

U.S. Amateur Championship

Saturday, August 22, 2015

Bryson DeChambeau

Press Conference

PETE KOWALSKI: Like to welcome Bryson DeChambeau, a 3&4 winner over Sean Crocker in the semifinals of the 2015 U.S. Amateur.

I guess the first thing would be: You're in a place that you've not been before. That must be pretty special for you.

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Absolutely. This is the first time obviously in nine years, three Amateur tries, it's something I've been looking forward to for a long time and I'm finally able to do it.

To be here with the best players in the world that have played here and won here, is pretty incredible: Bobby Jones, Tiger Woods, Phil Mickelson and a couple others, it's incredible.

I'm so honored and appreciative of the USGA and what they have done this week, and past championships, as well.

Q. You're obviously a guy who is a little aware of history. You could be the fifth person to win the NCAA and U.S. Am in the same year, and you know who the other four years I fancy. What do you think of that notion of that happening tomorrow?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: I haven't even thought about that yet. I know there has been five. I can't remember exactly -- I know Phil Mickelson has done it. Tiger Woods I think did it -- Jack and Tiger, yeah. To be in that group of players would be incredible. Still got to go out and do some work tomorrow.

Still got 36 more holes to play. But again, I'm looking forward to the challenge and hopefully rise to the challenge and do my best.

Q. Coming off of the NAAs in April, how does an event like this compare to the pressure that you felt back then? Is it a very similar contrast? And course setup, as well, do you find there's some similarities there, as well?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Well, I'd say that at the Concession Club, you had to be a great driver of the golf ball, and out here it's the same thing. You've got to be able to hit it in the fairway and hit your greens. Make a couple putts -- it's just like any golf course.

It's more penalizing out here when you don't hit the



fairway, and it's even more penalizing actually at Concession Club. You had to hit every fairway or you would be in the palmettos or whatnot.

But the pressure as it relates to here, it's going to probably be about the same I've got to admit. It will be a fun battle tomorrow, and if I can stay in the moment and do my best in every single situation, I'll do just fine.

Q. On today's match, just a brief period early on where you were not in control. You had things pretty much your way most of the day. How did you get over that and take command?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Well, again, like I've said before, I'm just going to try and play my game, and on average, I think that my game was a little bit better than his, and I didn't worry about the hiccups on 5 and 6. Yeah, I hit a bad tee shot but that's going to happen. That's golf, and I didn't worry about that.

I went forward, played 7 nicely, almost made birdie. And then 8, I made a great par. And 9, I also made a great par. And making par on those two holes is very difficult, and that actually flipped the momentum again my way.

Q. You say you've come to learn in match play that you do pay attention to your opponents, so you're playing an emotional guy today who gets fired up out there. How important was it to stay on top and not really let him get too fired up?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Well, when you've got an emotional guy like that, personally, I think walking ahead of him and making him feel like he's behind me gives a perspective change I think for him, and he knew it. He knew that he was behind and he needed to keep pressing and hitting good shots, because I wasn't going to let down. And ultimately, it got to him. And on 13, missed a tee shot; 14, didn't hit that great of a tee shot, and that was the match.

Q. I think at 11, he cut it down to where you were only one up, but it seemed like you just played your game, turned it up a little bit. Can you talk about that change there where you kind of went on that run from 12 to 14 there to really take control?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: So on 12, that was a huge second shot to stuff it in there to six feet. I knew that he was most likely going to get up-and-down, even

though it was a ridiculously hard shot, and he did hit a great shot to a foot and gave it to him. I had a 6-footer, and I threw it right in the heart.

It was kind of the same feeling as 15 yesterday with Paul Dunne. He made a 30-footer on me, and I had a six-foot slider again and I drained it, made it right on top of him. So that showed the change at least from my perspective of that I'm not worried about anybody else. I'm focused on my own game. I'm just going to make my shots.

Q. What did you hit there?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: I hit a 42-degree, which is a 9-iron.

Q. On a lighter note, obviously in a similar position today off of 6 tee. Any side effects from poison ivy from yesterday?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: No, I was lucky enough not to touch the poison ivy. Today was a little deeper into the hazard, so I had to take a penalty shot. Did my best to make par there, but unfortunately, didn't cut it enough. It was out of the rough, and he hit a great bunker shot up there to five feet and made it.

