

U.S. Mid-Amateur Championship

Press Conference

Wednesday September 18, 2019

Joseph Deraney

Q. First of all, got to be pleased that you're playing for a national championship tomorrow. I know you've won one, a couple in Canada, but this is a little different.

JOSEPH DERANEY: Yeah, no, I'm very excited. Just to get to play in USGA events is special treat. We all typically count how many we've played in, right? So it's a special treat. To play so well, you know, is something really fantastic.

Q. I don't know how many 36-hole finals you've played in, but what do you anticipate in a 36-hole final?

JOSEPH DERANEY: So I can answer that question pretty quickly: zero. It's going to be just like today. It's 36 holes. Really I'll have to figure out how to focus on the first 18 and not just be like, Let's get it over so we can get to the show, the last 18 holes.

So, yeah, again, just play solid. Go out and I'm going to play the golf course. You know, try to eliminate mistakes. Make the other person make birdies. They're kind of hard to come by in spots out here.

Try to stay rested. Get some food. Hopefully come the back nine we got a shot.

Q. Today's match you birdied 8 and 9 to take a big lead. How did you do it?

JOSEPH DERANEY: So I birdie 7, 8, 9. He birdied 7; 7 was an important birdie, because he had hit the green and I was just short. So that was a key kind. Made about a six-footer down the hill.

8 they set it up to -- it's a hole that can be drivable. I hit 3-wood in the greenside left bunker and hit a pretty good shot to about three and a half feet; made birdie there.

And then 9 I hit a good drive and held off a pitching wedge. Again, it's got a little kind of valley or -- yeah, I guess a hill kind of behind the flag. So fortunate enough for it to roll back and then made about a six-footer there.

Q. But he wasn't done. He made a pretty good recovery shot on 13. Got back in the match.

JOSEPH DERANEY: Yeah, so we tied -- I think we tied

10, 11, 12. I think I was 3-up. Yes, it was very good. I mean, I hit a good shot and they'd been bounding over the green, so I was basically where pretty much everybody else was going to be.

Because of his angle and because he was on the sand cart path, he was able to get some spin on it. Now, he had to catch two perfectly and he obviously did. Yes, you can't do anything about that.

We both made, whatever, decent pars on 14.

We both made good birdies on 15.

Then I kind of butchered 16.

17 he hit a great putt from 35, 40 feet to a gimme, and I hit my putt from 28, 30 feet to about three and a half feet and then made it.

You know, 18 I hit a good drive. I was probably 50 yards in front of him. Again, there is that kind of bowl. So just was trying to get it to release back off that bowl.

You just got to make him make the putt, right? I tried to make my putt, but at the end of the day he's still got to make a 12, 15-footer kind of curler.

Q. Of all the things that come with tomorrow, and there are other things other than just playing the match, some other things on the line. It's pretty well documented. The champion goes to the U.S. Open. How do you keep those things out of your mind and stay focused?

JOSEPH DERANEY: Here is what I'll tell you: it's my understanding if I get to the finals, which I have, I get into the U.S. Amateur. Okay? So I've not played in a U.S. Amateur. I played in a PGA TOUR event; get to play in a U.S. Amateur and made the finals. I'm going to go play the best I can. If I lose, I lose. If I win, fantastic. We'll go to the Open.

If Augusta National sees fit, we'll travel down the road. I grew up in Augusta, Georgia, in Statesboro, Georgia, so very close. Be a sweet prize.

Quite frankly, both these kids out there - and I call them kids because that's what they are - are very, very good. Obviously Stewart is the best or one of the best. Him



and Garrett are probably the best Mid Amateurs in the world.

Can't think about winning. They're too good to think about anything other than the first tee shot and trying to squeeze a hole or two out of them.

Q. Last one: have you heard from Garrett, because he's been in this position before where he's played for this championship?

JOSEPH DERANEY: So, again, like I told you earlier, Garrett and I are partners in the fourball next year. So I'm excited about that too because we're in that as well.

So I'm sure he'll send me a text. I'm not sure if he's doing a game tonight or not. Tomorrow night? So I'm sure he'll send me text. I think Garrett has been in there. If I'm not mistaken, Todd Mitchell has been in there.

Q. Yes.

JOSEPH DERANEY: So I got plenty of people to lean on if I need to. At the end of the day it's golf. If I lose tomorrow, I still get to go home to my wife and three kids. I can't tell you how good my perspective on life is because my life is so good.

But, yeah, I'm sure -- or at least I hope -- he'll send me a text.