

U.S. Amateur Championship

Quick Quotes

Saturday August 19, 2017

Doug Ghim

THE MODERATOR: We've got Doug Ghim with us, first finalist, 2 and 1 winner over Theo Humphrey.

Doug, he won second hole to take the lead, and then with some great play you got the lead up to 4. Give us a little assessment of where you thought things went your way.

DOUG GHIM: Yeah, I had a big putt on 1 to halve the hole. That kind of set the tone I think for the rest of the match. It was I think about nine or ten feet for par.

Very easily if I miss that that kind of just hands him the keys to the match pretty much for the of the day and let's him dictate it.

I made that putt, and although I lost the next hole I felt like I hit every shot the way I wanted to. The second shot just squirted right on me unexpectedly. If I'm going to make a bogey it's going to be with committed golf swings. I wasn't so much disappointed. Obviously you don't like losing holes, but I was still pretty positive.

The putt on three was big to square the match. Made a really good birdie there. I feel like once I made that birdie on 3 and squared the match, I knew -- I felt like I wasn't going to lose the match.

Q. How long was that putt?

DOUG GHIM: I would say it was close to 20 feet, maybe just short of 20 feet.

THE MODERATOR: If you have a question, let's use the microphone.

Q. You get to 4-up with five or six to play, was it?

DOUG GHIM: I get 4-up with six to play.

Q. And so when he got it down to 2, what are you trying to do there? Just trying to play each -- just stay in the moment? What was your thinking?

DOUG GHIM: Well, it's match play, and it was actually a bit of an advantage to see him tee off. For some reason, it's really not that difficult of a tee shot, 17, on paper. For some reason I hit it off to the right in that bunker quite a bit.



Once he went right I figured he probably wouldn't have a shot at the green, so I thought -- I mean, I'm probably going to layup. I don't have the length to get it there. Even if I did, it's an awkward shot because it's a back right pin.

I just wanted to make sure that I had an opportunity for birdie and be able to put pressure on him, so I took a 3-wood instead to keep it short of that bunker. I feel like that would give me a chance to first hit and layup, and then basically send a message, like, You're going to need birdie to win this hole, because I'm not going to give it to you and you're not in a great spot right now.

I think it paid off, because he had to hit a layup to the left and he had to go first. Granted he hit a great shot, but the pin is so difficult. Once I was 2-up, I just basically played smart golf, I guess, and played my opponent. Just everything was based off what he did off that tee. That drive right kind of dictated what I was going to do.

Q. Any way to describe the feeling when the putt on 17 went in?

DOUG GHIM: Man, I was just trying to feel my hands. I'm sure it was visible I was trying to calm myself down. So many thoughts in your head are going at that moment.

In any match to have that length of a putt to close it out is hard to do, but then you also got these other thoughts this your head.

Like, you know, for me I got a little bit of demons because the Pub Links from three years ago. I was just trying to make sure I stay calm. Didn't make the putt more than what it was. It was an uphill five and a half footer and it's right center.

I told myself right before I stood up, if you start it -- I'm a spot picker, so I picked a spot. I said, If it starts on this line it will go in.

When I got over it I was like, Just start it over that thing. I hit the putt, looked up --

Q. (No microphone.)

DOUG GHIM: Yeah, every time.

Q. Can you talk a little bit about when you were much younger and getting going in the game and spent a lot more time practicing I think in the hitting cage your father had put up in the backyard, what it was like playing for you at that time. You practiced a lot more than you played then, didn't you, when you were younger?

DOUG GHIM: Yes, well, when I first started the game it was all about practicing. I think my dad -- I'm sure there was financial stress, but I think I more than anything he wanted me to make sure -- or he wanted to see if I actually really loved the game.

Every day it was like an ice home game, right, where you play Flappy Bird or something and you get a score and you're trying to beat your high score. You're not worried about what anyone else is doing.

If I beat my score from before then I was happy with my day regardless if I bogeyed the last hole or whatnot. I think that made it fun, so by the time I started playing in tournaments it was more of a standard that I kept to myself other than against other people.

