

U.S. Amateur Championship

Quick Quotes

Friday August 18, 2017

Doug Ghim

THE MODERATOR: We've got our first semifinalist for the 117th U.S. Amateur, 2 and 1 winner over Connor Syme of Scotland. Doug, that was a pretty intense match against the two guys left in the field with the highest world amateur golf ranking.

That kind of stuff happens in the U.S. Amateur. Just get some initial reactions from you about the match itself.

DOUG GHIM: I mean, I knew it was going to be a difficult one as soon as I saw the draw. I mean, when I finished my match yesterday and I saw Connor chip in on 18, I was like, That's what I'm going to be playing against, right?

He's an incredible competitor. I have tremendous respect for him. I feel like if we were to play another match tomorrow it would be a 50/50.

It's just the way it goes. It's unfortunate to see such a good competitor have to leave early. Definitely happy to be still standing here.

THE MODERATOR: Probably was helpful to you that you always were either square or ahead, right.

DOUG GHIM: For sure. I just think the way that I play, the way that I play golf, especially match play, I'm not very aggressive, but I feel like I'm pretty consistent. I hit a lot of fairways, greens.

So I feel as soon as I get an advantage it becomes really difficult for the other side to get back in. If they do so, it's because they're going to have to win hole against me. I'm not going to do anything to really give them a hole. I mean, I did a couple of times today and I was a little upset with myself, but the golf course also played much more difficult.

I could tell that Connor doesn't give away many holes as well. I just think the way the course is playing today it was inevitable for both of us. I guess I just took advantage.

Q. What was the progression of your thinking from the start on the 8th tee when you hit 3-wood, was



it?

DOUG GHIM: Uh-huh.

Q. Just onto the green and Connor hit into the hazard on the right, and then of course he hits that excellent shot and makes the putt. How did your mind work during that? At the start you're obviously in a much better position.

DOUG GHIM: Right. I mean, it's match play. It's a shot that happens in match play. If we're playing a stroke play tournament Connor might not pull that off. Just knowing your back is against wall, and if you don't hit a good one you lose one shot.

So it's like, even if I blow this over the green, if it wasn't going to be perfect I probably won't halve the hole. So as a competitor, knowing that he's in that position, he had a ton of green to work with. You have to entertain the possibility that might happen. As a matter of fact, you have to tell yourself it's going to happen, that way you're prepared for it.

Because it's always a pleasant surprise when you're expecting something and then he doesn't pull through and now you have two putts to win the hole. I was just going into it. My dad was like, You're probably going to win this hole. I was like, I don't know. He could hit it to 20 feet and make a 20-footer. He could hit it stiff. He could hole it. I don't know. There are a lot of things that could happen.

So wasn't surprised at all that he hit it close. Less surprised that he made the put, so...

Q. So no rollercoaster effect for you at all? Just trying to assume your opponent is going to pull off the best shot he can?

DOUG GHIM: For sure. As much as I would've liked for him not to hit it close, it's match play and you have to expect that as a competitor.

I think Mr. Jack Nicklaus would say all the time, Always expect the other guy to make the putt or hole the chip. You never want to be surprised. I think my dad and I usually do a really good job of that.

Q. Your birdies on the back nine were probably pretty critical, I would say. Run us through that.

DOUG GHIM: I would think so. I thought I hit a good

par putt on 9 and it just broke a little bit more than I wanted to. I didn't take advantage of a very good drive on that hole. That was one of the holes that I just kind of gave to him and I was pretty upset with.

But once I saw that his drive was where it was, I thought if I could get it to the front left of the green either pin high or to the front, I thought 3-wood was the right club, and I hit it pretty decent. It was a little spinnier than I wanted it, but it got just enough -- just far enough where I would have just an angle to kind of cut a wedge in there.

You know, Connor had pretty much an impossible shot. I mean, I can't say because I couldn't see his lie, but...

It was doable, but he had to hit it perfect and it just came out a little hot on him. You know, that freed me up to hit a nice pitch.

Birdie on 13 was nice. Connor, again, kind of freed me up because he had about ten feet for par. That kind of gave me a free run at it. I thought, I don't want to have to watch him putt and see if I win the hole. I want to make this one. It was an easy putt to read. Hit a good putt and wept in.

Q. 16 turned out to be a surprisingly good hole for you.

DOUG GHIM: Yeah. Definitely worked out my way from the start, because he was away, which dictated because I was in such a bad spot, and frankly I was very surprised that he hit the shot that he did. I didn't see his lie, so I can't say whether...

Q. He had a little stone behind the ball. He said it played with his mind.

DOUG GHIM: So then that would explain a lot. Coming from the right side of the green he has that whole back slope to work with, where I have to hit down that slope. It's such an elevated bunker shot. If he had hit it to like five or six feet, you know, I probably -- going at the pin -- would not have a chance to hit it in where inside of 20 feet.

