

# U.S. Amateur Championship

Saturday, August 22, 2015

## Derek Bard

### Press Conference

PETE KOWALSKI: Like to welcome Derek Bard, finalist in the U.S. Amateur, 3 & 2 winner over Kenta Konishi of Japan.

You won the first hole with a birdie, and never trailed, probably a good way to start. Tell us what do you think were the key moments in the match?

DEREK BARD: Well, never trail is the first thing. I've trailed in every match leading up to this until this one, so that was the goal coming in, get off to a little better start. Birdied 1 which was great and kind of rode in from there.

One of the key points of the match definitely was on No. 12. He got it back to all-square. He won 10 and 11.

And 12, we both missed the fairway. He was in the right side and plugged it in the lip of the bunker. I had a tough shot. I just had to get up there on the green. Hit a great shot in there, about 15 feet pin-high and forced him to get up-and-down from an impossible spot. He made bogey and I 2-putted and from there, I kind of rolled in.

**Q. Derek, you knocked off No. 1 in the world yesterday. You play the NCAA Champion tomorrow. Are you the favorite or the underdog?**  
DEREK BARD: I'm the underdog.

#### **Q. Why?**

DEREK BARD: Why? Bryson, he's had an incredible career so far. Like you said, NCAA individual champion, so many other things that I probably don't even know about. He's obviously very smart with I think physics is his major. He's just a good all-around player. It's going to be tough, it really is.

I was talking to some of my friends and my dad earlier. I just said: Yeah, I'm going to have to play my best golf to have a chance tomorrow, because he's been playing very solid leading up to this point, and I'm just going to have one of those days where everything falls the right way from here.

**Q. I believe you were roommates with Denny McCarthy; how much did he help you throughout this whole week?**

DEREK BARD: Yeah, he was here, I believe lost in



round 32 unfortunately. But me and him have a very close relationship. I look up to him as a brother. I don't have an older brother so I kind of look up to him as the older brother I never had. He's a great guy and he definitely helps me in the two years we had at Virginia to become a player like I am today; things on and off the course he's taught me.

So he's someone I look up to and I'm sure he's going to have a very successful professional career. Hopefully he makes the Walker Cup Team, too.

**Q. What are some of the things on and off the course he taught you? I believe you said kind of course management was one thing.**

DEREK BARD: Course management, absolutely.

One of the main things he does better than anyone I've ever seen is when he doesn't have his best stuff, he'll still get the ball around, find the hole and post a good number. So that's the thing is playing good golf when you're not playing that well, and that's something that I've tried to work on the last few years, and he is the master at it. It's really incredible.

PETE KOWALSKI: Do you have that in you --

DEREK BARD: Yeah, he's pretty competitive. I feel like I do. I feel like I fly a little more under the radar than he does. He's a bigger name than me obviously. He might show a little more emotion than I do, but it's definitely there (indiscernible) just not show as much of it compared to him.

PETE KOWALSKI: As a follow-up to that, your tee shot on 16 was probably not what you would have wanted to do, but you followed it up with a great iron shot.

DEREK BARD: Yeah, I was 3-up with three to go and that tee shot has been killing me all week. I haven't hit a good one there yet. I figured, the hole is 450 yards, so I figured if I could just hit a solid 3-iron, I should have 6-iron, 5-iron coming in and kind of like chunk-sliced one down there and found the fairway which was fine.

So I knew if I could get it on the green virtually near the hole, I would have a good shot at closing out right there. Just got a good number with a 3-iron and had a

nice uphill lie to get the ball in the air a little bit. I flagged it; I went right at it, and it was one of the best shots of my life.

**Q. What has Coach Sargent meant to your career since you got to school?**

DEREK BARD: He's huge. I was in a bad spot coming into UVA. I was playing the worst golf of my life. I was lost and I got in and worked with him right away. We started to work on my swing, and the changes were hard at first. But they kicked in about a month and a half after we started, and I remember I finally broke through in the lineup for that third event in the fall and never left the lineup since.

He's been huge golf-wise, helped me in all aspects of my game and he's also a very smart guy -- mentally, he's very strong mentally.

Another thing he's helped me with is he's taught me how important practice rounds are. Practice rounds as a team, sometimes they get a little too long for my liking but he takes so many notes and just in the courses we play as a team, he knows them by hand. That's what he does for a living. He's just one of the smartest guys I've ever met.

**Q. When you were lost, how did he specifically put you back on the right path?**

DEREK BARD: It was just all with my swing. I didn't really have a swing coach coming in. So I kind of figured that out, started working with him right away. Right when I got there, he saw some things in my swing that needed changing and started from setup and went to plane and went to shot shape of my shots that I hit.

