

U.S. Junior Amateur

Press Conference

Saturday, July 25, 2015

Philip Barbaree



An interview with:
PHILIP BARBAREE

THE MODERATOR: All right, we're going to start out, we have Philip Barbaree the 2015 U.S. Junior Amateur champion. Philip, just to start out, tell us what it means to be the champion, a USGA champion, and to come back from 5-down to win it.

PHILIP BARBAREE: It means a lot with all the names that have won it. It's definitely the biggest junior tournament probably out there, and to win this tournament really means a lot. Just says a lot about how much I've been practicing and working so hard for this. Finally just came all together with in the past couple months. To win this is just really big. To come back from 5-down, I didn't really expect it. I was just grinding and trying to, you know, get some momentum and see what would happen. I guess ended up paying off. After the first 18 I was 2-down and I was really tired after the first 18. I mean, I got four, five hours of sleep last night. To come back out and play, do four holes, I just had no idea how I would do it. Wow, just means a lot.

THE MODERATOR: Talk about the par you made on 9. Seemed to get you going.

PHILIP BARBAREE: Yeah, well, all day I just was so uncomfortable with my putter. All day. I don't know why either. Actually pretty much this week it wasn't the best. But, I mean being it got the job done, thank goodness, but from 9 I had no shot really from that side. Just trying to get it up there. I wasn't going to lay back when I was 5-down, so I just tried to hit a hybrid and hit it in the bunker. I been having those shots, couple of those shots this week and I've been hitting them pretty good, so I knew I could hit it down pretty good. It was same type of shot, 90 yards; I hit it up in about four feet. That putt was pretty big. I got over it and that was probably the most comfortable I've been over a putt. Right when I hit it, I knew then. That just really set the tone for the back nine. After that putt I told myself that I was getting a little better, feeling a little more comfortable. Get the momentum and maybe something will happen. I just can't believe it.

THE MODERATOR: When you won holes 11 and 12,

did you feel like that's the moment, Wow, now I have a chance?

PHILIP BARBAREE: Yeah, 11, that was just a good birdie there after he was out of position. And then 12, I really thought -- after 12, after I made that putt -- it's one thing to just run it down there and you can see the hole, but when you make that putt it really sends more of a message. I knew after that putt I had a really good shot at it. I knew that momentum was changing. I knew I had to just keep on doing what I was doing and just hang in there.

Q. You share the same swing coach with Jordan. Have you heard from Jordan? Have you heard from your coach? You plan on meeting Jordan?

THE MODERATOR: Jordan Spieth, by the way.

PHILIP BARBAREE: Yeah, I mean, I haven't met him yet, but I hope I get the chance. I hope we'll get to play together, but... I forgot the question. Sorry.

Q. You share the same swing coach with him. Have you heard from Cameron at all?

PHILIP BARBAREE: Yeah. Well, he just texted me. I'm sure I will call him and talk to him and go see him after the tournament. But he just really helped get to where I am. I mean, at the end of the year last year I didn't really know what I was doing. He helped me get back on the path where I wanted to go, knew I could go. Just shows how good and confident he is with his players. He really just knows what he's doing, knows what he's talking about. He's not just a swing coach or somebody that's out there trying to just get money or something like that. He full on just really took me under and helped me a lot. Sometimes was over there at 6:00, 7:00 at night helping me. Really means a lot to me. Just been so instrumental in getting me where I am.

Q. When exactly did you start working with him?

PHILIP BARBAREE: Actually, I started working with him in the summer, at the end of the summer 2013. That was about the time that David Toms Academy, 265, was opening up, and I didn't really get over to Dallas much. I just thought maybe someone that was just there constantly looking at me would be better for me. Didn't turn out well at all. You can never replace what Cameron is to me and what he is to those

players. Jordan, Ryan Grider, Will Zalatoris, me, Jordan. I think I said him already. I started working back with him at the beginning of this year.

Q. That's really when it all turned around for you?
PHILIP BARBAREE: Yeah, just all turned around. I've been work hard. I knew I could do it. He's helped me just believe in myself and just be confident. I knew I could do it. I just had to believe in myself. He helped me so much.

Q. With this win it will now move you to No. 2 behind Sam. Next month he's going to graduate and you're going to overtake the No. 1 spot in junior golf. What does that mean to you?
PHILIP BARBAREE: It really means a lot. I mean, to be behind Sam, he's been such a good role model for me. Looking after him and seeing how hard he works -- I mean, we've been close for a long time. He lives on the same road as me. We practice together all the time Nathan. It's really amazing to see how much we've grown as a team and together. You might see me out there playing, but we all -- I mean, we do try to beat each other, but at the end of the day we want what's best for each other. And Sam has helped me so much. Really just everybody, honestly. There's not enough people to thank. Just to be there right behind Sam is just amazing. I hope he stays there. I know there is not a good chance, but I know we'll have a great team.

Q. Speaking of Louisiana, you're the first guy since Willie Wood, 38 years ago, to win this Championship.
PHILIP BARBAREE: It wasn't just me at all. I have to go back to everybody that's around me. My parents, Nathan, Cameron, my fitness guy, James, and God. I couldn't have done it -- it's not just me at all. So many from other people. Just the people around me, we just wanted this so bad; been working so hard. It's all coming together right now. Just an awesome feeling.