As soon as I saw the ball sail over the green I didn't look at the flag. I was like, I saw Doc do this yesterday on TV where he used his hook and brought it back. I was like, I'm going to take everything out of play and make sure I get it on the green.

It's going to force him to try to hit a really good flop shot because I have a putt for par. He was handcuffed back there. He tried to hit a good flop shot. Didn't hit bad one, but it rolled kind of where my ball was. I pushed the putt, but hit it good speed so that forced him to make the putt and he just didn't make it.

Q. On 11 did you feel like you gave one away there?

DOUG GHIM: I just can't figure kikuyu out. I don't really know what's going on. I thought I hit a good chip. I hit it exactly where I wanted to and the ball literally bounced backward. It was a bit annoying.

But at the end the day, I hit a poor drive and got a good break, had a good lie, and kind of put myself in the drive's seat. Kind of at least forced Connor's hand to try to make birdie. Gave him a little bit of pressure.

He was already 1-up, so just being in front in a pretty good spot kind of put a little bit more heat on him to hit a good shot.

He didn't quite pull it off. Although I didn't pull it off, there was no blood because we were just kind of -- once I hit my second shot, he had a poor lie I think in the left rough and will to lay up and all those things, so I felt more like I got away with one.

I was just happy that there was no surprising chip-in or anything like that. To halve that hole was fine with me.

Q. Congratulations.

DOUG GHIM: Thank you.

Q. I was just wondering if you can comment on your three years in Austin, and also being a big 12 Player of the Year, how much your game improved being at Texas.

DOUG GHIM: I've always felt like I had the potential to be really good, but I always felt pretty underrated. My decision to go to Texas was because I was going to be associating myself with guys that are incredible golfers. Gavin Hall, Beau Hossler, Scotty, and then guys like Brandon Stone and Dylan Frittelli; Spieth, Gribble, they had just left.

I knew that every single day I was going to have to put my name and my game and put it next to theirs and see how I'm doing every day. At the same time, when you watch Spieth play really well I'm really happy for him. He's one my favorite guys on tour, if not my favorite. It's a little bit like, Yes, way to go. But then it's like, But that's what I have to try to compete against when I get out there. That's the bar, right?

But the facilities at Texas are great. I feel like being able to have the hands-on, like the state of the art, TrackMan, things that I don't have the fortune of having back home, has been great for me.

I just think the competition that I have to face every day within my own team. Being Beau's teammate for two years, it was really hard on us because he was winning

all the time. He never let us forget it either. Every single day when he won a tournament he would come back and we would have to hear Beau gloat about it and whatever. It was like, I really don't want to lose to this guy again.

You know, I think that was healthy for me and I loved every second of it. I am kind of sad there is only one year left. It's made me I think much more competitive and much more consistent.

Q. I think I saw your coach John Fields out there today watching you. If I'm not mistaken, he was here in 2012 when Texas won the championship. Has he given you pointers on Riviera, and have any of the guys that were here at that time contacted and you give support or pointer on the course?

DOUG GHIM: I can imagine Spieth is a little busy, so he didn't call me or anything. But Coach Fields, yeah, I mean, he's obviously willing to help, but he kind of just lets me do my thing.

I have asked questions. Like 10; like what the heck do you do there? They were like, Well, it all depends. It's match play. It's more about the stories and trying to draw from what those guys did and what are the things that could happen down the stretch.

From what I remember Riviera at the national championship it was crazy down the stretch. I can't remember who chipped in, but chipped in for par. Frittelli had like a 20-footer. Spieth holed out from the bunker in 15 I think from like 200-some yards. Like those things can happen.

It can either happen for you or they can happen to you. Just knowing that that's kind of the nature of match play, and Riviera kind of allows for crazy things to happen, which is great because it's match play.

It's helpful to hear those stories, and excited to see what kind of stories will happen in the next couple days.

Q. You're in new territory here; made it to the semifinals. How do you keep yourself focused and not think about going too far ahead?

DOUG GHIM: Yeah, it's new territory for the U.S. Am. You know, there is a lot more stakes than the U.S. Junior or U.S. Pub Links, but I played in the Pub Links, I've played in national championships where it kind of feels like the same.

It's the U.S. Am for college golf. It's as big as it gets. I feel like I've been in a couple big moments, TV cameras not letting me warmup before I play or stuff like that.

But, yeah, I just feel like the golf course is so hard and the competition is so stiff, so there is no time to ponder on those type of things. This golf course is so demanding and the conditions are getting harder every day. You just can't slip up, because you know once you do your opponent is going to take advantage of it.

There are nerves for sure, but everyone is feeling them. I'm more than happy to feel those nerves, because that means I'm doing something right.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations.

DOUG GHIM: Thank you.