

U.S. Amateur Championship

Quick Quotes

Thursday August 16, 2018

Isaiah Salinda

Q. Isaiah Salinda, South San Francisco, California, Stanford and U.S. Amateur quarterfinalist. How does that sound to you?

ISAIAH SALINDA: Sounds pretty good. I'm already excited for tomorrow. Looking forward to it.

Q. Over the course of the U.S. Amateur, you've gotten more familiar with Pebble Beach despite the fact that you had not played it before. What are you finding out about it that fits your game, and how does that translate to your success at the U.S. Amateur?

ISAIAH SALINDA: Yeah, it's obviously an incredible course. I hadn't played it before this week, but still learning about the courses I play, picking up bits and pieces here and there. But it just requires really good shots, especially off the tee. As the rough is growing you've got to hit the fairways, and my ball-striking has been pretty good, so I feel like that suits my game pretty well.

Q. Your match with Stewart, you're down and you make a comeback. What were the key moments where you were able to get it to the point where you got it to your victory?

ISAIAH SALINDA: Yeah, it was a tough start, obviously, but I think the birdie on 11, I think that was my first birdie of the day, that kind of got me going there, brought it back to 1-down, and then from there -- the back nine, I just was a lot more comfortable, played a lot better on the back nine, just as I settled down there and hit a lot of good shots and made some putts. Yeah, kind of turned on 11. Kind of got some momentum there.

Q. Your shot into No. 18, beautiful iron shot. We were doing an interview, so we didn't get to see the audio of what was going on on the green, but I saw a huge smile from Stewart Hagestad. It looks like you had some camaraderie between the two of you near the end there. Did he come very close to holing a shot or what happened on the 18th?

ISAIAH SALINDA: On the 18th green, yeah, he had about a 20-, 25-footer for birdie, and I had already lagged my eagle putt up there to like two feet, and he had a 25-footer downhill left to right, and he just barely left it short. I thought it was in the whole way. I'm sure



he did, too. Yeah, I know him pretty well just from seeing him at tournaments, so yeah, it was a pretty comfortable match all day, despite us not playing our best. But yeah, I thought that putt was in.

Q. That putt is rolling toward the hole on its slow journey, are you thinking, we're heading to No. 1 right now?

ISAIAH SALINDA: Pretty much, yeah. You've got to expect your opponent to make it, and it looked good the whole way. I thought we were going extra holes. It seemed like we were going extra holes the whole way.

Q. I was talking to Bradley a little bit outside. He mentioned that your driver broke early on in the round today and you had to bring out a new one. How was adjusting to -- were you playing a different driver?

ISAIAH SALINDA: It was basically the same. Yeah, so it cracked on my second tee shot. I hit it, and it was a good shot, but it felt weird. And then I looked at it, and it was cracked along the bottom of the face. So I was kind of freaking out for a little bit because I didn't know -- I didn't bring an extra driver head, and I didn't know if any of the Callaway guys would have one. But they were really great. They ended up bringing one on the third hole, adjusted it right there. It was basically the same head, same loft. I think it was slightly different lie angle, which felt a little bit different on the course. But just had to adjust, and it was fine.

Q. It seems like you and Bradley gel pretty well together, as well. How is it having him on the bag for you these last few tournaments?

ISAIAH SALINDA: Yeah, he's been great. Being a former teammate of mine, we know each other really well, and he knows my game really well, and we get along. He's just really good at helping me in my pre-shot routine, just getting me in the right mental state and picking good targets, so he's been great for me this week.

Q. Did the driver issue calm you down or make you more flustered as the front nine went on, as you're trying to get adjusted to a new driver?

ISAIAH SALINDA: Yeah, it wasn't frustrating, it was -- I mean, the bad shots I hit, it wasn't because of the driver head. I mean, it was a little different, but like I said, I just had to adjust. It wasn't really a problem,

honestly. It was fine.

Q. Had you ever done that before?

ISAIAH SALINDA: Cracked a head, yes, but not in competition, not in the middle of a round.

Q. You're kind of the hometown guy now that's left; how many folks were out there this morning, and did the group increase, and will it increase again for tomorrow?

ISAIAH SALINDA: Yeah, there were quite a few people watching. My family, my parents, my brother, a couple teammates, and a lot of guys who said that they're from the Bay Area and really pulling for me, so that meant a lot. Yeah, it'll probably increase tomorrow, so I'm excited.

Q. Playing against a guy like Stew who it seems like in amateur golf you hear his name anywhere you go, how were the nerves this morning coming off the first tee?

ISAIAH SALINDA: I was pretty calm for the most part. I felt like I was playing well, I just didn't get off to a great start. Made a couple kind of unforced bogeys I felt like. But yeah, I kind of settled down as the round went on and started to hit better shots, so that was helpful.

Q. Was that one of the best 4-irons of your life on 18?

ISAIAH SALINDA: Yeah, I would say so. Yeah, under the circumstances. Needed a good one there and hit one, so it felt good.

Q. Take us through the circumstance of that one since we didn't get a chance to see it.

ISAIAH SALINDA: Yeah, so I hit a really good drive up there. I was right around 218 I want to say to that middle right pin. I knew I needed a solid 4-iron to put it on the green, and I hit it, and looking into the sun, I never saw it. I told my caddie -- I asked my caddie, where is that, because I had no idea. It felt good, but -- yeah, I saw it land on the green and roll out, so felt good.

Q. How are you a more confident player now?

ISAIAH SALINDA: Yeah, I felt like NCAAAs was kind of the start of my good play this summer. That was really big for my confidence to play well there and gave me some momentum going into my summer tournaments. But I think the biggest difference was now I'm able to play and play good golf even when I know I'm not necessarily swinging it my swing or mechanically not the best. I'm kind of just able to get the ball around and manage my game better now than I ever have. Just through experience and kind of talking to my swing coach, Jeff Smith, he's given me a lot of -- instilled a lot of confidence in me to go out and play even when I'm

not feeling totally comfortable or confident in my swing, just to trust myself and make it happen.

Q. A few weeks ago you won a stroke play championship there at the Pacific Coast Amateur and this week is a match play championship. Do you approach your game any differently? Do you have much experience with match play over stroke play or do you prefer one over the other?

ISAIAH SALINDA: Yeah, well, match play is a totally different ballgame compared to stroke play. You're just playing one guy, and each hole is a new match it seems, and a lot of momentum swings. But I definitely enjoy match play. I do have experience in it, just kind of the intensity of it and the pressure on you to kind of hit the shots when it matters. You only need to beat the guy in front of you, not everyone else on the course. I definitely enjoy match play.

Q. You had squared the match on 15, and then on 16 green, you both had really difficult first putts, and you putted first way past the hole. What were you thinking at that moment?

ISAIAH SALINDA: I just totally misjudged it, misread it. I knew it was fast, but didn't think it would be that fast, and I hit it a little too hard and misread it. It was just a bad putt. It happens.

Q. At Stanford, I was curious how much you have learned from players like Maverick McNealy and other upperclassmen throughout your three years there.

ISAIAH SALINDA: Yeah, I'll be a senior, so I was on the team with Mav for two years, I think, and yeah, I learned a lot from him just watching how he kind of prepares for tournaments, gets himself ready. Mentally he's one of the strongest players I've ever seen. I talk about confidence a lot, and he has it. So I learned a lot from him definitely in my two years with him.

Q. You don't have like the notes that he does --

ISAIAH SALINDA: No, I'm not quite as analytical as he is. He goes the extra mile for sure. But there is something to be learned there for sure.