

US Open Championship 2016

Friday, June 17, 2016

Jason Kokrak

Flash Interview



Q. You have family in town?

JASON KOKRAK: Tons. My dad. I grew up about an hour and 20 minutes from here, Warren, Ohio. A lot of support. A lot of friends, family that come out to support me today. Today was a long day, but they were there for most of it. Most of it.

Q. How did you feel playing the two 18 almost like back to back? Did that benefit your game at all?

JASON KOKRAK: I think you find a little bit of a rhythm and I hit the ball well all day. So ran out of gas a little bit at the end, but happy with the way I've played. Happy with the way I putted out there.

The greens sped up two, three, four feet in the second round. Definitely some tougher pin placements, but played solid and kept it below the hole. I'm having fun.

Q. You competed in Oakmont before. What did you take away from those times, going in here?

JASON KOKRAK: I just kind of know what to expect. Playing the Amateur and playing the Open here, I know how fast the greens can get. I know some of the tricky pin placements. I know where not to hit it.

I think it's a little bit more friendly this year. The graduated rough is a little bit easier to play out of than some of the other stuff in the Amateur and the '07 Open.

But you've got to hit fairways. I'm hitting a lot of 2 irons, especially the second round. I hit drivers in the first round because it was wet and the 2 iron wouldn't get where I wanted it to. The golf course sets up good for me. Off the tee, hitting 2 irons, I can be a little bit not as aggressive as I normally would play. It's a great golf course. I'm having fun.

Q. What do you remember about your first time?

JASON KOKRAK: I remember it being extremely difficult. I think I putted it off the 1st green. My high school golf coach was a member here. I was here a couple times before the Am. It's a hard golf course. A par is a great score. Bogey's not going to kill you. It's eliminating the mistakes. I left it short on No. 1 and paid the price. Made double, but stuck with it all day.

Q. Was there anything that was key to your day?

JASON KOKRAK: Fairways, a lot of fairways. I hit a couple shots out of the rough. I got them up there

close. But I just didn't put myself in any really bad spots. I gave myself a lot of opportunities.

First round was a lot of 20-, 30-footers with the greens being a little slower, you could be somewhat aggressive. Second round, I hit it a little closer, gave myself good birdie opportunities. Just hung with it all day. 36 holes on this golf course is -- you've got to grind all day.

Q. What's that like mentally, to play 36 holes on this course?

JASON KOKRAK: It's about as hard as you're ever going to find. You're not going to find 36 holes that are harder than this golf course to play two rounds back to back in one day is very, very tough, very, very daunting. It's just one of those golf courses that you never can take any time off. You have to stick with it and if you have one mental mistake, it's an automatic double bogey.

Q. How are you feeling about playing again tomorrow?

JASON KOKRAK: I'm expecting the greens to get a little faster still. I'm expecting to firm up a little bit out there. So I'm looking forward to the challenge. I'm used to seeing the golf course the way it played in the afternoon. I misread a lot of putts in the morning round because the fire of these greens was kind of put out by all the rain. I know they didn't want to, you know, put too much -- too many mowers on them. But it's a golf course that you can make it as hard as you want.

I'm looking forward to it, and I'm playing well so hopefully I can continue to do that and have some fun with my friends and family.

Q. Do you think there's an advantage to having played it in the past, knowing what to expect?

JASON KOKRAK: Hundred percent. Knowing what to expect is key for me this week. I've kept it below the hole. I've hit one extra club into holes where I know I'm going to spin it off the green, like No. 2. It's just a golf course where you have to expect bogeys and just give yourself as many birdie opportunities as possible without having to hit the one-inch putt that rolls 40 feet.

Q. What happened at No. 1 and how were you able to put that out of your mind?



JASON KOKRAK: I hit it in the left rough. I tried to play kind of a shot that landed front of the green, maybe just a little bit short that would kind of bounce up and run up on to the green and I kind of -- it didn't come out. I hit it a little high on the face. Misjudged my chip shot. Came out soft.

Hit soft and I left my putt short too. Expecting the greens -- my first hole out with the greens being double cut and double rolled. So I was a little bit nervous on how fast that putt is to that back pin. I know you can roll it right off that green so just one mental mistake and I got it back on the next hole and continued on.

Q. Is it fun to play Oakmont?

JASON KOKRAK: Define fun.

Q. Did you have a good time out there?

JASON KOKRAK: Yeah, I have a great time on this golf course, but it's just, it's like beating your face into this wall. It's a great golf course. It's one of the best in the world. Yeah, I absolutely have fun on this golf course.

Q. Is it more like work than play?

JASON KOKRAK: It's a little bit of both, I think, with the U.S. Open. You see stuff that you don't normally see out on the PGA Tour. You see longer roughs, faster greens, trickier pin placements. It's one of the hardest venues out here. I think they made it a little easier, a little more manageable. I think if you hit it in the bunker, you're chipping out like I did on 18. It's tough either way.