U.S. Amateur Four-Ball Championship – Second Round of Stroke Play

Derek Abel/Christopher Wheeler – 13-under 128 (66-OM-62-PD—128)

We saw the [USGA] camera guy come around and started following us for a few holes, we figured were close [to the lead]—Derek Abel

FOUR STRAIGT BIRDIES AND FIVE OF FIRST SIX, THINKING 59 or 60? We really didn’t have a number in mind, but we got to a point where we didn’t have to worry about the cut or anything like that. We were just having fun, basically. (Chris)

GET IN THAT RELAXING MODE AND YOU ARE LIKELY IN MATCH PLAY, WHAT IS THAT LIKE: For us, we’ve been playing together for the last 20 years. We kind of know each other’s game really, really well, so whenever you get to a point where you are comfortable, it makes it like it always is every time you play together. Start to forget it’s a tournament and play like we do on the weekend [back home].

Don’t belong anywhere. We find a way to place to play. Mostly public venues. Derek has a 2-year-old and Chris has an 8-year-old.

FIRST FOUR HOLES: Derek started out hot. Made the first three birdies. On 4, Derek was in the penalty area and Chris hit a 4-iron up close. All the putts were inside 10 feet, and 6 put it inside 10 feet again.

You just start making the 5- to 10-footers … and it gets to a point if you start missing those at the beginning, you start thinking about them.

Ham-and-egged all day. I almost felt more confident if Derek was out of position. OK, it’s my turn. We talked about that a little bit and laughing about it. (Chris)

MATCH-PLAY MINDSET AS MEDALIST: I don’t think we really think about it like that. It’s going to be different because it’s not individual match play. With the strategy of knowing each other’s game, you kind of go into it not knowing what to expect. Just try to keep an open mind about it and take it a hole at a time. (Derek)

We’re just trying to make the best score on the hole and we’ll figure out if it is good enough afterwards. (Chris)

STRATEGY FOR MATCH PLAY WITH OLD MAC: It all depends on the pin positions out there. That will totally dictate how you play the hole. If they are bowls like they were [for stroke play], then you kind of free-wheel it. If they are in difficult positions like near a shelf, then maybe one of us will play conservative and the other will go at it. The course is totally dictated by the pin positions over there. (Derek)

Known each other since they were 13 playing junior golf. Played mini-tours together. Derek reinstated in 2016. Chris reinstated in 2012. Chris was 2018 North Texas Player of the Year.

It was more expensive to do that (play mini-tours) than do something else. (Derek)

Amateur golf is way more fun (Chris)