

U.S. Senior Open

Press Conference

Sunday July 1, 2018

Jerry Kelly



THE MODERATOR: Like to welcome our third runner-up, Jerry Kelly. Jerry, obviously not the finish you wanted. You were in the lead at the end of each of the first three days, but tell us about your feelings right now. And I know it's tough, but give us a little wrap-up, please.

JERRY KELLY: Yeah, I mean, this one's going to motivate me in a big way. We have got two majors in a row coming up, I'm ready to go tee it up tomorrow morning. I hit fantastic shots on the backside. The bounces did not go my way when the balls landed on the greens. That's golf. I made some good second putts to hang around, but I didn't put myself in position to make birdies coming down the stretch. Tough bogey on -- I hit a good putt. Will Rogers got me again, that guy, I tell you what. Just looks like it's going to break to the right there on 11 and it hung out to the left. Then again on 12 I feel like I'm going, I'm chipping straight downhill and it's just going to feed down there and it's uphill. All of a sudden I look up and I go, oh, I did the same thing one of the other days. So it's just such a fantastic golf course. Those of you who know me know I don't like to give the USGA that much credit, but they got it right this week. It was a fantastic job. The golf course got firm, tough, fast, extremely playable, still solid. It was a great championship. David, I mean, it always comes down to those putts. You end up, he makes birdie on 16. And let me tell you, that par putt on 17, that I had a front row seat, that was pretty solid. That was nice. Did you guys see that I rose my putter about, you know, three feet off of the -- yeah. That was just a pure putt and that's -- he's a major champion already. And now he's got his first win out here. And it's a senior major and apparently that's why I'm major-less, so --

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Would you say, if you had to pick between the putting and just figuring out the wind and the distance, which one befuddled you more?

JERRY KELLY: It was the wind today. But I had a -- like I said early in the week, it's a new/old move. It really is a new move because for the first time I kind of understood it where when I won last year and in Hawaii I was doing it, but I didn't really understand it as much. I understood it. But the problem is, is that I, when I do this, I can lean to the left in the wind. When there's not that much wind -- and even the first day, I mean it went

from 35 to 5. So I mean if you waited it out a little bit, you didn't have a ton of wind. This was a consistent, solid 20-mile-an-hour wind that was just -- it was beating me up. And I was seeing guys make birdies at the start right away and I was kind of shocked that the scores were getting better. I got out there and I got off to a decent start. So it was game on at that point, but I definitely leaned into, I leaned into the wind probably on about five shots that cost me. But the one that cost me the most was my foot slipping on 9. I mean that thing, I'm glad I made contact, that was just pure athletic ability. That was just solid to make contact.

(Laughter.)

But it put me in a decent position, and then I didn't get the job done from there either, but I wish I had that drive back. That's one. But just awesome tournament. It was fun.

THE MODERATOR: How bad was your lie on your second shot into 18?

JERRY KELLY: It wasn't that bad. It was good enough to where I tried to hit a hard cut and it went off the top of the club face. So it was sitting up, which that's a question mark right there. I almost wish it would have been sitting down further. It would have been a perfect 9-iron to dig it out and bounce it up, but I thought that I could sweep a cut pitching wedge in there and once it went off the top of the face it went a little left as well. So again, I made the swing that I wanted to make on that one, the whole back side -- I think it was 11 is when I started striking the ball. But unfortunately I started striking it so well I was bouncing through the greens. But I thought I made that putt on 18. I did. It was tracking the whole way and I didn't think it was going to slow up that much, but it did, so, oh, well.

Q. They did announce that in 2025 they're going to have another Senior Open, would you come back and try to play this course again?

JERRY KELLY: I will absolutely guarantee you that I will be back well before that, with many family members and I will enjoy playing this golf course. I don't enjoy playing golf outside of competition, I really don't, unless it's with my son or my wife and she very seldom wants to play. This is a place I would come and have fun playing. I love Colorado. My son's going

to school in Boulder. I mean we're so close to buying a place out here, but now we're going to have to decide between Colorado Springs and Boulder and Denver. I mean it's a tough choice out here, you guys got so many awesome spots. But, yeah, I'll be back.

Q. You look like you have a lot of fun when you play golf. Is that a safe assumption?

JERRY KELLY: Yeah, I mean my wife always says, nobody enjoys getting pissed off more than you. So I mean if that's the way you want to look at it, yeah. No, I love competing and when things aren't going well, I'm going to be fiery, I'm going to be mad, I'm going to go at it. But, man, I mean this is, this is fun, this is why I'm out on this TOUR, really. Not that I can't compete on the other, on seven or eight courses I still could consistently. But this is, this is solid competition out here and I love it.

Q. When you are in a five-way tie with a few holes left, is that more fun or does that --

JERRY KELLY: Absolutely, because I was like, all right, 2-under from here, I clear the field, no question. And I hit an absolutely fantastic shot on 15. It landed an inch on the green and it's over. Yeah, I make a great 2-putt, a tough one coming down, and then 17, what do I do? I play it to bounce and it stops. I hit a perfect shot. I actually was saying, sit down, and it did, unfortunately. It listens sometimes. When it's not supposed to. No, it's fun to go through it all, it really is. Painful but fun.

Q. And then you left the putt a little bit short on 18. Is that going to stick with you as opposed to running it pass in that situation?

JERRY KELLY: The 17 will stick with me. 17 was a makeable birdie from the fringe, no question. 18, I mean if it was anything but poa annua grass, I probably would have chipped it but you don't know what you're going to get on the check. And not to pump me up, but I am one of the best putters from off the green. So that was my best chance to make it. And when you talk about 40 foot uphill, breaking five to six feet, six inches short dead in the jaws, that's not going to bother me a whole lot.

Q. What was going through your mind on 18 box when you were coming in, knowing that you either had to make a par or just make a birdie to tie?

JERRY KELLY: No, I had to make birdie. There was no par in my mind whatsoever. It's a new 3-wood, I've never really hit a cut off the tee with it, and I'm going to have to work on that shot, apparently. Definitely came out of it, did not hit a good one. But David had the luxury of playing down the left, playing a little cut, and being as far out as he needed to be, just get it in the fairway. Me, I needed to get that ball over the bunkers to the right, have a wedge in there that I could control

the spin with, that I knew what the ball was going to do on the green. And I came out of it a little bit, hit a poor shot, lucky I caught a decent enough lie, but it just wasn't one that I could bank on, so, it was close. Birdie all the way though.

Q. I commented to a couple people in here earlier, it seemed like you and David both played at a very high level for pretty much most of the day and definitely down the stretch. Do you feel like there were really any shots you really missed, maybe other than the tee shot at 18. Seemed like you were pretty dialed in, not the distance control, but hit the ball great. Fair?

JERRY KELLY: You know, even the distance control was very good. What it gave me after my distance control was not very good. I mean, I landed it an inch on the green and it end up going over. I mean, I can't do any better than that. I had a wedge -- I guess that was -- was that 13 or 14? That might have been 13 or 14. 15, I had a wedge that I cut and I landed short of the pin and that one still bounced over. So I landed the shots where I thought I needed to land the shots. Maybe I didn't do a good enough job of adjusting to the conditions from front side to back side, because it really was, you could see, start seeing the footprints and it was starting to get purple enough to where, you know, I don't know, but I feel like I did what I needed to do and it just -- you know, one foot here or there and I could have spun the ball and been right next to the pin. I hit a really good shot. I hit really good shots.

THE MODERATOR: Jerry, thanks so much for your time.

JERRY KELLY: Thanks.