PETE KOWALSKI: Is there a certain point in the season where you kind of felt things were coming together, maybe before the NCAA? Was it as far back as maybe when you shot 61 in Japan at the World Amateur? What is the place where you kind of felt where, this could be a pretty good run for me?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Well, it wasn't about a run. It was more about an attitude change, and that happened last year -- not this year's Western Amateur, but the year before out at Beverly Country Club, I started playing not for myself, but for Christ, and that's ultimately what changed my perspective on the golf course and help me play to my best potential. Not anything for myself, but for Him, and that's ultimately what changed my attitude, helped me believe more in myself and helped me get the job done.

Q. What do you know about Derek? And in this position, would you prefer to be the favorite or the underdog?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: People always give players names, whether it's an underdog or leader of the pack or whatever. I'm not worried about that. Again, it's 36 holes, anything could happen. And like I've said before many times, I'm just going to go do my best, and I think my best will be good enough tomorrow.

Q. What do you know about Derek?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: I'm sorry, I don't know anything about him. I know he's a great player, goes to

Virginia I've heard, and he's here for the finals, so it's going to be a great match (laughter). It's going to be a good match.

Q. Have you sent a message this week, not in winning matches, but in how decisively you've been winning these matches?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: I would think so. Been playing pretty well. I don't know how many under par I am on this golf course. I think what's really helped me this week is when I'm out there, I'm not focusing on anybody else. I'm focusing on hitting the fairway, hitting the green and making the putt.

And there are certain times where I am being influenced by the player and what he does, but ultimately, it's 60 percent of just play your own game and then 40 percent being decisive of what he's done.

Q. Who influenced you at Beverly west? Tell us about that.

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Yeah, so Mike Schy, my caddie this week, actually threw me a book when I was 16, for my 16th birthday and it was called The Handbook on Athletic Perfection, a guy by the name of Wes Neal, and I had not read it. I was always neglecting it and never really reading it and didn't really think anything of it.

Before that, I always went to church, always believed I was a Christian but I didn't truly have a relationship with Christ. He threw me this book and it talked about spiritual perfection and not worldly perfection because it's unattainable.

And that helped me understand, in reading through that book during the Western Am, that I'm not playing for myself or for anybody else out there. I'm playing for Him. And if I can do my best in every single situation, and do it for Him, then I'm not going to be -- I shouldn't be worried about anything. I should have no fear because my life is saved and I'm not worried about anything else.

So that helped me a little bit. But it was after Zander -- to give you a little background on it. On the 18th hole, I was 1-down and I hit it down the right-hand side into the rough. He also did, as well. And we got called in for a rain delay for some reason. There's no rain that came. It was kind of weird. I don't know why it happened but it happened.

So came back out after 30 minutes. I had a hybrid out of the long rough. It was a difficult shot and I duck-hooked it. It was a terrible, awful shot. And now I'm thinking to myself, I'm going to lose. I'm done.

But for some reason, I had this brief moment of relapse

and said, hey, that's not the way Christ would act. He would not do that. He would try his best every single time.

So I went over, and after he hit his shot in the middle of the fairway, I went over and hit my shot. It was a very difficult shot, over a bunker, underneath trees, 200 yards away. Had to roll it up and over the green, and I hit it perfectly. I just said, I'm just going to execute it to my best and I did. But it went over the green about 40 feet away and he hit his onto the green about 30 feet.

I was thinking to myself, I have to chip it in, but for some reason, in that one moment where I was on the back edge of the green, chipping, I couldn't hit the shot. For the first time that week, I was nervous. I didn't know why. I just couldn't hit the shot. It took me about two minutes to finally pull the trigger.

I said to my caddie, "I've just got to go. I've just got to hit it." So I ultimately got up there, took out my 9-iron, hit a nice bump-and-run, and it actually went in the hole. It was incredible. I'll never forget that.

And I said: Cool, this is how I'm -- I'm going to do everything for Him and I'm going to honor Him and He's going to honor me by winning. That's not the case obviously, but that's what I was thinking at that particular point in time.

So he still had a 30-footer to win the match. He hit his putt, it was going six feet by, hit the back of the cup, went up, into the cup. I lost the match. (Laughter). So I was thinking to myself, why did that happen? (Laughter).

And I went, I was thinking about it, I shook their hands and was kind and courteous to the tournament director and everybody and I acted in the right way. I was still bitter after about losing. I didn't understand it. I thought to myself, if I honored Him, He would honor me and I thought that's what it was about. But it wasn't about that. That was worldly perfection and I could never attain that.

But what I did, how I acted, influenced others. And I realized that when I called Mike Schy on the phone about ten minutes after the match was done. I went over to chip and putt, and I called him and I cried literally for 15, 20 minutes. Because that moment, the Holy Spirit entered my life, and I finally understood what it meant to be a true Christian: Having a direct relationship with Him, doing it for Him, not for anybody else. And that's what changed my life.

