

# U.S. Senior Amateur Championship

Interview Room

Thursday September 22, 2016

## Dave Ryan

**Q. You told me in the cart, first thing, "The golf course I grew up playing on, nine hole course in Illinois, you would never believe what just happened right now." Tell me a bit about what's going through your head.**

DAVE RYAN: Well, as Jim can attest, we both grew up on this golf course in Taylorville, Illinois, it was a nine hole par 66. So did my brother. And it's like night and day compared to what we just got off of. For somebody to come off of something like that and to compete in this, it's pretty special.

**Q. That's really kind of the essence of amateur USGA championships though is it's kind of an equal playing field for people with that background in the game.**

DAVE RYAN: That's true. That's true.

**Q. Coming out of the gates you were just, you couldn't miss a putt if you tried. Have you ever puttied like that in your life?**

DAVE RYAN: I tell you what, my son gave me a video to watch from Dave Stockton. And he's a great putter. And I took some of his tips and I, it's like shooting free throws, you just get over it, see the line, and let it go. And it worked this week. And it worked last week when I played in the state Senior Amateur in Illinois.

**Q. For somebody like you who is been such a solid and decorated competitor on the regional level, until this week maybe you didn't quite break through on the national scene. And can you just talk about this week what maybe put you over the top to beat players you have known and competed against, Paul Simpson, Tim Jackson, before.**

DAVE RYAN: Those were two tough guys to take down, let me tell you. And I tell you something that helped me out a lot was my wife. She sent me a texted message, said, "Believe in your self. You're just as good as they are." I have trouble thinking that way and she helped me believe that. So, that's kind of what got me through.

**Q. Along with some great short game, a couple of those putts against Tim on 17 and 18 yesterday, you have to be able to get up-and-down. Is that a strength of your game would you say overall?**



DAVE RYAN: Yeah, I would say it is. Because the putt I made on 17 against Tim. He's in there like two, two and a half feet, and I knew I had to make it, because otherwise the momentum in match play just turns on a dime. So, fortunately it went in and then I made that -- I think he hit a drive to the right, didn't he? On 18? And that's hard to get it on the green from there.

Paul Simpson, on the playoff hole, he 3-putted the second hole. I'll tell you a funny story about him. I was playing in the USGA state team championship at Galloway a few years ago and Paul and I were paired together and this young kid from Kansas was in our group -- I can't remember what his name was -- and he goes, "Mr. Simpson, how many USGA events have you played in?" And he thought about it a second and he goes, "Oh, about 52." The little kid goes, "Oh, wow, that's a lot."

**Q. You talked about the momentum switch and when your mindset kind -- when you got 4-up your mindset kind of went from being aggressive to?**

DAVE RYAN: Aggressive to being conservative. Right.

**Q. Not letting it get away.**

DAVE RYAN: Right. Exactly I was trying to hang on and that's when you get in trouble. You start getting the old steering wheel out and start steering it. Instead of letting it go. Once I got -- I missed that par putt on 15, it changed my mindset, I got more aggressive after that. And I got back in battle mode, I guess is what you call it. And he hit a bad shot and that's probably what cost him the match on 16. It was a sucker pin placement, if you go for that and miss it left, you're dead.

**Q. Did you take a sigh of relief after that? Sometimes you need a little luck to win these things. That was kind of an unforced error by him.**

DAVE RYAN: Oh, definitely. And he had about five or six lipouts. I mean, if they go in, I lose. So you got to have some luck. I don't care who you are.

**Q. Talk a little bit about this golf course, too. I know that Tim was talking about how you never feel totally comfortable over a lot of shots because you have a little bit of a side hill, downhill, awkward lies. How hard is it to hit the exact shot you need at a particular time?**

DAVE RYAN: Well, I'll give you an example. On 18, Garth Bayer, the head pro, I mean I played here quite a few times in U.S. Open sectionals and other qualifiers. And I didn't realize this, but that 18th hole is a club and a half difference in elevation change. It doesn't look that way from the yardage and you just, I mean it's unbelievable, but you got to hit it and it goes. But if you don't, you're going to come up short all the time. I think he said Lexie Thompson, she lost the ladies amateur here because of that. The same thing. She came up short all the time.

But the green complexes out here are difficult. I mean, that putt I had on 18, I barely hit that thing and it went three feet by. If you get it on the wrong side, you got issues.

