

# U.S. Senior Amateur

## Quick Quotes

Thursday October 1, 2015

## Chip Lutz



CHIP LUTZ: Well, really, I mean, amazing feeling for me because it's one I have sought for quite a few years. From the first championship I competed in, I got deep into it and lost in the semifinals. You know, I had three of those semifinal losses in my first four years of appearances in the tournament. It was very, very difficult.

I think my hardest match was yesterday in my semifinal match. I had a nice lead against Tim Jackson, 3-up, and just started losing a little momentum and leaking some oil coming down the stretch. It was really difficult for me to finish that match. I was just trying to hold on with the skin of my teeth.

Getting over that hump was absolutely huge for me, and I could try to then really focus on this championship match.

### **Q. Was there ever a point during the journey where you didn't think you would get this?**

CHIP LUTZ: Absolutely. There were many times where I questioned myself. I've been very fortunate in stroke play events winning the British twice and the Canadian twice. That seems to be my strength.

I also done have done very well in match play. Obviously three semifinal losses, you have to win a lot of matches to get there.

I had to have some confidence in myself. I had to try to restore my faith in my game and hope that one day I would be faced with the opportunity again and not succumb to either pressure or the challenges faced by that.

Get over the hump. Just was tremendous.

### **Q. You were very emotional when you were talking. Did you think you would get that emotional?**

CHIP LUTZ: Yeah, I knew I would. That's my mom in me. My mom is very sensitive in that regard, and I think I inherited that from mom.

But it was very emotional for me. To finally to have been able to accomplish this goal mine really puts things to rest for me.

### **Q. Do you have any idea how many USGA championships you have played in in your career?**

CHIP LUTZ: I really haven't played in as many as

most. I spent a lot of time with either work or family and then didn't really start playing national events -- my first try was really 1998. I made my first U.S. mid-am in '98. I was a very late bloomer.

I played a lot as a young man growing up. My roots are in Pennsylvania, in Reading. Tremendous golf history with the Reading Country Club where Byron Nelson was the head pro and taught my father to play the game back in 1937 through '39.

So that was a tremendous sort of history. And my father was very good. I had a lot to work toward. He was really my best friend in golf. We lost him about ten years ago. He was just always a calming influence for me.

Wish he were here.

### **Q. Was it a coincidence that your mom finally decided -- she said she got a call from your brother and he kind of urged her on a little bit.**

CHIP LUTZ: It was funny, because my mom never really came out to watch us play. She was always very good in supporting us to get to the club and work as a caddie that started when I was just a little boy. I was probably two, three years old at the Reading Country Club.

So my history in the game is very long, but there was a period where I just didn't play a lot. Felt I could finally get back to it, and I've made a nice run. This is really the coup de grâce, the real cat. It's been a great career.

### **Q. (No microphone.)**

CHIP LUTZ: I knew my friends were coming, my brother. These are friends of mine from the club. We're close enough they could drive in, but it was an early start today. I knew I had people coming in to be with me. I just thought it would be really special to have her here because she had never been before.

What better time than the finals?

### **Q. What was that hug like on the 15th?**

CHIP LUTZ: That was special. Really good. Felt so good. My mom is 89. Don't put that in there.

### **Q. She looks about 69.**

CHIP LUTZ: Yeah, yeah. She could have walked this round easily today. She's in great health and we're just blessed that she's been such an inspiration for

me along with others.

But it was a really special day. She was 85 when I won my first British Senior Amateur. Her birthday is August the 5th, so that was particularly special. I was 55, just turned 55 in January of that year.

Her birthday was August 5th and I won it on that day, and I'll never forget it. It was just was really special. So I got a chance to talk to her from the porch over at the clubhouse. It was not only a neat birthday but a great opportunity for me. I was crying then like I'm crying now.

**Q. What were the last few holes like? You had a lead. You were so close.**

CHIP LUTZ: Today?

**Q. Yeah. Were you soaking it up a little bit? Literally, rain and... what were the last couple holes like?**

CHIP LUTZ: You know, I started getting a couple goosebumps thinking about it, but it was really hard. I realized at some point that I couldn't get ahead of myself. That was going to be really critical.

I felt as though I was putting myself in that position the day before with Tim Jackson's match. You can't project in this game, because the minute you do that you're out your rhythm and tempo and out of your comfort zone.

I really tried to dismiss that. I had to remind myself to stay with what had been working and play the game that I know and carry it through.

**Q. You said the conditions didn't really bother you?**

CHIP LUTZ: Not as much. I guess I had so many years in the U.K., so I've had some experience. I was pretty determined. That would be a factor. I generally play well in rain and wind and different conditions. I find that to be kind of a comforting part of my game.

**Q. You mentioned a history at Reading Country Club. Did you lose count of how many club championships you've won?**

CHIP LUTZ: I don't know. I'm not a collector of those necessarily. I'm certainly on board, although that's now a public course owned by Exeter Township, so it's not quite the same as it used to be as a private club.