Q. Talk about the 2017 class. Andrew is a 2017 guy. Do you think this class has a potential to be as good as the 2011, 2015 class?
PHILIP BARBAREE: We'll see about that. I mean, 2015 was pretty good. I don't know. We'll have to just wait and see. I know we've been showing up a lot lately, but I don't know. I think we'll just have and see how that progresses. I mean, I guess you could say me and Andrew being in the final, that kind of speaks for itself. It's kind of hard to replace those classes. You have a couple people like me and Andrew and couple others, I mean, everybody else, Ryan Grider, all those people that are around us. I mean, yeah, I could see one or two years down the road we could be just as good.

Q. Wyndham Cup in a few days, and then you go right to Miramont for Junior PGA.
PHILIP BARBAREE: Yeah.

Q. That's a lot of golf.
PHILIP BARBAREE: Yeah. When I was sitting down eating I was really thinking how I would get through that last 18 holes. I was thinking on 15 on my first 18, I just can't. I just died honestly. I was so tired. Then...

Q. Let's go back to the match. The 18th hole, when he hit it out of bounds, were you in shock as much as he was?
PHILIP BARBAREE: I was, because he had been playing great all day. I knew when I hit my ball in the fairway that I had a pretty good shot of winning the hole. But he hit it after hitting it over there, I mean, the wind was coming 20 miles an hour straight left to right. It's not hard to do. Just a little miss. I mean, I could see it, but I can't because he's such a good player. I know that really opened the door for me and gave me new hope.

Q. On the extra hole when he was in the hay and he put it over the green, what were you thinking then?
PHILIP BARBAREE: I was just thinking, Don't get emotional. I never feel emotional at all and then after he hit it off the green I felt something hit me. I was like, Oh, my gosh. I mean, yeah, I knew there was always a possibility -- I mean, I 3-putted, so I know there is a possibility he could get on the green and then 2-putt for bogey or making it for par. I was just trying to do my job of 2-putting. I really didn't have the speed all day, but I it got up there and hit it a little short of the hole and then lagged my three-footer.

Q. Was that the first time you've ever lagged a three-footer?
PHILIP BARBAREE: Probably, yeah. I'm happy about it, too.

Q. Take me back to 11 real quickly, because that was the turning point in both the morning and afternoon matches, morning for him and afternoon for you. Talk about No. 11 in both rounds.
PHILIP BARBAREE: Yeah, No. 11 first round I was 3-up; hit two great shots; thought it would be a little closer, but it was 35 feet probably. Like I said, speed was way off all day. He hit this unbelievable shot. I thought no chance he would make birdie. Makes birdie; I 3-putt. Right there, that's when the (indiscernible) started, right there pretty much. Then he went on to win four (?) More holes, so, yeah, pretty much there. Then second 18, I knew he was in a little bit of trouble there on the right. I had a choice of going for it or laying it up. I knew I really couldn't get a great shot at it, but I knew I could get it somewhere on the green. So I

wasn't going to lay up after 5-down, just like on No. 9. Ended up hitting a great shot to right on the front edge and chipped it up to about two feet. I think that was just a good hole. I don't think that was a momentum swinger because I think he just played a good hole. Next hole just huge, huge, huge. I mean, after I hit it on the green, I mean, I made that putt. I mean, that was the biggest turning point. Maybe one of the biggest putts I ever hit, so...

Q. That's one of the intricacies of the match play. Did you sense the change in his body language or demeanor at all?

PHILIP BARBAREE: No, not really. I will tell you -- I just look at this stuff. I don't know why, I just do. But on the first like probably eight holes I think we played, the whole time we were walking I was looking ahead and I could see his head just straight down. I mean, that's just body language right there. But, I mean, I couldn't really see much. That doesn't mean anything. I'm just pointing out stuff that doesn't really matter. Then after I made the birdie on 12, after he had been holding his head high the whole day, after that, after the turning point in the first match, he started hanging his head down again, and I knew I had a chance. I mean, that doesn't really mean anything. He may have just been thinking about stuff. I can't talk for him. But, yeah.

Q. Considering the heat that you went through this week and all the delays and then the way this match went back and forth, how do you stay focused in that time to play the golf that you need to to win this Championship? What do you do to try and stay focused?

PHILIP BARBAREE: I really just focused on my game. I mean, try not worry about what everybody else is doing. I knew I was down early. I was down in my last three matches. I really just had to keep playing, keep grinding, and hope for a momentum swinger. That's what you do: stay focused. It's a lot easier to stay focused in match play than stroke play, just because stroke play you can do all sorts of things and score. It's not just one hole. Then match play you're focused on that one hole, one shot. It's just a lot easier to focus on that. But, yeah, if Jordan was still playing I probably wouldn't have made it, but... That's probably the reason -- or probably why I stayed so focused. I knew match play, it's one hole at a time. I knew momentum swings just come like that. (Snapping fingers.)