He's really been huge. The fact that -- we made a few different changes, and all those changes, I started seeing improvement only a month later. That's pretty phenomenal. I can't believe it happened that quickly and it just kind of built from there.

**Q. You'll be in the Masters next year most likely. Have you ever been to Augusta?**

DEREK BARD: No.

**Q. Dreamed of it?**

DEREK BARD: Yes. I told Holly, actually, it's been my dream. It's been my dream as a little kid playing golf to play in the Masters and be a professional player. I didn't think I would be playing the Masters when I'm 20 years old. It's definitely come a little earlier than I thought it would, if it ever did.

But yeah, there's no problem with that. I can't wait. It hasn't sunk in yet. It's all been kind of dreamlike for me

here but I'm sure once I look back and reflect on all this, I'll realize that I'll be teeing it up with the best names in golf I guess in April.

**Q. When your swing was lost, did you feel like you were losing your fire for the game at all?**

DEREK BARD: I never lost my fire for the game. I still with -- hitting it like that, I still managed to kind of scrape it around and have some good days no matter how awful it is but never lost my fire for the game. That's one of the things that -- I'm very motivated. Little things motivate me and that's really helped this week, just my passion for the game and to play well and to perform under circumstances like this, I feel like I thrive under that. So no, I never lost my fire for the game.

**Q. I know Bob Rotella works with the program -- how does he help?**

DEREK BARD: Actually leading up to this tournament I was playing decent but I wasn't playing my best golf. I gave him a call a few days before we came to town, had a nice talk with him. Just tried to implement some of the things he said. We actually -- we texted back and forth a little last night. So he told me a few things and just basically said, just keep doing what I'm doing and be unstoppable. That's the main thing and it worked out today.

PETE KOWALSKI: Prior to winning Sunnehanna, what would you say was your biggest golf accomplishment?

DEREK BARD: I won the U.S. Collegiate last fall. That's my only college win so far. It's one of the biggest college events in the fall. It might be the biggest or top three or whatever. It's a huge tournament, Georgia Tech's tournament.

I remember, we played Bank of Tennessee, East Tennessee's tournament the week before, and I finished like 55th, the worst finish in my Cavalier career.

And then kind of dusted myself off the next week and came out, shot 66 in the first round and then the last day, I shot bogey-free 64. Best round of golf in my life. I ended up winning by six I think. Unfortunately as a team, we lost to Texas by one which kind of sucked.

But that was huge; to rebound from a tournament and finish like that, the Bank of Tennessee, was huge for me to turn things around so quickly. And that really kind of started this whole thing for me, like I deserve to be out here and playing with these kind of people and these kind of players.

**Q. How did you turn it around from your worst**

**finish of your career?**

DEREK BARD: Just kind of happened. I don't really have an answer for that. We got back into town late Sunday night and we turned around and left on Wednesday.

I worked with Bowen a little bit on my swing and main thing was just mentally. I figured, okay, bad finish but you have a big one coming up, so you might as well go there, completely new tournament, completely new week and see what we have coming up and I had my best which.

**Q. You had your little brother, Alec, on the bag. Is that usual for you or a first-time thing?**

DEREK BARD: Second time he's caddied for me. But he's done great. We gel out there. He's a golfer, too. He's going to be a senior in high school. He's actually -- plays at Penn State. Me and him play a lot of golf together and he knows my game and how I think. He's been huge.

So we gel out there. We just go through our little routine on every shot no matter if it's a putt or a full swing. So he really keeps me focused and sometimes when I get a little out of comfort or a little antsy here and there, he kind of maybe settles me back down, some of the things he says. It's been great. It's been a great deal so far.

**Q. How would you compare his game to yours?**

DEREK BARD: He hits it a long way. He's a big kid, first of all. He's about as big as me and he's three years younger. He hits it as far as I do, so he's a good driver off the golf ball. He's a good player. He's streakier than me. He'll have days where he'll go out there and play very well and sometimes beat me unfortunately.

But he's a good player, and I'm sure -- he's got one more year to work on his game. I'm sure the guys at Penn State will help him out.

PETE KOWALSKI: What do you do for the rest of the day now?

DEREK BARD: Get some sleep I hope. I'm pretty exhausted. Like I said, I have friends in town and my mom and sister are coming in tonight and some more friends are coming in. I'm sure I'll see them. I don't think I'm going to practice at all. Go back to the hotel and watch a little bit of coverage. Just relax. Just have a good time and enjoy it.

PETE KOWALSKI: Congratulations. Appreciate your time.