My grandfather was part owner of that club back in the '40s after World War II and through '66, I think. We've been around and I grew up there. Have a lot of fond memories. Henry Poe was a tremendous inspiration who followed Byron Nelson at the Reading.

He was an assistant at Wingfoot in the 1939

Philadelphia Open when there was a playoff. Byron Nelson won that playoff with Craig Wood. Denny Shute. Craig Wood was a head pro at Wingfoot. His assistant was Henry Poe. Byron told Craig Wood that he was on his way to Inverness and there would be an opening.

Henry interviewed. He became the president of the PGA and was a tremendous man. So, again, just more of the history we had in Reading. Great players. Great people, great pros.

**Q. (Regarding Hall of Fame.) Where do you go from here?**

CHIP LUTZ: That's a really good question. I've been wondering and often think that I might just quit. (Laughter.) I don't know where else to go from here because I'm not a collector of things necessarily.

What I would miss would be the players, the camaraderie, and the people that are in the game. That would be the thing I would miss the most if I stopped playing.

I'm really not sure. That's a really great question. I have a little soul searching to do this year in the off-season. I had consciously cut back on my schedule a lot this past year. I had been very fortunate to do well in the last five, but I did get into the National Senior Hall of Fame in North Carolina this year and now the Pennsylvania Sports Hall of Fame.

Seems to be Hall of Fame year. I can't think of any better way to finish this off than to really put this on the resume right on the top where it belongs.

**Q. You're a member here now, so you can just come down.**

CHIP LUTZ: We used to have a shore place. Should never have sold that.

**Q. They have a lodge here, too. As more of a local coming in, did this championship feel different for you from the very beginning? When did you really feel the momentum of this week kicking in?**

CHIP LUTZ: That's a great question. I have known Roger for quite a few years, and he's been hosting a small tournament here for Pine Valley members called the Guinea Hen, which is just a fun event. I've been a member of Pine Valley for 34 years, so I've gotten to know him a bit through that.

He's hosted that for quite sometime. I have had the opportunity to play here. Also had a Mason-Dixon match here I think probably six, seven years ago maybe. Somebody might know that.

Then as the event was approaching I connected with Roger and asked him if I could come down and play. Actually the lodge was busy that night, so played on a Thursday night and they were gracious host me at

their home.

So I stayed at their house about a month ago and played the next morning. So I had some looks early, about a month or so ago, and then I was here about a week before.

I've been really kind of looking at and focusing on this event as not only a comfortable place for me, but great people and great opportunity for me to try to make the best of things.

**Q. You mentioned you cut back your schedule this year. Could you put your finger on why? Are you enjoying the ride more?**

CHIP LUTZ: Yeah, you know, I was I guess in some seasons really frustrated that I was unable to win this tournament in the past. I thought I might quit. I thought I might just stop and give it up and give up the hope.

Stayed with it. Managed to try it one more time.

**Q. Just soul searching? Talking with your wife?**

CHIP LUTZ: Mostly soul searching, I guess. You get that close so many times and you don't break through, it's kind of heartbreaking.

**Q. Now you get to defend. (Laughter.) You'll love St. Louis.**

CHIP LUTZ: I'm sure I will. I've played it before. They had a U.S. Mid Am there. It was actually I think the first one I played in.

**Q. Won't be any pressure.**

CHIP LUTZ: Won't be. That's the best part.

**Q. When you make up your schedule for next year, will there be more? Less? Have you figured that out?**

CHIP LUTZ: I think it's a bit early. I have to really sort that out. I need a little time off right now, take this all in, and see where we go from here.

**Q. Where will the trophy go in your house?**

CHIP LUTZ: Great question. I'll take it over to my club and share a lot of drinks out of it before it ever makes it home, I think. So it'll be well used by the time you get it back next year. (Laughter.)

**Q. In the final it seemed like your ball striking was consistent. Tell us about that and how you were able to carry it from there.**

CHIP LUTZ: Yeah, the ball striking was very good most of this week. In fact, I should recognize Mike Killian. He just retired from Galloway National. Mike was actually a golf teammate of mine. He was a senior when I was a freshman on the University of Florida. So I knew him from back there, and it had been a long time since I had seen him.

We reconnected. I contacted him maybe six, seven

years ago just to get in touch. That was when we owned a place in Ocean City. Just recently when I came down the week before the event began, played here, and then I had some time off and a few days in between.

I had reached out to Mike and played nine holes on the Galloway. Mike actually gave me a little tip that really helped my ball striking. It was just very simple and that's really essence of a lot of golf is simplicity and basics.

He just picked something up after two swings. Lower your hands a little bit. That just did wonders for me. I hit the ball higher, kept it on line better. I was struggling with my tempo, and that was a key ingredient really in my ball striking this past week.

I thought about that last night because as I got near the second half of the match with Tim yesterday got a little bit fast. Kind of forgotten that. It was good for me to reflect on that overnight and to draw on that and try to refresh my memory and collect those thoughts and go back to what worked. That little tip that Mike gave me was invaluable.

