

U.S. Amateur Championship

Press Conference
Sunday August 19, 2018

Devon Bling

Q. We'd like to welcome Devon Bling, runner up at the 2018 U.S. Amateur. Not the result that you were hoping for, but you've got something hanging around your neck that you've got to be awfully proud of. Tell us about that.

DEVON BLING: Yeah, it wasn't the day I was hoping for, but I played really well all week. I battled really hard to get to this championship match. It's just the beginning, it's not the end. Now I get to look forward to the U.S. Open and the Masters, so that's definitely a lot of positives coming out of this week.

Q. Devon, great week; today it looked like you had some places where you just wouldn't quit. Toward the end when you made your putt on 9. Take us back earlier in the round to No. 4, to watch your opponent get up-and-down from the ice plant, what was that like?

DEVON BLING: Yeah, it wasn't really surprising to me. He's a great player. He is in the championship match. You've got to hit shots like that to get there. It wasn't too surprising, but definitely did hurt a little bit after being in the bunker off the tee. But it wasn't too surprising.

Q. Earlier in the week you talked about being from Ridgecrest, a town of 20,000, and your family is out in big support. What kind of support did you get from the community during the week, and did that build as you got to the final match?

DEVON BLING: The support I had was unbelievable. I had friends and family and teammates, and there was people crowded in restaurants back in Ridgecrest watching. I could feel all the support, and it was great to have all that. It definitely grew to today. There was a lot of people out there. I was just happy for all them to be there.

Q. What did you and Coach talk about after he had that four-hole run on the front nine to get to 5-up? What did you try to do to ground yourself and try to get yourself back?

DEVON BLING: My coach kept telling me, there's a lot of golf left. That's why it's a 36-hole day. There's plenty of holes. I think we had another 20 holes where I could make up those five shots. He just kept telling me to keep battling and never quit.



Q. When he hits the drive out of bounds on the 18th and takes the penalty, are you thinking maybe it's time for you to get the momentum heading into the afternoon session, and then he ended up halving that hole; what was that turnaround like?

DEVON BLING: I definitely did think if I can win this hole and get back to three, it's definitely doable in the afternoon. But he made a great up-and-down out of the bunker, and I didn't strike a very good putt. We ended up halving the hole. I didn't really take it too badly. After being down so many early, I was just -- we talked about it, I said if I can get to four or better by the end of the round, I can make that up. But yeah, it was definitely a surprise.

Q. The U.S. Amateur, as you said, just the beginning. Going forward as you get to your next season with UCLA, how do you approach your next golf competition? You've got this great set of play behind you; what does that do for you?

DEVON BLING: Definitely raises my level of confidence going forward, knowing I can compete with the best players in the world, and just -- yeah, it just boosts my confidence going forward.

Q. Was there any kind of conversation at all between you and Viktor during the course of the match where you guys just focused on your play?

DEVON BLING: I think we exchanged back and forth three or four times the first round on hole 6, but that's about it.