

U.S. Amateur Championship

Press Conference

Saturday August 20, 2016

Brad Dalke

THE MODERATOR: We're here with our U.S. Amateur finalist Brad Dalke, took a 3 & 2 win over Jonah Teixeira. It's got to be a good feeling to hear that after your name, U.S. Amateur finalist. Has it sunk in yet?

BRAD DALKE: It's starting to. I mean, it's crazy. Beginning of this week, I don't think I was expecting it. I knew I was playing well and knew I could do it, but now that I'm finally here and I'm a finalist, yeah, I mean, it's awesome. It's a dream come true.

But I know there's work to do tomorrow. It's going to be a long day, and I need to go get the job done.

THE MODERATOR: You actually found yourself 2-down after six holes, then were able to play your way back into things. What were your thoughts as you found yourself down early?

BRAD DALKE: Yeah, I hadn't been down much at all this week. But I knew I was playing good golf. I think I was 1-under at the time or maybe even. I was hitting the ball well. I knew I hit some good putts that just didn't go in, so I just need I needed to keep grinding. If he keeps playing like he is and wins it, he deserves it. I just kept grinding, kept waiting for a time to kind of get some things going, and I finally No. 10 and 11 won those two holes, and that was big for me. I was able to kind of flip the switch there and turn the momentum to my side.

Q. Early on it seems like Jonah was making putts just like he had done days before. Did you think, oh, here we go again, once he got up two, and can you pinpoint a particular shot maybe that kind of changed the course of the match?

BRAD DALKE: Yeah, he was making putts early on. But like I said, I knew I just needed to keep grinding. You just never know what happens in match play. And obviously this is kind of a big hump in the U.S. Amateur, making it to the finals, just because of all the stuff that you get along with it. I mean, I think it's in everybody's head, no matter how hard you try to push it out of your head. So I knew that he was probably thinking the same thing. He's thinking he's 2-up, he's got the Masters on the line, the U.S. Open on the line, all this, and he's thinking the same things as me.



We're all thinking about it, so it can be easy to kind of tense up when you're thinking about those things. So I just kept grinding, kept going and kept trying to hit good shots, play my best, and it worked out. I played really solid the last 12 holes when I needed to, and yeah, it was big. I played well when I needed to, so it was fun.

Q. Jonah called the turning point for him the par-3, 13, and then you were in the pine straw after that on 14, I think maybe it was a cut in there. Can you take me through those two shots and winning 13 and 14 with the good shot on 13 and then kind of the rescue on 14?

BRAD DALKE: Yeah. 12, first of all, was a big turning point because he was on the green in two and I had about a 15-footer, and he three-putted, and I almost made my putt. But yeah, 13 I hit a great shot in there exactly how I wanted to. I wanted to land it -- me and grant were talking about it, land it about five yards behind it and let it feed down, and did exactly that. I thought his shot was going to be pretty good for a while, and then at some point I kind of realized it might be long, and you just can't miss long of that pin at all or you're dead. I won that hole, and then 14, yeah, to hit a bad drive there and still be able to win the hole, that was probably one of the biggest shots of the match, maybe even the week, was that putt I made from about 12, 13 feet. I had a good line on it and hit a good putt, and it was able to go in. So yeah, those were two really big holes to get 2-up with four to go and kind of -- not have it in hand for sure but have the upper hand definitely.

Q. So you mentioned that obviously you thought at some point when you were down, okay, Jonah has got in his head some of the other things that are going to go on if you win. Obviously at that point you're just trying to grind to get back. But once you take the lead, how do you suppress those feelings and try to finish off the match?

BRAD DALKE: I mean, I just kept -- I'm a big believer in just swinging free, just having no thoughts in your head, and I know that I hit the ball the best when I just am going out there and hitting the ball, not anything about thinking. So yeah, I just knew that the job wasn't done. Obviously I had the upper hand. I had a good chance, but I just needed to go out there and hit good shots at the right times, and I was able to just clear it out of my head and get the job done. I knew that I was

close but I still had to hit four, five good shots coming in.

That shot on 15, that wedge shot, was huge, to be able to get that one close and have a nice close birdie look, to be dormie going into those last three holes was big.

Q. I think in the past you've been medalist at a local qualifier before. You've been to sectionals maybe twice. What's the closest you've come, and now that you're in the U.S. Open without having to go through that again next year, just talk about what that means to you.

BRAD DALKE: Yeah, I've been to sectionals twice. I wasn't really close in either one of them, just didn't play my best golf. But yeah, it'll be nice this year. It's still sinking in that I'm playing the U.S. Open next year. That's so cool. But yeah, I'm excited for it. Obviously it's basically a year away, so we've still got a lot of time to get ready and get better. I think -- if I'm playing good golf, I think I can compete with the best players in the world, and obviously I have a year to prepare and get even better, and I'm excited for it. It'll be awesome.

Q. Do you know much about Curtis Luck? Have you played with him before, and what are you anticipating for tomorrow?

BRAD DALKE: Yeah, I don't think I've played with him. I know him, though. U.S. Junior Am when it was in Houston a couple years ago, we hung out a little bit, me, him and Gordon Neale and Ryan Ruffels and some of those guys. But I don't think I've ever played with him before. But it'll be fun. I know obviously he's a great player. He's in the finals, so he's a great player. He's one of the top ranked amateurs, and it'll be a tough match, just like every match has been.

I'm confident in myself. I think my game right now, I can beat anybody in the world. I'm excited for it, and I've just got to go out there and play well and execute, and we'll see where that takes me.

Q. 36-hole final, though, is a little bit different ballgame. He was talking about the fact that he got about an hour's worth of sleep last night. How did you sleep, and also going into tomorrow, is there a different way that you set up and approach a 36-hole final and the way this ends?

BRAD DALKE: Yeah, I actually slept pretty well last night. I'm not going to lie, I was nervous. I was nervous going to bed, but once I kind of got to sleep, I actually slept pretty well.

But yeah, tomorrow will be fun. I mean, 18 holes is a long time. You can be like I was today, 2-down through 6 and still have a chance to win if you just play solid.

36 holes, I think in the past in U.S. Juniors and U.S. Ams you can be 4- or 5-down after 18 and still come back and win the thing. You know, I just think -- I just need to realize tomorrow no matter what happens at the beginning or middle or end, you're always in it, and it's a lot of golf to be played. It'll be a really fun day. It'll be a long day. I'm excited for the crowds. I love playing in front of people, and I'm really excited for it.

Q. I know yesterday was your birthday, today is your sister's. You've got a bunch of family coming in. How many Dalke and extended relatives are you going to have here tomorrow?

BRAD DALKE: A lot. There will be a lot of people. We've got some more people flying in tonight. My golf coach Ryan Hybl is coming in tonight. My instructor is coming in tonight. We've got a whole gang coming, so I'm excited for it. It'll be fun to play in front of the people who have helped me get to where I am now. Hopefully I can go out there -- I'm sure I've made them proud already, but hopefully I can make them even more proud tomorrow, and I'm excited for the opportunity.