

# U.S. Amateur Championship

Press Conference

Friday August 19, 2016

## Curtis Luck

THE MODERATOR: Here with our next semifinalist, Curtis Luck from Perth, Australia, reached the semifinals by defeating Andrew Huseman, Davis Riley, Cameron Young and now Sahith Theegala in the quarterfinals.

You never trailed in this match but I think you were only able to build the 2-up lead once before you finally won it. Tell me what the battle was out there today.

CURTIS LUCK: We did have kind of a scrappy match, you could say. So it was back and forth. There were a few pars that won holes out there, which isn't usually the case. But you know, that's how it goes sometimes in match play and that's the best thing about it.

But you know, yeah, it just bounced back and forth all day. Basically we just had to keep our head in it because as I said, we were making a few mistakes. So you know, there was that chance that your partner was going to make a mistake. I'm just super psyched to come out on top.

The MODERATOR: Well, you took a 1-up lead again on No. 17 with a birdie there. Tell us what happened there. That was the lead that you were able to take for good.

CURTIS LUCK: Yeah, that putt on 17, I kind of discussed it with Dad a little. It was one of those putts where you just kind of have to touch it and get it on line. I guess the slope does the rest.

Fortunately, I hit this putt and I actually thought it was short. Dad apparently didn't but I don't believe him, and it just managed to sneak in the front edge, dead in the center. Yeah, what a feeling.

THE MODERATOR: Tell me about the feeling: You're going to the semifinals at the U.S. Amateur.

CURTIS LUCK: Yeah, this is something that I think every amateur who takes golf seriously would love to win is the U.S. Amateur, biggest amateur event in the world. It's been a bucket list of mine, and obviously there's a great carrot at the end of the road.

If I get through the finals, I'd be thrilled. If I finish up



tomorrow, I'm still super happy with the way I've played and the way I've dug deep in the situations where times have been tough.

Yeah, thrilled.

**Q. You've been in this spot before in 2014. What's different about your game and your mind-set this time around?**

CURTIS LUCK: I'm definitely more mature than I was in 2014. I think that's a given; I'm two years older. But you know, my game's come a long way. I tend to know my misses a bit better now than what I did. And also, yeah, I just kind of think I've got a better understanding for the game that, you know, it's not always my best golf that's required. It's just me putting in a hundred percent, realistically can get the job done.

Where I think 2014, I was probably, still had the idea that I had to play my absolute best to win tournaments. That's probably maturity, yeah.

**Q. Your opponent tomorrow grew up two hours from here, has a big hometown following. How do you hope to embrace that challenge of not only him, but have the crowd going for him?**

CURTIS LUCK: He's had an absolute sensational crowd this week, and I think that's so awesome, because it's so good to see like such a good support crew around a golfer at an event like this.

You know what, it's going to be sensational. I'm sure the atmosphere is going to be ridiculous tomorrow. And hopefully, yeah, we can just put some good golf on display for them and make some good shots. Yeah, we'll just see how it goes.

**Q. Where was the club and how close were you on 17? And secondly, I know you play a lot of match play coming to Australia. What is it about the format that you really enjoy?**

CURTIS LUCK: So I hit hybrid into 17. It was 217 meters, uphill, completely into the wind and I hit a 3-hybrid. My putt, I would say, was about 25 feet probably. Yeah, with the match play side of things, yeah, we grow up playing match play. I mean, pretty much every big event back home, all our amateur championships, which are your State Amateurs, throughout the entire country, are all followed up by

match play.

So we get a really I guess good experience playing match play early. You learn what to do and what not to do. Yeah, we have all sorts of things that include match play. So I guess we're really fortunate as Aussies to come over here where match play is probably not played anywhere near as much.

Not that it's an advantage, because good shots will always win your golf. The actual getting it in the hole doesn't change, but the mind-set can. I'd say that it's a good advantage to have.

**Q. Have you had experience in your match play career of hostile crowds at all and contending with one golfer having the crowd on his side more?**

CURTIS LUCK: Fortunately with golf being such a game that requires etiquette, usually -- I've never had to deal with a crowd that hassles one player. Yet a crowd can be biased, and I'm absolutely sure they will be and that's completely fine, because they are going for a player. They are not going for both of us. They are going for Carlson.