But that time was a lot of fun. I don't think I had a full grasp of what golf was because I was practicing so much. I remember the first time I was on a golf course. I had no idea what the rules of golf was. I just knew how to hit the golf ball.

I was pretty good at hitting shots, but I didn't know things like I shouldn't step in people's lines or I need to rake the bunker, that I wasn't allowed to ground a club in a bunker -- didn't even know what a bunker was because I was on the driving range or in a cage all the time.

But it was fun. It was fun to learn. It was cool playing with other kids just for fun and not to have the competition. You know, hearing that you're pretty good from a bunch of other kids and adults was a lot of fun.

I think when the going gets tough at this stage in the higher level of golf, I always look back at those days and be like, Remember why you're doing this, right? It's not a job. It's a privilege. It's a lot of fun.

Q. Can you talk a little bit about how much your father has meant to you through your golfing career. He's been your only coach and obviously provided an enormous amount of guidance. Must have been very meaningful today to have him on your bag.

DOUG GHIM: I'm not really sure if I can quantify what it means to me to be out there with him tomorrow.

We've shared so many good moments and so many

really difficult ones. To mention in 2014, that night after was -- I mean, I think I was okay, but I don't think the significance dawned on me, what I just did in blowing a 1-up lead on a 36 hole.

But, I mean, the difficult part was knowing that I could have walked out on the fairway of Augusta with my father, and that was kind of basically taken away from me. That was difficult. Then when I that putt on 17 dropped it was the first thing that popped in my head, We're going to the Masters -- likely. But I hope I'm going to the Masters.

Q. Would you carry your bag in the Masters?

DOUG GHIM: Yes.

Q. You talked the other day about the '14 APL and that you've grown so much as a player in the last three years and played a lot of matches against really good players. Can you just talk about how in that match play setting, you know, the chip-in you made on 8, the important par save on the 10th when it looked like you could lose that hole, what do you draw on experience-wise and emotionally in a match?

DOUG GHIM: I mean, in match play, because I feel like in match play it's a lot easier to look at a shot for what it actually is.

Because when you have a putt to halve a hole, there is no uncertainty about it. It has to go in. And the fact is, whatever it is -- I think on 10 it was like a six or seven foot putt. It's a six or seven foot putt that's breaking slightly to the left.

Of course it's to halve the hole, but in stroke play you're thinking -- because in that -- that particular pin, if you hit it firm and probably lip it out, it could go off the green again.

But in this situation, it has to go in. Like no doubt about it. So it frees me up to go and look at it and say, What do you have here? I have a seven foot putt and it must go in, so we're going to do just that.

If it doesn't go in, oh, well. I'm 1-up going into the next hole. I think the more I've played matches the more I've realized that and the more I can separate what it means to what it actually is.

I don't know if that makes any sense, but like trying to take any emotional or circumstantial pressure off the putt and just think about the putt itself. I think that's why I've gotten a lot better.

In stroke play that's difficult to do because you're not only thinking about the shot now, you're thinking about

the one after. Yes, this might be a must-make, but you also don't want to run this four feet by and have to put that stress on you again.

In match play there is none of that. I think it's easier to just walk up there and pull it off.

Q. Talk about the pitch-in on 8 for eagle.

DOUG GHIM: Yeah, I mean, I was fortunate. I thought when I hit that 3-wood, because of the slope and how low I hit it, that it would be in the hazard. When I saw it, I also got a really good lie and I thought -- I mean, obviously depending on what Theo does, it's not very difficult because the upslope, there was a couple of paces of green that was a part of the upslope.

In many cases out here, the kikuyu is the whole upslope, and then when the downslope starts it's immediately green. So that's really difficult to judge. When there is an upslope that is part of the green you know it's going to kick forward and it will absorb some of the heat on it, but still kick forward.

On kikuyu it might just stick and come all the way back down. When I saw that I had lie that I could control the ball in, and obviously Theo made it a little bit easier because he had I think ten feet for par, I thought, Just hit your spot. Make sure you hit it hard enough to get it there.