Q. No matter what happens tomorrow, obviously with the success that you've had over this summer and previous summers, what do you view as your

role in golf moving forward?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: I hope that I can honestly revolutionize the game of golf in a unique way; in a way that tells everybody, do it your own way, kind of like Arnold Palmer says, swing your own swing. That's what I like, what I like to do and what I want to do for the game of golf. I think there's many ways to do it, and the routes or the opportunities that golf presents itself are endless. There are many routes that people can go. Look at all the golf swings out there, and even my golf swing, how I play.

So if anything, I would like to show people and tell people, play your own game and play to the best of your ability; and if you do that, that's all you can do.

Q. Touching on that, you've got some significant TV time this year, whether it was NAAs or Tour events or now. Are you surprised that more people haven't tried your method of playing in terms of the 6-iron length and all that?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Honestly, no. It's a very unique, oddball way of playing golf (laughter). But it works for me, and I think down the road, for the future of the game, it could be beneficial. If you think about it, most people struggle with hitting long irons, because of the length. They can't control a 3-iron.

But I think if we get a fitting system that's correct, and we're able to manufacture these heads at a costly price, or at a nice price where people can afford it, then it could be very beneficial for people starting out.

The reason why they don't want to play the game is because it's too difficult, the golf course is too long and it's too tough to hit a golf ball. They won't want to do it.

But I think by making all the shafts the same length, putting the same posture in, same everything, they will be able to hit the golf ball a lot easier and a lot more efficiently and they will like it a lot more. It could revolutionize the game of golf in the future.

But as of right now, it's too tough. No manufacturer is willing to do it. And it's because I'm not on Tour. There's not one guy on Tour who is doing it, and so why should they ever do that and it's understandable. You have SuperStroke that is out there making a lot of money now because of what K.J. Choi did and now what Jordan Spieth is doing. It takes one guy to change the world.

Q. There are certain indications that come with being a U.S. Amateur finalist or even more so maybe even if you win tomorrow, that come from the Opens and Masters and things like that. Will you stay amateur long enough to take advantage of

some of those invitations that you'll probably get from the position of this tournament?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Absolutely.

PETE KOWALSKI: Tomorrow is a big stage. What do you do the rest of the day to get yourself so you're in a position to be ready and play 36 holes for a big prize?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Yeah, well, first off, I haven't played 17 or 18, so I've got to go play those holes and figure those holes out (laughing) because I'm going to play it at least once.

I'll relax this afternoon and have a nice time enjoying friends and family and hopefully -- well, my parents will be here tomorrow, as well as a couple other great friends of mine. So get to see them in the morning and that will be awesome. But I'll keep my body healthy, do my isometrics, eat right and just have fun. Enjoy this moment.

This doesn't come along very often. I'm so honored to be able to be in this position and playing this well. I couldn't have imagined it. But it's something I've worked hard for for a long time, and I'm excited. I'm just so excited for the opportunity tomorrow to play for the Havemeyer Trophy.

Q. I was just wondering, you mentioned to have fun this afternoon. What do you like to do when you're not playing golf?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Honestly, I like to write cursive backwards and left-handed. Something that is weird, obviously, but that's me, I'm unique.

Q. It sounds perfectly normal.

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Exactly. But I do those sort of things to keep my mind off of golf and to help my fine motor skills with my hands, create more sensitivity and increase my brainpower, try and do something like that. Then I'll also watch TV and watch a couple movies maybe, I don't know, and go have some Boston Market tonight.

Q. When you're writing cursive backwards, are you writing something you're copying from a book or something off the top of your head?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: It could be anything. I know how to write my name backwards and left-handed in cursive and I can sign it pretty well. So that's something that I may do in the future, kind of unique -- definitely unique, obviously, but I think it sets me apart.

Q. Another personal question. Who is your favorite player? Who influenced you the most?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: There's no doubt about it that Hogan and Mo Norman influenced me quite

heavily in their ball-striking abilities and being able to control the flight of their ball. It was pretty incredible given they had balata balls and wooden shafts and everything like that. So those two people have influenced me greatly.

And then seeing Jordan Spieth do what he's done this past year is incredible. He's a great role model and a classy guy and first class. And his caddie, Michael Greller is, as well. I've been lucky enough to talk to Michael Greller, as well as Spieth for a little while, and they are salt of the earth. They are incredible people that I have learned a tremendous amount from.

PETE KOWALSKI: Congratulations and enjoy Boston Market.