Yeah, I can completely understand, and yeah, I'm sure there won't be any issues out there. I've got some supporters here, so I'm sure they will be making plenty of noise to try and match.

**Q. With all your experience in match play, what's your favorite part of match play?**

CURTIS LUCK: I love the fact that you can only give one hole away at a time. There's no better feeling than knowing that you can either go for it or not, and at the end of the day, it's only one hole. You're only going to lose one hole for the whole day, which is, yeah, it's great. Sometimes when it's not a pin that you should be going for, and you're up, or you're down, you can go for it.

So I love the way that it really changes your view, depending on how the course is set up and the situation. I love that about match play.

THE MODERATOR: You're here with mom and dad and you said you have other supporters out there. What's it like to have some friends to cheer you on.

CURTIS LUCK: It's great. Mom and dad have come to the U.S. Amateur. This is their third year. It's not new to them but it's my first year of obviously making it through to the match play. I'm sure they are thrilled. But yeah, it's great having family here.

My nana and granddad are here, as well, so we are saying all together, which has been sensational. It just makes everything off course just feel a bit more

homely, and I can have good discussions, whereas usually you stay in a hotel by yourself and stare at the ceiling.

It's nice, yeah, to have my family, and to have that support. I know they are out there watching and I know how much it means to them. So yeah, it's great.

THE MODERATOR: We've only had one other Aussie player win this championship, Nick Flanagan. What would be your thoughts on adding your name to that list?

CURTIS LUCK: As I said, this is the best amateur event in the world, so I can't even begin to comprehend how it would feel after if I had the chance to win this event. It's kind of -- I might have to tell you about it afterwards if I get the chance.

**Q. How did winning the pro event this year impact your confidence, and could you clarify when your decision needs to be made as far as taking a card there and all that?**

CURTIS LUCK: Yeah, you know, it kind of comes back to the maturity thing earlier. I'd say I went into that week, not expecting heaps. I was playing well, but the funny thing was, I wasn't hitting it great. I was just kind of scoring, and I actually had a really bad wrist issue early in the week through the practice rounds, and I was not sure on the Thursday I was going to be able to tee it up, but managed to get out there and do my thing.

I played some really solid golf, but again, didn't play my best. That's where it's become so interesting over the past few years is because it's really kind of slapped me around a bit, because when I was young, you think, you have to play your best to win, but you don't. You just have to get the job done regardless of how you're playing.

So that's done a lot for me in that confidence side of things and obviously gives me a pretty good idea of where I'm at. If you can beat a professional field, that's pretty cool.

But with the turning provide of things, I think it was definitely on my mind to turn pro in October this year. But I did know that something like the U.S. Amateur or the Asian amateur are the two events that can get you into the Masters. Could postpone that potentially. So I had entered to a school for Japan and Europe. Whether or not I get through far enough that I'll have that Masters ticket, we'll see. But that could, yeah, throw a bit of a spinner in the works.

Yeah, we'll just see I guess.

**Q. This is obviously one of the great golf courses in the world. Your impressions of the golf course, and also what makes it a good or not so good match play course.**

CURTIS LUCK: Well, it's a great golf course. It's brutally tough set off the backs. I'm thankful that the USGA has set it up pretty playable for the match play. And for the stroke play, they did actually push a few tees up and made some holes that maybe are not so birdieable, birdieable.

But the course is, yeah, awesome. The greenskeepers have done a terrific job with keeping it in the standard that it is with all the weather that we've had this week, and I'm sure it will be better again tomorrow and the next day I get the chance.

But you know, it's a long course. It requires great tee shots, but that's pretty usual for these U.S. Amateur/U.S. Open venues. That's kind of where the golf's at. If you hit good tee shots, you're halfway there. So yeah, I love this place.

**Q. And as a match play course?**

CURTIS LUCK: Yeah, it's great. Yet again, with them pushing the tees up, match play can get messy. It definitely can. It can be great to watch and it can be messy to watch. Today we had a little bit of a messy game, but that's what these courses can get out of the players. It only takes two players of the 312 to not hit it their best on a course like this, which is so penal, and you get a scrappy game. But that's a whole different type of golf, because then it becomes who can scramble the best, and it's interesting in itself.

But yeah, they have set it up perfectly, I would say, for the match play this week. They have done a great job.