**Q. Going to buy him a drink?**

CHIP LUTZ: Absolutely. I'll buy him dinner.

**Q. Talk about the partnership you seem to have developed with your caddie.**

CHIP LUTZ: It was tremendous. Al was just phenomenal. We worked off each other really well. I was originally contacted by Mike Meisenzahl you would know from Gap. He was on our Mason-Dixon and other teams and great player. Mike was a six-time club champion here, and he called me and asked me to caddie for him, if he would like me to caddie for him.

I said, yeah, absolutely. We originally started with that thought in mind. Just prior to the event he had an opportunity to actually play in a tournament -- which I failed to ask him. He was here and came out and spent some time today. But Mike is the one who actually suggested Al and handed off the bag to Al. I said to Mike, if you're giving it up, if we hit it off, you can't come back. (Laughter.)

I don't want to switch horses in the middle of the program here. As it turned out, Al and I hit it off great. He's just so helpful not just from reads, but he has something special about him in terms of his -- the confidence he helped to instill, the calm that he helped to also portray and get me to think about, and the confidence in myself and in my game. That was really instrumental.

I had made a couple really bad putts in earlier rounds and couldn't get some things done. Had three five-foot putts couldn't seem to get in the hole. We got to the 18th hole in that match against -- might have

been my quarterfinal match. I had a birdie opportunity to close it out. He said to me, Mr. Lutz, you're a good putter. You're a good putter.

That kind of thing is just so helpful. It was so timeless and perfect.

**Q. I noticed throughout the final every time you addressed the putt he walked behind you. Was that planned or superstition?**

CHIP LUTZ: No, that was planned. We planned that earlier because I had been struggling with the line for quite some time. Always feel I've been a good putter, but I could improve in that area.

I found myself aiming left more than I should and pulling the balls, so we went through that routine in our practice rounds and we talked about that. So I asked him to do that; he did it every time. I don't know how it happened, but he didn't correct me once. (Laughter.)

He just said I love it. I love the line. I mean, he was just great about it. Just reinforcing and confident and he just gave me good feelings. That was the most special part about Al. He was a great partner in this event for me and great person as well.

**Q. What is his last name?**

CHIP LUTZ: Nagbe.

**Q. What is your mother's name? During the round did you make eye contact with her? Ignore her presence?**

CHIP LUTZ: My mom, her name is Janet. Adams is her last name. Yes, we did. We made some eye contact. I tried to with most people. It was really difficult to be overly outward in terms of communication with friends and others.

I knew they would understand because it was a time I needed to be focused. I still wanted to acknowledge them obviously.

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CHIP LUTZ: It's just really tremendous. I know a lot of folks have been thanked here and can be thanked over and over and over again.

First of all, Tom Huff, who really conducted a tremendous competition. Also, of course, our owners, who I'm particularly fond of, especially now that I'm a member. It's just tremendous.

Roger and Edwina, it was just really a fun time. You made it so warm and welcoming to not only me, but everybody here and all the participants. That means a lot coming from two owners who really get involved in the golf course, really get involved with the people, and are just really regular people.

That's great to see. (Applause.)

Greg Sanfilippo and Lisa, great job. They are championship director, Greg; and Lisa, thank you for your efforts. And particularly all the USGA volunteers. The volunteers don't always get the recognition they deserve. This is a tremendous amount of effort. They travel greatly to get to these championships and to administer them in the highest standards. We greatly appreciate that.

And also the volunteers who have been here. It's just been remarkable. It's a tremendous job. I know Edwina how hard it is to get people to volunteer, but you seem to do it effortlessly. Must have a pretty strong arm. (Laughter.)

You did a great job. That was fantastic. Thank you for the pin. The golf course, your staff, absolutely tremendous. Obviously you presented a golf course which was in tremendous competitive condition, and it changed every day.

That was the beauty of it. As players we had to adapt our games to the firming conditions, to the speeds of the greens, and it really presented a true challenge for all of us.

So thank you for the efforts that you gave us. And your staff. Thank you.

Andrew Madison and the pro shop staff, you guys are all great to me. Thank you so much. Lizzie, you seem to have called it early you said. Thank you. Like the way you think. (Laughter.)

But it's just really been tremendous for me. The opportunity to stand here today is just a remarkable



journey for me. (Applause).

Particularly to have my mom here was really special. My mom, first time she's ever seen me play, so it was really particularly exciting for me. Also carried a burden.

And all the friends that had joined me today from LedgeRock, my home club up in Reading, my brother, my wife of course. How could I forget? Let me back up. My wife. (Laughter.)

### Q. Quick learner.

CHIP LUTZ: And my business partner and her husband John recounted more rounds of my golf and seen more of my play than probably most people have, and they've been great supporters as well.

But everybody has just been tremendous. I've had a lot of support and inspiration. A lot of those names are on this trophy, so when I see that, knowing that I'll be there, it's really good.

So thank you all. It really has been a great experience. I'm glad to finally have arrived here at the USGA and become one of your champs.

Thank you. (Applause).