Worst case scenario, hit it 30 feet by. I hit it and hit just the spot I was looking at. I knew it was going to have a good chance to be close. I saw it kick on a good lie, and then my dad was on the top of the hill just yelling, Yes, and a pretty loud roar. It was pretty special.

Q. Can you explain the decision to wear the Masters hat today? Was there a thought-out process? Secondly, how many times have you attended the Masters and the US Open, and what's your biggest memory from one of those?

DOUG GHIM: Well, it was kind of -- I kind of organized it already to wear the Masters hat. Sure, like you could say there was a little bit of thinking about it for tomorrow, or like what it meant to win.

But just matches black pants. It's the best black hat I've got. It's a pretty cool hat. (Laughter.)

Yeah, I didn't want to wear the Cubs hat because I wanted to earn my right to wear it. Pretty excited to wear it tomorrow.

As for the Masters, I've attended twice now; I've played the course three times with my school. That's pretty amazing. Thanks, Coach Fields. I remember the first time playing it. It was both a little bitter and -- I mean,

obviously mostly really cool.

To realize that you're getting to play a golf course that probably majority of people will never play, that was really cool. Seeing the history and seeing the clubhouse and everything. When they took us to a tour of the Crow's Nest, it was kind of like, Okay, I don't really want to be in here, right?

Yeah, I walked to the practice round when we played the tournament Augusta state. I thought that was pretty cool. I had to go later than the rest of my teammates that day because I had to take a government quiz online.

I remember heading out there with my assistant coach, J.P. I think one of the first group we saw was like Rory, Spieth, and Byron Meth. I remember stepping up there, it was the 8th tee. I see Rory and I see Spieth, and I walk up and J.P. goes, Oh, no. I was and like, What?

I just see two balls pretty far up there and I see one ball kind of short. I'm like, That's kind of strange. I look and the last name was Meth. I was like, Okay.

Then I get to the range to avoid all that mess, and the first person I see walk on to the tee is Byron Meth, and the rest of my teammates are like, Let's go have lunch. We got to get you away from this guy.

I could tell the moment I walked onto the premises the rest of my teammates were being really careful and really mindful about it. I appreciated that. Especially Gavin came after and he goes, You're going to be back here one day. Don't you worry about it.

I have a lot of good support back at school, but just I can't pick a memory that's meaningful to me because every -- just being there just absorbing the atmosphere out there is crazy. Getting to watch the best players play one of the best golf courses out there, there is not one moment I can tell.

Q. You alluded to it there, but how long did it take you to you get over that loss? When you left that tournament that week, how long did you think it would take you to possibly get back to the Masters?

DOUG GHIM: I mean, I was over it pretty quickly, especially because the Pub Links was before a pretty busy schedule. I had the Porter Cup right after and the Western Am and the U.S. Am. I think when I say I didn't realize the significance of what I just did was because, first of all, I didn't qualify for the U.S. Am yet, and my biggest goal at the Pub Links was to get to the final, because I knew that I wouldn't have to play a qualifier if I did so.



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So my first goal was already accomplished, and so I was really actually pretty happy with myself that I was in the U.S. Am. I would've had to play a qualifier I think two days after the last day of the U.S. Pub Links and I probably wouldn't have played very well.

So I didn't really think about it much. It really dawned on me when I went to that practice round. That's kind of where it hit me, where it was like, This is what I could have been doing and my teammates could be watching me right now. This sucks.

But, you know, golf, I could play golf for a really long time. As long as each focus every day is to get a little bit better and not to skip any steps -- I mean, Coach Fields told me all the time that you want to get a little bit better every day. Don't be complacent, but don't be trying to skip steps and trying to get really good in one day.

Success isn't overnight. I kept telling myself that I am associating myself with really good players every day. I had Beau Hossler as a high bar to set for myself, and every day just try to get a little bit better. It's pretty exciting to see some of the results show up.

