

U.S. Senior Open

Press Conference

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Allen Doyle



MODERATOR: Ladies and gentlemen, welcome back to the Media Center here at the 38th U.S. Senior Open.

Allen Doyle, the 2005 and 2006 U.S. Senior Open champion, the last player to go back to back to win the U.S. Senior Open. Allen playing in his 14th U.S. Senior Open this year.

And Allen, of course, you have New England roots. You grew up in Woonsocket, Rhode Island. Went to high school at Catholic Memorial. Spent some time in Norwood growing up.

Can you describe the significance of having a championship, the U.S. Senior Open Championship, here in what's essentially your backyard.

ALLEN DOYLE: I think it's great for the state, for sure, New England especially. Mass certainly was, as I remember as a kid, was -- they were waiting for a champion to come along, you know, a guy that could make his mark on tour and represent the state, you know, and New England.

And really, to me, it always seemed to put a lot of pressure on guys. I never felt that because I wasn't, you know, that great a player in my early teens -- my late teens, early 20s.

But so to get an event like this back -- and I remember in '01, when Nicklaus played and I think Palmer played, it was -- I mean, it was huge. It was a great thing for the area, a great thing for this club to show off itself.

We're back, and everybody seems to have the same vibe.

MODERATOR: There were huge crowds in 2001. You didn't start well that Championship with a 78, but boy, you played great the last three rounds. What are your recollections from 2001 and the experience that you had here?

ALLEN DOYLE: Well, I mean, I had a great experience other than that first round, probably.

I was playing very good coming into this event. Maybe I put too much pressure on myself that first round because I honestly felt, if I came to a USGA event, that even though I may not have been mentioned as one of

the players to watch or to pick, that I always felt that I was one of those guys.

I wouldn't say that I ever thought that -- I mean, it was kind of ironic, when I won my first one, that I was as old as I was. So when you get up at that age, you may have thought that your chances you blew. I played pretty good at Inverness. So I've had some real good USGA finishes.

It was funny, I said it at NCR -- it was my first USGA title. A lot of people seeing me around the amateur game and how well I did in the amateur game thought I was a U.S. Amateur champion, and I was not.

So I always -- but I said, I finally got a trophy to prove it. I always thought I was a USGA champion because I was on three Walker Cup teams and three World Amateur teams and we won the World Amateur in France. But Tiger Woods was on that team, so I was dwarfed in attention because of that, and that's fine.

But I said, I finally got the trophy to prove that I'm a USGA Champion. So this, on any tour, let alone our Tour, is the zenith, is the event that everybody wants to win.

I figured, possibly, it passed me by. But when I worked at Spring Valley, I had an old pro, a fine, fine guy. He said any time that you can have EST behind your name, then you've done something. And in my case, it's always been the oldest. So but it had the EST, and so to win it at NCR and then to follow it up the next year was mind-blowing, almost.

MODERATOR: Yeah, not just a USGA Champion, you're a two-time USGA Champion. And with the benefit of a little over a decade to look back, how do you put that into what you've accomplished in your career, and what does it mean to be a two-time USGA Champion?

ALLEN DOYLE: Well, it didn't do anything that I didn't think it would because I knew, if you won it, you'd be recognized far more than you ever would if you didn't win it.

Nor did it get me up to the stratosphere of the great, great names in the game, which I knew that wouldn't --

it wouldn't do that anyway.

But for a guy that played and practiced all those years just for his own being, it was a huge great satisfaction, and it was just that little -- even if other people didn't think it was the cherry on top of that pile, I thought it was. And so it was -- you know, to look back and to be recognized.

You're recognized a little different, whether it be the players in the last couple of days calling you champ -- it isn't so much they just use that word. There seems to be something behind it. So it has that meaning to it, and it has that respect to it, and I take more out of that than I would, let's say, the banner and your name in lights or whatever you call it. So it's been a great thing for me.

