's a little bit tougher in a lot of ways. There's a lot of extra distractions. To me, it was always good. It's fun. I mean, I have a great time with it, and the game is fun now. So hopefully, he'll have a great time with it. There is a lot of extra distraction that comes with it. I don't know how good he is at prime rib like I am, but you know.

**Q. Michael, you're still playing very well at age 56. Bernhard Langer, 57, won by eight shots two weeks ago. From a fellow player's perspective, how good is that, and how good is he?**

**MICHAEL ALLEN:** He's still our -- the guy we judge our game against. He's still the best out here. His work ethic, the way he goes about things -- sometimes like, God, don't you have anything else to do? Don't you go

out with friends and have a beer or something? My goodness. But he's the litmus test for it. He's the guy we all want to always beat. And you know, when he plays well, he's the guy you're going to have to kind of compete with. He is. He's amazing how well he's gone about it, the way he's kept his fitness up. I'm sure he's playing as well now as he ever has. I know he's putting as well now than he ever has in his life. He's a true gentleman, a true champion. That's one of the great things out here, to be able to play against those wonderful champions like that.

THE MODERATOR: Michael Allen, 7:31 at the 10th tee on Thursday. Hope to see you in here again.