

2015 US Women's Open Championship

Thursday, July 9

Flash Interview

Austin Ernst



AUSTIN ERNST: Didn't put myself in too many bad situations. Every time but once, I got myself -- hit a lot of fairways today. If you miss the fairways out here, you can be in some serious trouble. It's hard to advance it. Made a good putts, a good putt for par there on 9 to finish the round.

Q. How mentally exhausting is a golf course like this?

AUSTIN ERNST: If you make it difficult on yourself, extremely. Today I had a pretty easy round mentally. I didn't have a lot of knee knockers for pars. I hit a lot of greens. Obviously you're having to read a lot into the greens because they have so much slope. I made it as easy as I probably could have today.

Q. Were you more comfortable on the back nine?

AUSTIN ERNST: My first nine?

Q. Yes.

AUSTIN ERNST: I probably hit a few more -- I don't know, not necessarily. I hit a lot of good shots on the front. I just didn't make as many putts. I was comfortable from the beginning, made a nice up-and-down on 10 that kind of settled me a little bit. Then made a few birdies every time I -- on the back pretty much every time I had a wedge in my hand.

Q. How long were the par save putts on 18 and 9?

AUSTIN ERNST: 18 was probably 15 feet. And 9 was probably around the same. 18 might have been 18 feet, yeah.

Q. The saves that you did in keeping out of trouble, sounds like the keys to your round, entering tomorrow and being in the position you are in, obviously is more of the same, but is there any varications to that?

AUSTIN ERNST: Not really. I just pick my spots where I can be aggressive. They moved a few tees up today where you can be a little bit more aggressive. They gave you wedges, 9-, 8-irons in your hands. Before we were hitting 5 or 6-irons into the greens. You could be a little bit more aggressive there. Obviously a few holes where you are still hitting 5woods or hybrids in

where you play more center of the green. I'm just trying to hit a lot of fairways, hit a lot of greens, that way I can be aggressive and make it very easy on myself.

Q. How often do you think of the 2012 Curtis Cup?

AUSTIN ERNST: Every now and then. Obviously that was a really cool experience to be able to draw back on. You get a lot -- it's a little bit more nerve wracking doing that because you're playing for seven other girls and basically your country. That was a really good experience. We obviously didn't win that week, so it's a little bitter sweet feeling with it. But yeah, I think back on that a lot. Being in those situations, making putts there with all that pressure definitely helps.

Q. The Solheim Cup here, how often are you think about that making that team?

AUSTIN ERNST: That's definitely one of my top goals for the year. I'm trying to think about it too much. I know that I've just got to play solid golf and that's going to take care of itself. Obviously if I'm not playing solid golf, I'm not going to be on the team. I'm just trying to take care of everything week by week, day-by-day, just try to keep improving as the year goes on.

Q. How would you assess the season as opposed to the other two full seasons?

AUSTIN ERNST: I feel like I've started off better than I have the last couple of years. Missed a few cuts, more cuts than I wanted to. But I feel like recently, Arkansas, had a good week, really solid week, had a lot of positives to build on from there. I've definitely been -- where I am now as opposed -- on the Money List, scoring average, all that is definitely better than it has been the last two years. Obviously, the win last year made that year just -- made it from being an okay year to a great year. So I'm just trying to keep putting myself in position, in contention. Hopefully I will be there on Sunday.

Q. Do you like these courses where you have to grind out a 68, 69 as opposed to a birdie fest?

AUSTIN ERNST: I like either one. I've kind of adapted my game to where I'm fine on these. I used to be a little bit too aggressive. I used to go at too many pins. Now I'm just aggressive to more conservative spots. If I have 5-iron in my hand, it's a tucked pin, I'll play ten feet left of the hole instead of going right at it like I used to. I like old style golf courses. This golf course really

fits my eye. I drove it really well today. I've driven it today the best I have all year, I only missed one fairway. So that's huge out here.

Q. Does this remind you of anything else you have ever played?

AUSTIN ERNST: Not particularly. Just with all the elevation change. But the next stretch we have are all old style golf courses. So it's a solid golf course that I like a lot