MODERATOR: Fast forward to this year. We're back at Salem Country Club, 16 years later, after 2001. You're a little more familiar with the course than maybe some of the other players. What are some of the challenges that the players will face at Salem?

ALLEN DOYLE: Well, I think probably after seeing it in the practice round, they may not -- they probably will have a little more respect for it. I wouldn't say that we didn't, because that's the furthest thing from the truth.

I know they did some changes. If I was included in those changes, I wouldn't have had them add the length on 9 and 18. I wouldn't have had them do a few other things. But when you play the practice round, whether it was the cool wind in the mornings or whether it was the course playing a little soft, if you didn't get a real appreciation for how this thing was going to play, then you lost a unique opportunity to get a feel of how well you're going to have to play to do well here.

MODERATOR: My final question before we open it up to everybody, it's your first U.S. Open since 2012. What have you been up to the last four or five years?

ALLEN DOYLE: Well, I piddled around at The First Tee. We had a First Tee chapter in LaGrange. I'm kind of the pseudo superintendent. I piddle around there in the morning. I take the kids to lunch. Then I go play golf.

MODERATOR: Sounds like a pretty good life.

ALLEN DOYLE: When I'm on a cart.

MODERATOR: Let's open up to questions.

Q. Allen, since you put the EST next to your name now, there's like 47 first-time players in this field, in

the Senior Open. What advice would you give to one of those players that are playing here in this Championship for the first time?

ALLEN DOYLE: Well, I wouldn't give them any different advice in any particular -- if it was the first event on the Champions Tour, let's say, and they're going to be a little excited or the first doing something. But it's almost too, too mundane and trite an answer to say you're not going to have to go as low as you think you will. You're not going to have to hit as many great shots as you think you're going to have to hit. You're going to have to stay in the game. You got to stay out of the rough. But that's every USGA event, almost.

So there's a template here, and all these guys should know it, especially when you say -- when you say the first-time guys, more than half of them aren't really first-time guys. They've got experience in events far more impressive than this, possibly, because they've played all the great Majors in the world.

So the template is pretty simple. Drive it in the fairway, try to keep it out of the rough around the greens, and make sure you position yourself and then figure out these greens. When they say stay below these greens, you know, they mean it, and it's that important.

Q. Hey, Allen. Can you talk a little bit about your work after you left competitive golf in a regular fashion, talk a little bit about The First Tee chapter and what your chapter does and what the game can do to bring more young people into the game.

ALLEN DOYLE: I do what I do. I mean, I'm not an idle hands guy so I've got to kind of be doing something.

I picked up the game caddieing, and people may not draw the dot -- connect the dot from First Tee to caddieing, but you actually can. I mean, I can remember carrying double in a group that they played with a good bit and I'd drop a bag on the left, got to go to the right, and the guy that I go to said, has he got a shot there? And I said not really. And he said, well, he probably will when he's through.

So, you know, you learned a little bit about what other people thought of a guy that cheated. You'd caddie in some groups and you'd hear, when the one guy was not close, that they'd be talking highly about him. And so you knew, you kind of learn respect and honesty, this kind of stuff.

So, you know, there are no caddie programs down south, or there are very, very few. And if you ever tried to get one started, it would never go. The First Tee is something that is needed, for sure, outside of the numbers. Then you throw in the numbers that the game needs to grow in the future, and it's needed. So

it was a simple thing to get involved in.

I will say Greg caddied for me in the Porter Cup. It may have been the reason I didn't win it more than once.

(Laughter.)

ALLEN DOYLE: I'm just sayin'.

Q. Allen, I was -- earlier this week, I was talking with Jay Williamson, who was out on Tour for 16 years or whatever. He always putted right-handed, and he was saying putting was always his crutch. And this year, he just recently switched and started putting left-handed. He played hockey in college. I just wondered if that made -- and he was left-handed, you know, held his stick left-handed as a hockey player. If that made sense or if you ever fiddled around with that as well?

