

U.S. Amateur Championship

Friday, August 21, 2015

Derek Bard

Press Conference



PETE KOWALSKI: We welcome Derek Bard who is a 1-up winner over Jon Rahm, world No. 1 ranking in the amateur golf rankings, and into the semifinals of the 2015 U.S. Amateur.

That's got to sound pretty good to you I would think.

DEREK BARD: Yeah, it sounds pretty sweet, not going to lie. Yeah, just kind of grinded away at him today. He had me early. Like I was telling Holly earlier, I kept a positive outlook, stayed patient and it fell my way.

Q. It seemed like on 15, Jon missed a shorter putt in there, and then right after that the match started to turn in your direction. Was that a momentum swing in your eyes?

DEREK BARD: For sure. I hit a decent shot in there about 20 feet pin-high right and he steps up there, hit a great shot about four feet underneath the hole. I missed mine. I figure, okay, 2-down, three to go. It's going to be tough. And his lipped-out.

Obviously it was a huge momentum swing, because at that point I was still down. But I felt like that I had a lot of control at that point. So that was probably the turning point for the last few holes.

PETE KOWALSKI: So you're standing on the 11th tee and you're 3-down, what are you thinking and is there a, take a deep breath and see what we can have happen, or what were you saying to yourself?

DEREK BARD: For sure. Yeah, like you said, 3-down, eight to go. It's not a good position to be in. But I just tried to keep it as simple as possible. I really focused on getting my drive in the fairway there and it was an easy pin up the front left and I had a wedge in my hand. So hit a good drive there, wedge in there, and made the putt.

I felt like at that point, kind of pumped me up a little bit and kind of turned the tables on him and I was able to make some putts coming in and turn the match around.

Q. Have you surprised yourself this week?

DEREK BARD: Surprised myself? Yeah, maybe a little bit. Last year I made it to round 32. And in that match, I remember I didn't play too well. So I was really hungry to not only get back here but make -- it's hard enough to make match play; make match play and win

a few matches. I've never made it past round 32 in a USGA event, two U.S. Juniors, lost in the round of 32. That was kind of like the curse on me.

I won that match and after that, I kind of look at it like everything else was a bonus. I'm out here just playing golf and every guy I faced, we both tee it up together and on we go.

Q. How much do you like Olympia Fields? Do you feel like it suits your game, suits your eye a little bit?

DEREK BARD: No, it's fantastic. We are treated like professionals here, and every time I come back to this tournament, it's awesome. Olympia Fields is great. Nothing, I mean -- I don't know, it's a great course. I feel like a lot of tee shots kind of fit my eye, some of the doglegs, I can shape my shot in there. Didn't do it too well today early but kind of pressed on. The greens were fantastic today. They were running really fast today, faster than they were all day, and luckily I made some putts.

Q. How would you describe your game, what are the strengths of it?

DEREK BARD: I'd say putting. The second half of the summer, I haven't putted too well. I considered changing putters like a week leading up to this event, stuck with it, and luckily I stuck with it. Actually in the first two stroke-play rounds, I didn't putt my best but I hit it pretty solid, and that's kind of propelled me through to the match play. Starting with that first match on Wednesday, putter heated up, I started making putts and here I am.

Q. Would you consider yourself long off the tee?

DEREK BARD: Not really. Compared to Jon today, not at all. He was behind me about 20 or 30 yards every tee shot, and he was just down the middle every time. It was pretty intimidating. But you know, I can get it out there I'd say. But compared to some of those guys, not even close.

PETE KOWALSKI: You win Sunnehanna. Is that something to give you a bit of a boost to the rest of the competitors?

DEREK BARD: It was huge. I mean, Sunnehanna is such a prestigious tournament, great people, so many

tour professionals have played there and won. I was happy to add myself to that list.

Yeah, absolutely. Definitely gave me some momentum for the rest of the summer. Follow that I didn't play my best but I felt it was still there. Just trying to get it out of me and luckily it showed up this week and I'm playing really well to the best of my ability.

PETE KOWALSKI: For folks who follow amateur golf know your name, but other folks that are casual viewers of golf that are probably not real familiar with you. Does that under-the-radar thing kind of help you?

DEREK BARD: Yeah, I kind of like that, especially with my last two matches. Hunter, All-American, Walker Cup member, I think he was fifth in the world or something; going against him, I'm a no-name. Same today: Show up, Jon Rahm, No. 1 in the world I'm a no-name compared to him.

I kind of look at it like if I win, that's fantastic. If I lose, I was supposed to lose. That kind of just makes me feel a little freer out there; just hit good shots and keep it as simple as possible.

PETE KOWALSKI: The fact you were against those guys, helps your confidence level there, too, right.

DEREK BARD: Absolutely, yeah. I'm feeling pretty good. I'm playing well. So we'll see what happens tomorrow. I think I'm playing Kenta.

No, we'll see. I don't know anything about him and I'm sure he's a nice kid. Look forward to teeing it up with him.

Q. Do you let the potential of making the Walker Cup Team slip into your mind at all?

DEREK BARD: I haven't really been on the radar. Maybe after Sunnehanna, popped up on the screen. But I'm not thinking about that right now. There's a lot of great players that are probably ahead of me on that list for the last five stops. I'm just going to go out there tomorrow and do the same thing I've been doing for the last few days.

PETE KOWALSKI: Appreciate your time. Congratulations.