

2015 US Open Championship

Friday, June 19
Quick Quotes

Branden Grace

Quick Quotes From:
BRANDEN GRACE

BRANDEN GRACE: It was a tough day. It was a grind. It got tough in the morning. I think we would have liked -- the wind blew a little bit, especially being so cold. But 8 was a bonus. Hit a great drive, great second. Actually, I thought it kept it on the green, and it didn't, which was a pity. With the severe backdrop, I actually thought of chipping and I thought, I can hit a putter, I can get it close. I was really giving myself a better chance. I think it was 35-odd yards and managed to do it perfectly. That's a big bonus, kept the round going.

Q. How did the course play compared to yesterday?

BRANDEN GRACE: Definitely a little bit softer towards the front nine. I must say when we did the turn, then it really started firming up again. The sun came out, the wind is still going a little bit. So then it's again just trying to hit your positions, trying to hit your targets out there. The greens are really sloped and really quick and firming up tremendously. You can't go for all the pins and just try to stay patient. Take the birdie opportunities when they come your way and make the most out of it.

Q. The eagle today?

BRANDEN GRACE: Yeah. I think it's -- it plays a little bit to the guys that hit it a little bit longer than the average guys out there. If you can fly a couple of those drives 290, 300 in the air, depending on the wind direction, you can really start giving yourself some nice opportunities. I managed to do that today. I hit a couple of bombs out there and managed to give myself wedges instead of 7 or 6-irons, which you can really start attacking. You need to know when to attack and when not to attack. I think I've done it so well. Those two eagles so far have been a big bonus, yesterday on 12 and today on 8. It really got the round going and turned things around tremendously.

Q. How big is wind a factor?

BRANDEN GRACE: Yeah, I think we've actually been quite lucky, to be honest so far. Yesterday there wasn't



that much wind. There was a little bit of wind on the closing stretch. But today it's a total opposite wind than we've had so far in the practice days. So the tougher holes are playing downwind, which makes it a little easier for us. But then again, the shorter holes aren't short anymore. So you have to work up to the game plan and stick to your shots and hit your targets. That's been the main thing the last few days.

Q. How does it feel going into the weekend in a U.S. Open. I know you've had one weekend at a U.S. Open before.

BRANDEN GRACE: I've been playing well. I've had a good start to the season so far. The form has been good. I've been playing much better in the States and everything has been building up to something like this. And then again, I feel very comfortable on the links. I've had a couple of wins back in Europe on the links, and it's trying to stay patient and take the chances when they come your way. If you're going to start forcing some things, it's going to bite you. If you get in trouble, try and take your medicine and try and make the bogey and keep the double and the triples off the scorecard.

Q. This course is only 8 years old, it was designed to replicate the links courses at the British Isles. You mentioned the links courses you played back home, is it more similar to those?

BRANDEN GRACE: Yeah, obviously the ones in Europe is true links. It's not as severe slopes as these ones. If you look at St. Andrews or Carnoustie, it's more you need to play the ball a lot more on the ground. A couple of these holes there's some big slopes. If you miss the fairway on the wrong side or the green on the wrong side, sometimes you have to go with a flop shot or hit a spin shot, where the low shot is not going to do it out here. I think this is a true test, and I think it's showed so far. Obviously the course is in great shape. It's playing firm, it's playing long, it's doing exactly what they want it to do. It's a true test, and it's going to get tougher on the weekend.

Q. There was the comparison made to Kingsbarns. Do you see that also?

BRANDEN GRACE: Kingsbarns has got a little bit more severe slopes than the other two. And I think it's done. I had my low score professionally on Kingsbarns when I won the Dunhill Links. You need to stay patient

and take your opportunities. And we all can hit the ball well, it's just keeping the damage small and take the chances when they come your way.

Q. You were at 5-under tied at the top of the leaderboard, did you realize where you were at?

BRANDEN GRACE: It's pretty hard to miss it, with all the TV and scoreboards out there. Nobody has won a major after 36 holes. There's still 36 holes to go. So you have to stay in your frame of mind and in your zone and try and make birdies and keep the mistakes off the scorecard. I've hit a couple of good shots. I gave myself a lot of chances on the back nine, I didn't take any on the greens. And just unfortunate finishing with a bogey, but still a good round. I'm still in good position and I'm looking forward to hopefully a good weekend.

Q. The conditions this morning, do you expect it to change?

BRANDEN GRACE: There was a little bit of rain last night that softens the course a little bit. Going out there I think tee off time was an early one, so the greens were a little bit softer, a little bit slower, so you could really just attack a couple of pins in the morning. But there was quite a bit of a breeze this morning. So you could only attack as much as you would have liked on the front nine. As all of us know, the front nine is a tougher nine, there's less opportunities. You really have to just try and get your level par, 1-under, 2-under round going, and take the opportunities on the back nine.

Q. Do you feel more confident after that round?

BRANDEN GRACE: I got it going yesterday, as well, and didn't manage to keep the bogeys off the scorecard on the back nine. Today was a little bit different. I feel really comfortable going into the backside of it. I've hit some great shots both days on the back nine, gave myself some nice opportunities, and didn't make as many as I would have liked. But I think the back nine really plays into a guy that hits it a little bit longer. If you can fly 290, you can carry a lot of the trouble, a lot of the bunkers you can fly, which gives you shorter clubs in, going in with gap wedges and wedges instead of 6 or 7-iron, you can attack it better. I think the course played fair and tough so far.

Q. That eagle putt, is that something you read?

BRANDEN GRACE: If I say yes, then I'm going to lie. But it's a little bit luck. You can see what the ball is going to do, you can pretty much read it a little bit. But to get the speed right on a putt like that is almost impossible. Thankfully for me the pin was there. I hit the pin center and it managed to fall in. That was a bonus, and that was a big turnaround today.

Q. Do you feel like your career stamps you as the

kind of player who is going to win major championships?

BRANDEN GRACE: Well, I hope so. We all want to do one thing, we all want to win tournaments. Every golfer that teed it up this week, all our dreams are to win majors and to compete in the majors. So this is something I've dreamed of. This is something I've prepared for. This is something I've practiced for. So the opportunity is nice, it depends if you take it or not.