**Q. You talked 30 years ago you qualified for your first USGA championship, the U.S. Amateur, here and 30 years later you win your first USGA championship here.**

DAVE RYAN: It's kind of ironic, isn't it. Yeah, it is. Then when I went down to Shoal Creek and played in that thing I was like a doe in the headlights. I didn't know what to expect. Jerry Pate is standing there watching me tee off and I was as nervous as you know what in a church. But it was, but I always liked this course. There's, there was two guys from my area. Jim Forsina and Bunch Bunn were members here. Probably back in the 50s and 60s. If I remember right they brought me down here as a kid and played. But I kind of fell in love with it then. It's a great golf course.

**Q. If you were to receive an avalanche of invitations to other tournaments because of this, would you rethink your schedule?**

DAVE RYAN: For like the Chicago district?

**Q. For like anything.**

DAVE RYAN: Well, yeah.

**Q. For the rest of this year, next year, tournaments that --**

DAVE RYAN: Right, yeah, because I didn't realize --

**Q. It could be anywhere, you will have people beating down your door to get you in the field.**

DAVE RYAN: That's a good one. I never thought about that. But I didn't realize -- he told me yesterday -- that I'm exempt for the U.S. Amateur, the Mid-Am, and the Senior Open and this one.

**Q. Do you want to know your updated exemptions? You're 10 years into this one now.**

DAVE RYAN: Oh, really?

**Q. Yeah, you're in the next 10 of these. You're in**

**the next two Mid-Am, the next two U.S. Amateurs?**

DAVE RYAN: Vinnie Giles and I.

**Q. Next year's Senior Open and you're through to sectional qualifying for the U.S. Open.**

DAVE RYAN: Oh, I didn't know that. Wow. That's huge. I didn't know that. Wow. I didn't know that one. Wow.

**Q. So have you a busy schedule next year.**

DAVE RYAN: Yeah, it sounds like it. I'm still in shock, a state of shock. Unbelievable, for a guy from Taylorville, Illinois to win a national championship, it's unbelievable.

**Q. You said you won the senior Illinois Amateur last week?**

DAVE RYAN: Yeah, last week. Bloomington Country Club. Yeah.

**Q. You said you won by eight strokes or something?**

DAVE RYAN: Nine.

**Q. So that kind of set the stage for your playing well coming in?**

DAVE RYAN: Right, yeah, that's true, it did.

**Q. How about the week as a whole? It's a grueling thing to play basically 10 rounds in eight days and keep your focus. I know we saw a few matches come to 18 and players were just really just trying to hang on. I know that's the case for you, too. Is it more of a mental than physical at that point?**

DAVE RYAN: Well, to be honest with you as the week went on I got more comfortable, because I don't know what it was, I got I won my first match and I thought that's good. I won my second match. That's great. And I didn't have real high expectations. And then once you get going, it's just, I guess it was just meant to be. One of those things. You got to have some luck, too. One match, on number, the first par-5 on the front nine. 6? I duck hooked a drive, hit a tree, came right back in the middle of the fairway. And then, I'll be honest with you, I was telling him yesterday, I changed my swing thought of what to do. I changed my whole swing, my takeaway, I changed it, because I guess that comes from experience, but that's all I thought about was my take away trying to get the blade more square instead of shaking hands, old school. And it worked.

**Q. Just watching that club go back?**

DAVE RYAN: Yeah, where it looks shut but it's actually square to your target line. Once I did that, I mean it just clicked. I got lucky, it was something I think Paul Trittler, the guy I work with out in Arizona, told me about a long time ago. And something in the back of

my mind just said try it. And it worked. That's the only swing thought I had the whole week after that.

**Q. The tee shot on 18 today?**

DAVE RYAN: I smoked that thing. I killed it.

**Q. Which is even more impressive because it's such a tough driving hole. Because when you played Jackson, you seemed to take the right hand bounce over there and it was close to the trees.**

DAVE RYAN: I tell you what, it's kind of like the old story of Ben Hogan. He's playing in Florida, he's got the caddie and there's three palm trees. And he asked the caddie, where am I supposed to aim this? And the caddie said, the middle tree. And Hogan goes, which palm leaf?

So I kind of thought about that on the last hole. I was aiming at the part of this clubhouse. There's like a chimney and that's what I hit at. I aimed right at it and that's all I focused on. And that's a good way to do it, just think about your target. It's hard to do all the time, but.

**Q. You only live an hour and a half away from here. How are you celebrating this tonight?**

DAVE RYAN: I don't know. I have to talk to my wife. We're going to figure it out. It should be fun.