ALLEN DOYLE: I've often made a comparison, at least with me, from sport to sport, and I always felt that I learned that it wasn't a bad thing to be the underdog in hockey because, when we were kids, we were a ratty group, a local little group that one of the dads ran, and whenever we played against these other junior groups, boy, they'd come out on the ice, and they'd be dressed, the uniforms would match. And we had all mismatched stuff. We had to wear the half jerseys and we were yellow or red, or we came in and this group looked like they were going to kill us.

And our pseudo coach said, hey, they put their socks on like you do. Let's go out and just play our game. And we beat them, and that's stuck in my mind for 50 years. And that's probably when I likened how I could beat Watson in Kansas. That really, to me, was nothing. I mean, it went back to those days of a simple lesson that this guy, he puts his socks on like you do.

And Tom's a wonderful guy and a first-rate man, but he's not a better man than I am. And he's -- I know he's a competitor and a hard worker, but I don't know if he's a better competitor or harder worker than I am. So I felt I had as equal a chance as anybody. So that's what I always drew from another sport.

So I wouldn't -- you know, I mean, if it helps Jay up here, it will help him here. So that's a good thing.

Q. Did you play -- as a hockey player, did you shoot left-handed or right-handed?

A. I shot left-handed. But that was always your -- your strong hand always went on the top of the stick. So that was where a right-handed person, most of them shot left-handed because your strong hand was on the butt of the stick.

So I mean, if it helped Jay -- I saw his name down. I played a decent amount with Jay a couple years on Tour, and he's a good guy, and I saw he turned 50. So I hope it works for him.

Q. Allen, you got the whole contingent. It's great to see your family here. How are you going to decide the caddie duties this week with your daughters?

ALLEN DOYLE: I think they flip. One of them's got it tomorrow or Friday. I don't know what it is. Erin was worried about she may not see the course prior to going out. I said, it really doesn't matter. We're either going to do pretty good, the way I'm hitting it, or it ain't gonna matter if you came up here a month early and walked the course every day. We're going to go out and do as good as we can.

Q. How's your game, and what are your expectations this week?

ALLEN DOYLE: I would tell you the same thing I would always tell you on expectation. I was -- of course, I'm just a club player now, but I'm still a decent club player, and I've been breaking my -- shooting and breaking my age two, three times a week. But it's been at a club that I play all the time.

What the guys are fired up for me -- and I kept trying to tamp down their expectations (laughter). After walking out there, I don't walk much. I mean, I feel it. So that has tempered my expectations.

When I did play the course, it played long, which doesn't benefit me so much. But, you know, I would -- but I never put expectations on myself. I came and tried to play as good as I could at the time I was there, and hopefully it was better than what I would have done if I didn't just come with the attitude of trying to do my best.

Q. Just to follow up, when you were growing up in the Boston area, who were -- since you played hockey also, were you following the Bruins then?

ALLEN DOYLE: Oh, yeah.

Q. Who was your guy?

ALLEN DOYLE: Bobby Orr was the guy, you know.

Q. What about him did you admire, and did you apply anything you saw that he did to what you did later on?

ALLEN DOYLE: Well, a guy like that, you only see him in the public light pretty much, but he was always a reserved guy. You never heard him yakking. You never heard him bragging.

And you hear the stories about people saying, act like you've been there, so I've always tried to take that from

all elite athletes, to be humble. I've often said -- and I've won a good bit, thank goodness -- but I've always tried to be more humble after each win than I was before. That was one of my goals.

So that's what I've tried to do, and I think in that case, you savor what you've done, and you realize how hard it is to do. So you know how hard you've got to work, and then you keep trying.

Q. Also, during that period, golfing-wise, Arnold obviously was the man back then, and Jack was coming into his own. Were those the folks you followed, or were there others?

ALLEN DOYLE: Oh, no. I was an Arnie fan. My dad, he never played golf until he retired, and when we'd watch -- it's funny, when we'd watch golf in the '60s, it was the last four holes. They'd bring you up on the 15th tee.

