

U.S. Amateur Championship

Wednesday, August 19, 2015

David Cooke

Press Conference



Q. David Cooke from Bolingbrook, Illinois, 3 & 2 winner in the first round of match play at the U.S. Amateur. Nice to have a win this close to home at the U.S. Amateur I'm sure?

DAVID COOKE: Yes, definitely. I'm glad I got into this tournament, glad I've been doing well, and glad to make everybody from Chicago proud. Illinois, I guess.

Q. Had you had U.S. Amateur experience before or any USGA?

DAVID COOKE: No, this is my first U.S. Amateur. I played in the U.S. Public Links last summer. That was my first USGA event last summer.

Q. How did that go?

DAVID COOKE: I missed the cut last year at the Pub Links.

Q. How did an Illinois boy end up in Raleigh, North Carolina?

DAVID COOKE: Going to school. Loves Raleigh, loves the coaches. I started off at Purdue University in West Lafayette, and after my first year decided to transfer and really wanted to go somewhere in the southeast, somewhere with some better weather. Coach Sykes seemed like a good coach, seemed like somebody that I could get along with really well and somebody that would -- he's had success with previous guys before, and I figured he would be a good coach to learn from.

Q. Which courses did you play growing up here?

DAVID COOKE: I worked out at Bolingbrook Golf Club in high school for about three or four years. I'd say the majority was spent there.

Q. What did you do when you were working there?

DAVID COOKE: I was a driving range attendant, doing the driving range picker.

Q. You were the target?

DAVID COOKE: Yeah.

Q. That's a place where you really have to learn how to hit fairways because if you're off the fairway there you're bouncing into the water.

DAVID COOKE: Yep, it was a good course to learn from because the wind is really exposed out there, and they have tees that are pretty far back, so it was a good training aid for college golf. I think playing out there

really got me to learn how to play on the bigger championship-style golf courses.

Q. Were you able to play there for free? How did it work?

DAVID COOKE: Yeah, yeah. Most of the reason -- I would work once or twice a week. Most of the reason was so that I could practice and work for free.

Q. Did you work for Mike Williams out there?

DAVID COOKE: I did. He was my boss's boss. I knew Mike well, but I worked for Rick Nelson, ran the academy down on the other side of the driving range, and that's where I worked.

Q. Can you tell us a little bit about your match? It looks like you got out early and you were just able to keep grinding along there.

DAVID COOKE: Yeah, I birdied the first two holes to go 2-up, and I thought that it was definitely a good start to be able to just kind of ride that out as long as I can, not give it back, and it kind of stayed right around 2-up the majority of the round. I just wanted to keep hitting good shots, hitting it on the green and making sure that I was putting pressure on him, and if I made birdie, that's great, but just make sure that I wasn't giving him any holes, making sure that I was just staying in it as long as I could.

Q. Two-part experience question: How much experience have you had playing at Olympia Fields, and how much match play experience have you had?

DAVID COOKE: Olympia Fields my freshman year when I was playing for Purdue, we played in the University of Illinois's tournament on the South Course, so I played that course three or four times, and then I've played the North Course probably three or four times over the last few years just with buddies and members that are friends of mine, get lessons with the same guy, stuff like that.

Match play, I don't have a lot of experience. I've played in an ACC-SEC Challenge last fall, and we only played one match. In the last year or so that's the only time I've played match play. We had big ten match play my freshman year when I was at Purdue. That was three years ago, though. So that was the only other time probably.

Q. I know we talked to you a little bit about this yesterday, but do you feel like you're still riding a little bit of the confidence from winning the Illinois Open this summer?

DAVID COOKE: Yeah, I think that was a big stepping-stone for me knowing that I could compete at that level. You know, my coach tells me, my swing coach, John Perna, has reminded me to just continue to think about that round, think about those days, and just try to visualize hitting the golf ball, hitting shots the way that I did the rounds there. You know, I played well the first two days here, but I wasn't hitting very many fairways, so I hit my driver great at Illinois Open, and he just kept telling me to remind myself of that and just kind of picture those rounds and just think about those. The Illinois Open is definitely a great memory to have in the bank going into this match play.

Q. I know Royal Melbourne isn't Olympia Fields, but still, when you go out and shoot 63 somewhere, that's obviously playing some good golf. Is that your low round?

DAVID COOKE: Yep, 63 is low, 63 is best. I think I've shot 65 four or five times in tournaments, but 63, that was the first time.