

U.S. Open Championship 2018

Saturday, June 16, 2018

Daniel Berger

Flash Interview

THE MODERATOR: Daniel Berger is first in the Flash area this afternoon. Daniel tied for championship record for this week at 66, and he's plus 3 for the Championship.

Q. There's a lot of birdies out there today. Talk about it.

DANIEL BERGER: It was a nice change, considering the first day I didn't make one. So overall, very, very pleased. But, you know, I think it had a lot more to do with my putter than it did necessarily my ball striking because, you know, with a lot of these pin positions, you really can't hit it that close to the flagstick. You just have to be, you know, really precise with where you're leaving it so you give yourself an actual birdie chance. I did that really well today.

Q. You put yourself in position for Sunday.

DANIEL BERGER: Yeah, I mean, that's fun. I mean, this is why I practice and play because I want to be in this position to have a chance to win golf tournaments.

It hasn't necessarily gone my way this year, but I've done a lot of the right things, and it's more about just letting it happen and not putting too much pressure on myself. Today I did that. I just went out there and played golf and added up the score at the end of the day, and it happened to be a good one.

Q. Did you think that this was the time to be out on the course? Several guys made birdie runs today. Do you think, as the afternoon goes on and maybe it dries out more, it will be harder?

DANIEL BERGER: I think it's going to be extremely difficult. I don't even know if the wind is going to be as much of a factor as it is going to be the firmness of the greens. Some of these pins are three off the edges, where you hit one by, three feet past the hole and it's going 40 yards away from the green. I think to get out there early and play a good round really was to my benefit.

I think, if someone shoots 4 under this afternoon, it's more like 8 under.

Q. (No microphone). Were there any pins out there where you felt you could aim more towards the edge, not so close to but in the right spot?

DANIEL BERGER: I would say in 18 holes I played today, I don't think there was one gettable pin. From



what I remember, and I just came off the golf course.

But it's just -- there's just so many run-offs, and you have these small little landing targets of ten feet of where you actually have a chance to have a birdie putt. So, I mean, like I hit plenty of really good shots in there. I hit one on the par 5, No. 5, that I landed ten feet from the hole, and it ended up 50 yards away. So that's just how it is out here.

Q. If there is a difference, what's the difference between standing over a shot at a U.S. Open and standing over a shot elsewhere? Is there some tension here that doesn't exist there?

DANIEL BERGER: I think, obviously, at a U.S. Open, there's probably a little bit more pressure, but in a good way, not in a negative way. More in an I'm excited to go play kind of way.

But, you know, it's the same. When you have a chance to win a golf tournament, it's there. It's what I look forward to.

Q. How difficult was that putt for par on 14? You had birdies around it, but it seemed like that was maybe bigger.

DANIEL BERGER: That was a huge momentum saver. I mean, I hit a really good drive in the fairway, and then I hit a fantastic 4 iron that went over the green and was left with like almost nothing, and hit a great pitch shot to ten feet and -- you know, it was one of those -- the whole green is sloping right to left, but you know it doesn't go right to left. So to be able to trust yourself and hit the putt where you're looking is definitely a win.

Q. How would you describe the condition of the greens at this point and going forward throughout the day?

DANIEL BERGER: I think it's going to be extremely difficult this afternoon. The firmness, the first nine holes was a different level than when we got to the back nine. It was way more difficult.

So, I mean, I'm only going to imagine that, as the wind picks up, as, you know, the sun beats down on them, they're just going to get firmer and faster, and it's just going to be more difficult.

Q. They (inaudible) this course 14 years ago or

whenever it was. Is there any danger of that this year, or has it had enough moisture during the week that they can maintain it?

DANIEL BERGER: I think there's always a chance of that. I mean, you know, if the wind picks up another ten miles an hour, it's just going to dry out even more. But I think the USGA did a fantastic job of moving the tee boxes up on certain holes that needed to be moved up, like 7, to that pin, the front right. I mean, you can't be hitting a 6 iron into that hole. They moved it up to a 9 iron, which is still an extremely difficult shot, but it just makes it playable.

So they did a really good job of that, which I think will kind of negate if it does get too firm and fast. But it's just going to be extremely difficult.

Q. Daniel, in your competitive days, have you ever deliberately stopped a ball, and if so, what penalties went with it?

DANIEL BERGER: I actually randomly just was signing my scorecard, and it was on TV, and I was like kind of shocked. I didn't even -- I thought it was like a joke or something.

But, I mean, then I watched it again when I was done, and it looked like that ball was rolling 50 yards away. So I don't know the rules enough to tell you anything about that, other than I'm sure he regrets doing it. I mean, it looks like he just got really frustrated, which is easy to do, and, I mean, I don't think I've ever seen that happen before.

Q. Have you ever been close to that point where you get so frustrated, you do something that's going to cost you?

DANIEL BERGER: Oh, yeah. Today (laughter).

Q. Thanks, Daniel.

DANIEL BERGER: All right.