Whenever it was, Dad said, he said, ain't gonna be long before Nicklaus is kicking Palmer's butt. I looked at him and said, what the hell do you know about the game of golf? But he knew people, and he was an athlete himself, so he knew that kind of stuff. And like me in later life -- I was almost as smart as he was in later life. So they kind of knew.

But Arnie was a wonderful guy. I'll give you one story about him. We were playing in Des Moines in the Senior Open, and Erin, my oldest, was playing at Southern Mississippi, and they had a fundraiser a few weeks after the Senior Open. They wanted to know what I could get for autographs and stuff, get a bunch of stuff to auction off.

So when I called home, or Erin called, she said, who did you get? What did you get for stuff? I said, well, I got a ton of stuff. She said, well, did you get anything from Palmer? I said, well, I never saw him because he was early, or whatever, I was late. So I never saw him. But I always put a note in the locker, when I asked for something, so he knew what it was for. You didn't just stick a hat in front of him and say, hey, would you sign this. So they had a little appreciation. And it was actually in James Ray Carpenter, who is the past president of the PGA of America, and his name was on it along with mine.

Well, so, you know, they're all deflated because they got nothing with Palmer. Well, a week later, a box comes in the mail, and it's stuff that he's signed. He kept that letter, and he -- it was a dozen balls signed, a couple of hats, a couple of gloves, and he really didn't have to do that. That was my first year on the Champions Tour, so he didn't -- he didn't know me particularly well.

I mean, I wouldn't have thought less of him if I never got anything because I would have said, jeez, the guy got everybody and his brother hitting him up, and you can't expect if you don't see him -- you know. But a week later, we got a box full of stuff, and it was the hit at the event, at the auction.

MODERATOR: We have some folks from the Francis Ouimet Scholarship Fund here. You're a two-time winner of the Francis Ouimet Trophy. We're back here in Massachusetts. What does it mean to win the Ouimet Trophy for someone so prominent in golf in Massachusetts?

ALLEN DOYLE: It was probably more impressive I got the scholarship, probably. You know, I was -- there was a guy at the Spring Valley, Mike Shuman, and he asked -- he used to ask me a bunch, so I caddied for him a lot. He said, what are your plans next year?

I said, well, I'll be going to Norwich University. He said, have you applied for the Ouimet Scholarship. I said, I'm a C-student. There wouldn't be any need for me to. He says, I'm bringing you an application, and you're going to apply for it.

So I get it in a few days, and I'm home one night at the kitchen table. I'm filling it out. Dad comes in. He says what are you doing? I says, I'm filling out an application for the Ouimet Scholarship. He said what the hell are you doing that for? He said, that's why you should have studied harder in high school. I said, well, you know, one of the guys at the club, he said to do it.

So about three weeks later, I get the application, you know, the response back, and I got it. It was \$1,000 a year. Norwich was four. I had half a scholarship for hockey, and we had seven kids. So it was kind of important, three in college at one time, all that kind of stuff.

So, I mean, I didn't taunt them much. I said, what do you think now, you know? And I said, it actually worked, me being at the club a bunch and being a hustler.

And I've told the Ouimet people, I think -- or I've told a few of them. I don't know if Bob and who I told, but I said, my one piece of advice for the Ouimet Fund would be don't ever lose sight of who those scholarships are meant for because that guy, I'll betcha he sold that scholarship when that committee said, wait a minute, Mr. Shuman, Mike, he doesn't meet the standard.

And he said, he meets every standard. He's out there every day. He's a hustler, and this is what this scholarship is for. So it helped my family. It helped me

and my family, my family more, probably.

And I could make a couple grand in the summer working in the bag room and caddieing, so I paid my way through school. So the Ouimet thing is huge, and it's a great thing. I know it's going better now than it ever has, and God bless 'em.

MODERATOR: Allen Doyle, 7:31 off the 10th tee on Thursday with one of your daughters caddieing for you. Best of luck next week.

ALLEN DOYLE: We'll find out tonight which one.