

U.S. Amateur Championship

Press Conference

Friday August 19, 2016

Brad Dalke

THE MODERATOR: Not a bad 19th birthday here for Brad Dalke. Reached us with victories over Will Zalatoris, Blair Hamilton, Bryan Baumgarten and now a 3 & 2 win over David Boote. That's a heck of a way to celebrate your 19th birthday. How are you feeling right now?

BRAD DALKE: I'm feeling pretty good. It was a fun match. We both played well today. I think I shot 6-under on my own ball. It was a tough win, though, because he played well, too. It feels nice to win today.

THE MODERATOR: 6-under on your own ball, and you had seven birdies and one bogey, including birdies on your opening four holes. What got into you today?

BRAD DALKE: I was just hitting the ball really well today. The first four holes, I had 3-putts inside five feet that I made and one 30-foot bomb that I made. I just all day, hit it really well. Kept putting the pressure on him. Kept hitting fairways and got a few putts to go in, especially early on. They got me that lead. So just played really solid all day.

THE MODERATOR: Birthday cake have anything to do with that?

BRAD DALKE: There was some good cake waiting for me in the hospitality room, so that was nice this morning.

Q. Talk about the delay and how important it was for you to make sure you kept that momentum and not cooled off, because anything can happen during a rain delay. You saw it a couple days ago against Will.

BRAD DALKE: Yeah, me and Grant, my caddie, we went in the locker room and I just tried to take my mind off it. If I go in the locker room, hospitality room, see that score, see him 3-up or whatever, just staring at me, might start thinking about it, like I am 3-up so far.

So me and Grant just went in the locker room and chilled, laid down, listened to some music. We just took our mind off things. Took our mind off golf. Luckily the delay wasn't long. Delay wasn't nearly as long as I think we thought it would be.



Yeah, I went back out there and made a birdie on the first hole that we played, and so I feel like I kept the momentum going pretty well.

Q. I'm sure you've had a lot of nice birthday parties over the years. How does this one top the list as far as celebrating your birthday?

BRAD DALKE: I'd say this one is a little different for sure. To win a U.S. Am quarterfinals match on your birthday, it's pretty cool. It's probably one of the best presents I've ever gotten.

Yeah, it was a fun day, and it didn't really feel like my birthday. Didn't really seem very ordinary I guess. But yeah, it was a fun day, and hopefully we can go somewhere nice to eat dinner tonight.

Q. So you started with one family member here, he left, he didn't have any yesterday, and now you've got a whole posse. Talk about what it means to have the family and maybe more expected tomorrow.

BRAD DALKE: Yeah, it's fun. Tommy had to leave yesterday, but I think he's going to come back tomorrow.

It's nice to just be able to play with the galleries we have out here that are huge. It's nice to be able to see some familiar faces in there. Have my parents and all the family and friends that came up just last night and this morning. Be able to see them in the crowd really kind of helps me focus and keep going and keep pushing on each match.

Q. What's been clicking for you this week? Is there something in particular that's really been going well that's kind of helped you ride some momentum through the match play bracket?

BRAD DALKE: I think my driving has been really good this week. I've been -- like today, literally I was telling Grant, my caddie, that I was just swinging as hard as I can on every drive. I'm just that confident with it.

That's something that's hurt me in the past is my driving. I think now that I feel like I'm a really good driver of the ball, it's helped me out. Because if I'm playing someone in match play, and they are just hitting big drives down the middle every time, it gets tough to

beat them because they are just always having a chance. I feel like that's the way I've been this week. I keep hitting good tee shots and keep giving myself a chance from the fairway every hole.

Q. Is there a story behind you hovering the club the way you do?

BRAD DALKE: Yeah, so right before nationals this year in May, or in June I guess, I had a tendency on my takeaway to be pretty good and I get pretty steep at the top. I kind of raise my left arm. From there, they can go all over the place.

So actually a week before nationals, I was just on the range kind of playing around and trying to figure out some way to swallow out and round my backswing out. I kind of figured out that if I hovered the club pretty high over the ball, it helped me round out because I'm already standing up a little taller; I can just turn.

Started hitting it really well. Went to nationals, had one of the best ball-striking weeks I've had in a long time at the time and used it all summer. I think I've only had a couple bad ball-striking rounds this summer. It's helped me a ton. It might look a little goofy; everybody says they are scared when I'm hitting it because they think I'm just going to whiff the ball. But it feels good to me and I like it.

Q. You had seven birdies today on a course loving called, "The Monster." What are your thoughts on Oakland Hills and the South Course, in particular. Something seems to have hit a chord with you today?

BRAD DALKE: I love this course. I think it sets up great for me when I'm hitting the ball well. I feel like I'm a good ball striker and it's definitely a ball-striker's course with fairway bunkers all over the place and green-side bunkers and all that.

It definitely sets up for guys who can hit their driver straight and long, and I feel like I'm doing that this week. I feel like I haven't been in many fairway bunkers, which I feel like a lot of guys have been this week, just because there's bunkers right in the landing areas on both sides of the fairway.

Yeah, it's a tough course, but if you can drive it well, you can definitely get after it and I feel like that's something I did today for sure.

Q. You ask Grant were roommates a lot during freshman year. Talk about your guys's relationship and how close you guys are, and what's his best quality as a caddie?

BRAD DALKE: Yeah, me and Grant, we're pretty close. We started -- in junior golf, we didn't talk much. We

knew each other. I knew he was going to OU and we didn't talk a whole lot though. Once he got to OU, I kind of saw him at Norman sometimes. We got pretty close. We played some golf together last summer in amateur events. And this year, we've gotten really close. He's a great dude. I love him. He's like a brother to me now. We're just really close and best quality for him as a caddie, he's just always positive. He's obviously a great golfer himself, so he knows what he's doing out there.

He's just funny. He knows when I need a joke thrown at me or when he needs to be a little more serious. He's just a great dude and I love having him out here.

Q. Your dad won a couple national championships at Oklahoma as a football player. What would it mean to you to add a National Championship at this U.S. Amateur?

BRAD DALKE: It would mean a lot. I mean, it's a dream of mine. USGA events are some of my favorites. U.S. Juniors, U.S. Amateurs, they are a lot of fun. Hopefully U.S. Open one day. They are just a lot of fun. They are always set up pretty tough, which I love tough courses. And I mean, this is the premiere event for amateurs.

I'm excited for the opportunity. I've got the final four, come a long way but there's still a lot of golf left. Need to focus on that. But the opportunity that has been placed in front of me, it's cool. I'm excited for it.

Q. Jonah is a little bit older than you but how well do you know him, and he's obviously playing really well. So if you do know a lot about him, what part of his game do you think is going to be really tough if it's clicking for him?

BRAD DALKE: Yeah, Jonah, we've played a little bit together in junior golf. I think we played probably three or four rounds together. And yeah, he's a good dude. I like him a lot. He's a nice guy. Fun to be around.

I think he's kind of the same way -- I assume he's probably the same way I've been this week. He's a really good driver of the ball. Hits it really long and I assume he's kind of been doing the same thing; he's been hitting his driver really well and had a lot of opportunities.

If so, it will be a fun match to watch. I think there will be a lot of birdies and a lot of excitement.

THE MODERATOR: Jonah playing against you at Thunderbird. He's looking forward to your match tomorrow.

BRAD DALKE: Very cool.

