**Former NFL Lineman Williams, Partner Berthelot Roll into Round of 16 at Bandon Dunes**

By David Shefter, USGA

**WHAT HAPPENED**

As a former college and professional football player, Kyle Williams knows how difficult it can be to win a championship. The former Louisiana State University All-American won a BCS national title with the Tigers in 2003, but the defensive tackle never tasted that level of success in 13 NFL seasons with the Buffalo Bills.

He has a chance to rekindle that feeling this week on Bandon Dunes Golf Resort’s Old Macdonald course. Williams, 35, of Ruston, La., and his partner, Gregory Berthelot, 30, of Baton Rouge, La., successfully tackled their Round-of-32 opponents on Monday, handing Hillsdale (Mich.) College teammates Andrew Grayson, of Medina, Ohio, and Liam Purslowe, of Australia, a 4-and-2 defeat.

Competing in their first USGA championship, Williams, who retired this past December as a six-time Pro Bowl selection with 48.5 career sacks, got the side off to a fast start with birdies from 5 and 30 feet on Nos. 1 and 2. Then Berthelot, the 2011 Louisiana State Amateur champion, added another birdie on the third hole, the same par 4 he eagled during Sunday’s final round of stroke play.

From there, the side played the last 12 holes in the equivalent of 3-under-par golf – with the usual match-play concessions – to close out their 22-year-old opponents.

“It was obviously a hot start and it ended up being basically the deciding factor in the match,” said Williams. “We birdied the first three and got up and down [for par] on four. We were off and rolling and in a comfortable spot to get that [win].

“I know what we're up against and you'll have other guys you're going to play against that are competitors and skilled players. We're looking forward to what tomorrow holds.”

Although the day began with some light mist and overcast skies, the winds that are so prevalent at the resort were calm.

Two of the three co-medalist sides from stroke play advanced; the lone exception being Texans Christopher Wheeler, 36, of Addison, and Derek Abel, 36, of Dallas. Placed at the top of the bracket in the No. 1 seed slot, the former mini-tour players (they were reinstated in 2012 and 2016, respectively) lost to the Louisiana tandem of Andrew Noto, 29, of Metairie, and James Fuselier, 38, of New Orleans, 3 and 2. This came after Noto and Fuselier emerged from a 7-for-4 playoff earlier on Monday just to get into the draw.

Ex-Santa Clara University teammates Derek Ackerman, 22, of Santa Clara, Calif., and Matthew McCarty, 21, of Scottsdale, Ariz., the No. 2 seeds, defeated Canadians Eric Patttenaude and Adam Graham, 3 and 1, while third-seeded Vince Kwon, 25, of Marlton, N.J., and Troy Vannucci, 27, of Marlton, N.J., had a much more dramatic finish against Auburn University teammates M. Tyler McKeever and Steven Groover. Tied going to the final hole, Vannucci hit a 6-iron out of a fairway bunker from 185 yards to 25 feet below the hole. He then converted the 25-foot uphill birdie putt for a 1-up victory.

“Yeah, I was leaking oil,” said Vannucci. “I mean, Vince, he played incredible. He carried me all day.”

Two recent U.S. Mid-Amateur champions set up a showdown Tuesday morning at 8:24 PDT in the Round of 16. Stewart Hagestad, 28, of Newport Beach, Calif., the 2016 winner, and partner Derek Busby, 35, of Ruston, La., held on for a 1-up win over Robert Lutomski, 38, of Simpsonville, S.C., and Weston Bell, 25, of Piedmont, S.C.

Matt Parziale, 31, of Brockton, Mass., the 2017 Mid-Amateur champion and 2018 U.S. Open co-low amateur, and partner Herbie Aikens, 37, of Kingston, Mass., ousted California teenagers Aiden Tran, 15, of Fresno, and Jackson Lake, 18, of Clovis, 3 and 2. This is Parziale and Aikens’ third appearance in this championship but the first time they’ve qualified for match play.

“I’ve played with Stew quite a bit and we’ve always had a lot of fun together,” said Parziale. “We’ve been in contention [together] in some tournaments, but not matches. I’m good friends with Derek, too, so all four of us know each other. It should be a lot of fun.”

A third past U.S. Mid-Amateur champion, Scott Harvey, 40, of Kernersville, N.C., also advanced to the Round of 16 with his partner, Todd Mitchell, 40, of Bloomington, Ill., 2 and 1, over Davidson College graduates Ralph Blasey, of Bethesda, Md., and Alex Nianouris, of Raleigh, N.C. Harvey won the title in 2014 and Mitchell was the runner-up in the same championship in 2008. They were semifinalists in the inaugural U.S. Amateur Four-Ball four years ago.

**WHAT’S NEXT**

The Round of 16 and quarterfinal matches are scheduled for Tuesday on Old Macdonald, beginning at 7 a.m. PDT. The first quarterfinal match is scheduled for 1 p.m. The semifinals and 18-hole championship match will be played on Wednesday.

