

U.S. Amateur Championship

Wednesday, August 19, 2015

Paul Dunne

Press Conference



Q. We'd like to welcome Paul Dunne, 2-up winner in his first round match here at the U.S. Amateur.

Nice to get to match play, nice to get to a win after the special exemption from the USGA. That's got to be pleasing for you.

PAUL DUNNE: Yeah, it was great. The week of the cutoff of the World Rankings I think I was 60th, so I didn't make the top 50. But by the time the tournament came around, I was well inside, so it was nice to get an exemption in that I'm grateful for. I played nicely in stretches in the stroke play and struggled a little bit, but I managed to kind of scrape it in at level par, comfortably get in.

Today I started off playing nicely. I hit, I think, the first -- I'm trying to think. I hit the first eight greens in regulation, had some good chances to get up in my match. Didn't quite take them. When he made a mistake on 9 I got 1-up, and a nice birdie on 12 got me to 2-up. Then coming in I made a couple of soft bogeys really on 13 from the middle of the fairway, and then 15, which is really basic par-3, just misjudged the wind a bit. Yeah, but it was nice to play the last three holes well and close the match out.

Q. You said you thought on the tee at 18 -- what was your thought there?

PAUL DUNNE: Well, the tees were up 12 yards from where they normally are. I thought the way the bunkers come in makes it only about 15 yards wide there where you land driver, so with the wind into, I thought about laying up because you go in the bunkers, you can't reach the green. But then I would have had a rescue in for my second shot, so I thought if I could just pick a tree out and swing as hard as I could with a driver and pick my target and commit, that's all I could do. So yeah, I hit the best drive I've hit all week there, which was nice. I think I got it out there about 300 yards into the wind, which is long for me, and yeah, he made a mistake, hit it in the bunker, and then tried to take on -- I think because he was 1-down, tried to take on more than he could and hit the lip. Once he did that, I knew if I just hit the green, I'd be safe, so I hit a good 6-iron in there to about eight feet, as well. It was nice to hit two of my best shots of the day on the last.

Q. You were hitting the ball a long way past him all day. You hit the first eight greens in regulation. He was like a guy that wasn't going to go away, short game and everything else. Was it frustrating?

PAUL DUNNE: Not really. You knew it was going to be tough, but the golf course is tough anyway. And kind of with the wind the way it was today, it's tough to make birdie, so we kind of found ourselves in a bit of a par battle. I kind of gave myself some good chances on 4, 5 and 6 from short range, and I hit three good putts, I just misread the three of them. Nothing I could do about that. I was happy with the shots I hit.

But I knew that if I just stuck to playing the way I was that eventually I was going to win a few holes. Yeah, he was doing a good job of saving pars in the first few holes, and all credit to him. His chipping and putting was good. Yeah, but I was happy that I could close it out down the last three.

Q. Were you playing the course rather than the man today?

PAUL DUNNE: Yeah, I think the course is too hard to deviate from that, really. It doesn't matter how many up or down you are, you've got to hit fairways. If you miss fairways you're going to be on the back foot from the start, so I was driving the ball really well, apart from a couple. I mean, I hit a bad drive on 14 but managed to save par. Not a great one on 16, but it was down the side that I was trying to miss it on if I was going to miss it. That wasn't too bad. But apart from that I was hitting the ball long and straight, which is a real advantage around here. I had the advantage of length on him. Just around the middle of the round I had a few shots I could get aggressive with, but the greens are so soft after the rain that I just kept over-spinning my wedge shots. Even though I kept trying to take spin off, they just kept spinning.

Yeah, it was good to get up, but disappointing then to kind of throw it away in the middle, but nice to hit some good shots on the last few holes.

Q. The course obviously playing a hell of a lot longer than it was. Did that bother you?

PAUL DUNNE: No, they actually had a few tees up today. It probably played a little more into my hands considering I was a bit longer than he was off the tee. Yeah, a few of the holes into the wind like 9, they had the tee up, but if they have the tee back there, it's barely reachable in two for a par-4 with the way the wind was. So a few holes I got there, they had the tee moved up or just the front of the tee box further on, so

it was definitely playable, you just had to hit good shots.

Q. Do you know who you're playing the next round?

PAUL DUNNE: I haven't even looked to be honest. I didn't know who I was playing standing on the first tee today, I just knew my tee time.

Q. You've had a fairly busy stretch from the Open. You've had the European Match Play and then you went to slow vac I can't or something; is that right?

PAUL DUNNE: Yeah, after the Open I had a bit of a break. I had 12 days off before slow vac I can't for the European Amateur. That was last week. I mean, for the first few days after the Open there was a lot of interviews and stuff, but after that I calmed down, I got a good break, so I was well rested for last week. The Irish had a good showing last week, so that was good for all of us on the team.

Yeah, on to this week I had two days off in between, but I got here early. I got here last Wednesday, so plenty of time to adjust to the time difference and the temperature.

Q. You don't have any exhaustion at this stage or you don't feel as though -- again, we're only at the first round.

PAUL DUNNE: Yeah, I wasn't feeling the best yesterday, but today I was fine. Yeah, I got a good night's sleep last night, got some food into me, and I was fine.

Q. You've kind of got to pace yourself because it is a long week and just survive and get to the next round?

PAUL DUNNE: Well, you don't know how far you're going to get. Obviously you hope and plan to get as far as you can, but you could run into a steam train, someone birdies every hole tomorrow, or you could have the easiest match of your life. It's impossible to tell. It's just important to take your rest when you can get it and not do anything stupid and tire yourself out.

Q. Gary Hurley on the bag; is it good to have someone like that? He's a great green reader. I don't know if you used him much for that.

PAUL DUNNE: Yeah, definitely. Good to have Gary on the bag. We're great friends. Someone that knows as much as he does about the game, he keeps my mind from wandering off the topics that it should be on. He keeps me focused. Especially when I lost a couple holes there towards the end, go back to all square, it's easy for your mind to wander and get a bit flustered and worry about the momentum that you've lost. But yeah, he just kept kind of putting me in the right direction, telling me to just focus on the shot you're

hitting, just commit to it and that's all you can do. So it's good to have someone to talk to like that that has as much experience as he has. I'd have rather him not be caddying. I'd rather him have got through this morning, but yeah, unfortunately they didn't have the finish they needed, so just missed out. But it's good to have a friend on the bag.

Q. You're foursomes partners, so he probably knows your game better than Danny would?

PAUL DUNNE: Yeah, hopefully we can play foursomes again in a couple weeks at the Walker Cup. Yeah, he definitely has seen my game over the last couple years more than anyone else on the Irish team. We get on well, and it's just great to have someone like that taking the bag.

Q. He's employed tomorrow, is he?

PAUL DUNNE: If he wants to. I'm not sure if he has other plans. But yeah, if he's available, yeah, he can take it whenever he wants.