Q. You have all afternoon. A little time to recoup. Give us an idea of what you'll do to prepare for tomorrow in terms of reassessing how today's round went or just rest.

DOUG GHIM: I'm not going to be thinking much about golf. (Laughter.) Just going to be chilling. I have a couple friends that are probably going out to dinner tonight. Some of them couldn't make it out today, but they were telling me they wouldn't miss the 36-hole day for the world.

So I have such a good group supporting me, Coach Fields, Pearl, J.P., my parents, and my friends. I'm just excited to celebrate today's victory with them and ponder on it a little bit.

You know, it's just a 36-hole round tomorrow and it's nothing more than on that. Sure, there are a lot of things tied to it, history and all that stuff, but I'm just going to go and enjoy it tomorrow.

I know that if I play the golf that I can, then I'm going to have a chance to win the match. You know, I'm just focused on doing what I've been doing. There is no reason to think any differently or change anything.

If I can do that then that's great. Just looking forward to tomorrow.

Q. You get to the 1st hole; obviously a lot on the

line today. Then the U.S. Open trophy is there.

What did you think of that next to the tee?

DOUG GHIM: I was wondering what that was doing there. Because I'm in the breakfast room, and I'm there before kind of the breakfast opens. I'm like the first competitor out there and I'm just eating, minding my own business, and the TV is in front of me. All of a sudden I hear a lot of footsteps and I'm just eating, and I look up, and they're bringing the Havemeyer trophy to the middle of the room.

I'm like, Really? Okay. Well, let's not look that. So kind of scooch my chair in the other direction not looking at that at all. Get to the first tee and I'm minding my own business, and then again, two other people are just walking across the tee box and there is like the U.S. Open trophy. Like, What is that doing here?

And then they didn't tell us that they were going to announce the stakes during the introduction. They just go, The stakes of being in the finals tomorrow is the chance to play in the U.S. Open. I was like, No, we have to ignore that.

It was pretty surreal. It's really cool. It's really cool that they do it. I jest when I talk about that. The USGA, it's really cool that they do that. It's awesome.

Just trying to keep my head down. It's just another rounds golf. In that particular moment it was just a 3-wood off the tee. That's all it is. It's just golf, and just having a lot of fun doing it.

Q. Do you feel like your game is getting sharper as the week progresses?

DOUG GHIM: I think yes and no. I mean, you wake up every morning and you hope you're in a good rhythm. I think I'm thinking sharper. I've gotten to know the golf course a little bit better and seen it in many different conditions now.

Today was in the morning. Yesterday was in the wind in the afternoon. So I think I've seen it in many different ways, so that gives me a good chance to be successful each time I advance because there is less surprises.

I'm getting a little bit more used to kikuyu in the rough and being able to predict a little bit better each time I'm in it. I think mostly it's just being comfortable with the situation. Just dipping my feet a little bit further into the pool.

The temperature feels pretty good right now.

Q. You wanted to avoid what the stakes were before you played your match. Now they're with

you, and what does it mean to you to be in the finals of the Amateur?

DOUG GHIM: It's something you dream of. I mean, I think I've alluded to this before earlier in the week. This is definitely the one tournament that everyone circles on their calendar and the whole year leads up to this.

It's similar to college. The whole year comes down to the National Championship. You could have a great season, but if you don't close well at the National Championships, I mean, at least at University of Texas that's not acceptable. We play the whole season to be at Nationals and to be peaking at the right time.

It's the same at the U.S. Am. The whole summer schedule that we picked out was so that I could be competitive, have enough rest, and be able to peak at the right time. To be here and to be playing well means a ton to me. A lot of fun obviously.

But I don't take lightly how significant it is to be playing out there tomorrow and having a chance at being in the history books. The great champions of this game all started here, and it's crazy to think about.

I'll let myself ponder on it a little bit probably, but there is plenty of time to do it after tomorrow. Just going to try to stick to my game plan and focus on getting some rest and being in a good mental state for tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations. Appreciate your time.