**NOTABLE**

Last year’s runners-up, **Chip Brooke**, of Altamonte Springs, Fla., and **Marc Dull**, of Winter Haven, Fla., saw their run end in the Round of 32 by East Carolina University teammates **Logan Shuping**, of Salisbury, N.C., and **Blake Taylor**, of Wilmington, N.C., 4 and 2. Brooke and Dull were also semifinalists in 2017. They are exempt through the 2021 U.S. Amateur Four-Ball by virtue of reaching last year’s title match.

The 7-and-6 victory by Rhode Island residents **Bobby Leopold**, of Coventry, and his brother-in-law, **Tyler Cooke**, of Warwick, over **Jonas Mikals** and **Dustin Hall** matched the largest in championship history.

Long Beach, Calif., residents **Hunter** and **Ryder Epson**, the lone brother-brother tandem to make match play out of five in the field, needed 19 holes to beat **Jack Kozlowski** and **Trey Rath.** Ryder converted a 20-footer on the par-4 first hole to secure the victory.

**Brandon Cigna**, of Arlington, Va., and **Ben Warnquist**, of Olney, Md., the runners-up in 2016, survived the longest match of the day, a 21-hole marathon against **Jack Wall**, of Brielle, N.J., and **Brendan Hansen**, 19, of Spring Lake, N.J.

The lone father-son side to qualify for match play, John Sajevic, 63, of Fremont, Neb., and Andrew Sajevic, 28, of Omaha, Neb., saw their run end with a 2-and-1 defeat to the Southern California duo of Cullen Brasfield, of La Quinta, and Tyler Moore, of Escondido. John Sajevic was the oldest competitor in this week’s field.

**Carson Barry**, of Eagle, Idaho, who was a semifinalist a year ago with partner **Sam Tidd**, of Meridian, Idaho, rolled in a 62-foot eagle putt on the par-5 seventh hole on Old Macdonald, the second playoff hole, to advance his side into the draw from the 7-for-4 playoff on Monday morning. Barry just completed his freshman season at Oregon State. The duo was eliminated later in the day, 1 down, by **Andrew Medley**, of Scottsdale, Ariz., and **Taylor Wood**, of Coto de Caza, Calif.

The playoff lasted three holes and took 2 hours, 6 minutes to complete. **Andrew Noto**, of Metairie, La., and **James Fuselier**, of New Orleans, La., grabbed the final spot when the former converted an 8-foot birdie putt after a 147-yard, 8-iron approach to the par-4 seventh hole.

Speaking of Louisiana, seven of the 32 competitors remaining are from Louisiana. Noto, Fuselier, Williams (Ruston), Berthelot (Baton Rouge), **Derek Busby** (Ruston), **John Faulk** (Lake Charles) and **Matt Nicholas** (Lake Charles).

“Our [Louisiana Golf Association Executive] director, Logan Ray, said yesterday when we finished up that something is in the water this week, and we're doing Louisiana proud,” said Fuselier. California leads with nine players.

**QUOTABLE**

“We didn’t come here to win a T-shirt.” – recently retired NFL defensive tackle **Kyle Williams** on his side’s mindset this week. He is partnering with **Gregory Berthelot.**

“I've heard from a couple friends back home. They're excited and kind of pulling for us.” – **Williams**, who added that Buffalo Bills general manager Brandon Beane did text him.

“I don't think either of us played extremely well today, which I think was good for us to kind of grind it out there and get a win, maybe not being at our best, because we're probably not going to play perfect every day.” – **Matthew McCarty**

“We're not ready to go home yet.” – **Todd Mitchell**

“We've been in this exact position too many times. I'm interested in staying [in the championship] as long as I can.” – **Scott Harvey**, the 2014 U.S. Mid-Amateur champion who was a semifinalist in this event in 2015. He and Mitchell, his partner, have played in all five U.S. Amateur Four-Ball Championships.

“I feel like the way we’re playing, we have a chance to win. And this course sets up perfect for me. It’s wide and I can bomb it 330 [yards], wedge it on and try to make some putts. He (partner Bobby Leopold) is the best putter on the planet. So, we’re both in essentially every hole.” – **Tyler Cooke**

“[Old Macdonald] is an interesting test of golf. You can have one day where it’s 5-mph winds and another day where it’s 30 mph. I feel like we hit it solid enough that we don’t have to worry too much about the wind. But picking clubs can be tricky here. That’s the hardest thing. On a par 3, you can miss your spot by a foot and you end up 45 feet away instead of being 5 feet away.” – **Bobby Leopold**

“Hopefully, we don't have to play 36 holes tomorrow. But definitely [it’s] like playing collegiate golf and everything has helped us out with 36-hole days. I don't think that will be much of a physical or mental grind for us.” – **Derek Ackerman** on possibly playing two 18-hole matches on Tuesday

“[It] feels very relieving. I mean, it felt like the weight was off after he (partner Troy Vannucci) made that putt. I mean, that birdie was fantastic. And I kind of helped him out in the middle of the round.” – **Vince Kwon**

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