

# U.S. Amateur Championship

Quick Quotes

Tuesday August 16, 2016

## Alex Smalley

**Q. 65-68 for a 133 total, second lowest 36-hole stroke play score in U.S. Amateur history. How did you know that you had things going so well today on the more difficult South Course?**

ALEX SMALLEY: I just got off to a good start, had three birdies on the front nine, and then just kind of kept it going. Again, I didn't miss very many greens today. I think I only missed a couple. I just hit the ball solid all the way around.

**Q. Ben Hogan once called this course a monster when he won the 1951 U.S. Open. You played exceptionally well on a very difficult golf course. How did you find the conditions today with the rain? Could you be pretty aggressive?**

ALEX SMALLEY: Well, it was difficult still. I mean, it is a monster. The rough was pretty long because it was pretty wet. I don't know if they cut it. I mean, I found it a couple times. It was nasty. I think throughout the day, it got a little drier because the sun came out. The wind kind of died down. I guess it was kind of nice having the last tee time because the wind kind of died down our last nine. The weather was pretty good to us.

**Q. How did you prepare for the U.S. Amateur? What had you been working on in your game this summer and getting your mindset ready to play in this championship?**

ALEX SMALLEY: I'd just kind of been working on everything. I struggled with the driver the past couple tournaments I played in, but that really helped me this week. I hit the driver really well. And then putting, I can always work on putting. I know I missed some putts here and there, but overall it was pretty good.

**Q. We're obviously about to make the transition to match play from stroke play. You shot the lowest stroke play round. To you going into match play, what does that mean and how does that help you?**

ALEX SMALLEY: I mean, I don't think it has any weight to it now. I mean, we're starting all over again basically. We're starting match play, so I've just got to come out and play like I did the past two days, and I think things will go pretty well.

**Q. What are your particular strengths in match play?**



ALEX SMALLEY: Match play is different. It's different than stroke play. You can be more aggressive. I don't know, I think it's still golf, but it's just a different format, so I think it's pretty similar.

**Q. Just tell us how you're feeling right now, medalist, just a great day out there on the course.**

ALEX SMALLEY: Kind of shaking a little bit still. I'm not sure what to feel. This is my first U.S. Amateur, so it's kind of cool taking home medalist. But like I said, it doesn't -- medalist is nice, but we've still got a lot more golf to go, so I'm just looking forward to the next round of match play and then just go from there after that.

**Q. What were the goals you set for yourself coming in, and now that you're medalist, does that improve your belief at all that you can actually win this thing?**

ALEX SMALLEY: Yeah, coming in, I just wanted to make match play, so taking home medalist honors really means a lot to me. Like I said, I just have to take it one match at a time. I've just got to keep playing the way I'm playing and then things will go from there.

**Q. Do you allow yourself mentally to enjoy this a little bit knowing that you still have potentially many more rounds to go?**

ALEX SMALLEY: Yeah, of course. It's a great honor to be medalist. We'll go home, celebrate a little bit, eat, and then get ready for the match tomorrow morning.

**Q. The fact that you're shaking, does that lead you to believe that maybe you didn't expect to be in this position right now?**

ALEX SMALLEY: Yeah, like I said, my goal was to make match play. I was nervous the first couple of holes just trying to get into the groove of things, and then again coming down the stretch I was a little nervous because I gave a couple shots away. But playing 18 the way I did, it really made me feel good closing the round on 18, which is a pretty difficult hole.

**Q. Were you pretty cognizant of what the number was and what you needed to --**

ALEX SMALLEY: I knew I just needed -- I played a good round yesterday. I knew I just needed to play like that again and then I'd make match play. They had leaderboards out there. I kind of checked them here and there. But there were a couple guys in front of me

that I knew shot pretty low, so I didn't know how they were doing, so I just wanted to keep the pedal to the metal I guess you could say.

**Q. You mentioned that your driver has been one especially bright spot of your game. Has that been a real necessity this week?**

ALEX SMALLEY: Definitely, yeah, because the rough is pretty long once you get off the fairways. I think the soft conditions help because the ball doesn't roll a whole lot once it hits the fairway, so once it hits the fairway it kind of stops, which is kind of nice, but again, I've been hitting the driver really well, which has helped me a lot.

**Q. Was there one point in particular these past two days when you really knew that you were on to something, really firing something low out here?**

ALEX SMALLEY: I think after the first nine on this course being 3-under on the first nine, I knew that was -- had to be up there. But again, I didn't really know for sure throughout the round, but I knew I was playing pretty well.

**Q. Is that your dad on the bag?**

ALEX SMALLEY: Mm-hmm, that's my dad.

**Q. How comfortable is it having him, and not only him but both your coaches and four teammates, five teammates here?**

ALEX SMALLEY: Yeah, it's really nice. Yeah, we had five guys here including me, my dad on the bag. He's caddied for me a couple times before, so it was really relaxing just having him there by my side the whole day. It was really nice. And then the coaches' support always helps, so it's great to see them out here. Yeah, it was just great.

**Q. How have your results been this summer?**

ALEX SMALLEY: I've played pretty well this summer. My first tournament of the summer was U.S. Open sectionals, and I didn't play that great there, and then I think everything else for the most part has been top 10s. I know I had one finished tied for 12th in the North Carolina Amateur, but I think other than that, everything has been --

**Q. Needless to say you've had some good finishes?**

ALEX SMALLEY: Yeah, I had some good finishes coming into this, yes.

**Q. Did you play in the Players coming here?**

ALEX SMALLEY: I did not, no. I played in the North and South Am at Pinehurst No. 2, which is kind of nice. It's another major championship golf course. It's one of my favorite tournaments just because it's Pinehurst No.

2 and I really like it a lot.

**Q. How far into match play did you go?**

ALEX SMALLEY: So this year they changed the format. They cut to 32 this year. The past couple years it's been top 16. I lost in the round of 16. I didn't play very well. The kid I was playing against played really well, so I only made 16 in that one.