

# U.S. Senior Open

Press Conference

Sunday July 2, 2017

## Kenny Perry



THE MODERATOR: It is my pleasure to welcome Kenny Perry into the Media Center, the 2017 U.S. Senior Open champion. Kenny with rounds of 65, 64, 67, and 68 for a 16-under par total of 264. That sets a 72-hole scoring record at the U.S. Senior Open.

Kenny is the sixth multiple time champion of the U.S. Senior Open, and his round today is the first bogey-free round by a champion since Bernhard Langer in 2010.

Kenny, first of all, I just want to start off, bogey-free round, pretty incredible. But had some good par saves to keep that going. First the one at 10 and then the one at 15, which was really exceptional.

KENNY PERRY: I hit a poor 3 wood off the 10th hole. The wind was blowing pretty hard left to right. I just didn't commit to it. Hung it out. It flared out over there in the trees. I got lucky. It was on the cart path where a lot of people had been walking, and it was trampled down so I had a real tight lie, and I had about a 30-yard window between those two big trees.

It's one of those kind of shots you think, when you're playing with your buddies, you're going to pull it off every time. Under those situations, you never know what's going to happen.

I was a little nervous, but it came off pretty, shot right through the middle of the gap and ended up on the front of the green and had about 40 feet or whatever. I was able to two-putt it.

15 was probably the hardest hole of the day. It was 225 to that back left hole with the wind in our face. Just didn't commit to the 4 iron. I knew if I caught it great, I could go over. I knew over wasn't any good.

I didn't know where to hit it on that hole so I kind of came out of it and hit it a little heavy, which shut the face down, and it came up short of the left bunker, pretty much dead.

I couldn't chip it at the flag because it would go over the green so I chose to pitch it out sideways to a putt that I practiced a lot in the practice round. Doesn't necessarily mean you're going to make it, but at least I knew the break. I knew what I was going to do. That putt won me the tournament, by far. Poured it right in

there. I was able to hit the correct speed.

That gave me the confidence to get it done the last three holes.

THE MODERATOR: And the U.S. Senior Open is a stroke play competition, but at times today it almost seemed like match play. It really came down to you and Kirk. You played the last 36 holes with him. Just talk about Kirk Triplett as a competitor out there.

KENNY PERRY: Like I said yesterday, he's the kind of tough guy you don't really like to play because he's never out of the hole. He's always down the middle, on the green, world class chipper and putter. So I knew I was going to have my hands full.

Like I said yesterday, I knew I needed to get off to a good start, and I was able to shoot 2 under on that front nine. That front nine is tough with some of those pin placements and everything.

He hit a couple of loose shots. He made a bogey here or there, but I was able to kind of gradually work my way up to a three-shot lead.

Then I started playing -- I got to thinking percentage golf. I started firing up to all the middle of the greens, just let my putter two-putt, and force him to make birdies and maybe he would make a mistake, short-side himself or something, which he didn't.

He was able to birdie 16 to pull within two. 17 and 18 are the two toughest holes out here. Thank goodness they were straight downwind today. I was able to hit 3 wood off 17, and I hit a 9 iron back to the back of the green, and then I hit a pretty good drive on 18. It must have hit on the side of that hill and caromed off pretty hard to the left. But I only had a pitching wedge out of that rough so I knew I could get it up there around the front of the green somewhere.

But it was still nervy all the way to the end because when I putted my first putt on 18 up there, I still had a 3-footer down the hill slicing. I knew, if he made his putt, I was going to have to make that putt to win. So I was thinking, boy, oh, boy, this could get interesting.

Thank goodness, he didn't make it. I knew I could two-

putt from three feet so that was a good feeling.

THE MODERATOR: How does this win compare to your victory at Omaha in 2013?

KENNY PERRY: Very similar. Both mean a lot to me. Very proud of both of them. To have the USGA title, a two-time USGA champion, U.S. Open champ, Senior Open champ, it's as high as it gets for me on my resume.

There's so many great names -- you said 1984?

THE MODERATOR: 1894, the trophy goes back to.

KENNY PERRY: 1894, this trophy goes back to. So there's a lot of great champions on this trophy. And to be the 38th, to be a two-time winner. What did you say, there was only like six of them?

THE MODERATOR: You're the sixth.

KENNY PERRY: So pretty special.

THE MODERATOR: Let's open it up to questions. Let's go over here.

KENNY PERRY: You're the reason why I won. You've got a great story. You need to tell everybody that story.

**Q. We'll talk about it later. How long was the putt?**

KENNY PERRY: Which one?

**Q. On 15.**

KENNY PERRY: 15? 25 feet.

**Q. 25 feet, okay.**

KENNY PERRY: Yeah, easily.

**Q. So what do you think about what I said before to you?**

KENNY PERRY: Well, I just remembered the scenario. Bruce Fleisher -- I can't remember exactly what you said. You said we had a lot of things in common.

**Q. You both won at Pleasant Valley.**

KENNY PERRY: We both won at Pleasant Valley. Keep going. Tell the people.

**Q. And you both beat broadcasters.**

KENNY PERRY: Okay. Yeah, I beat Feherty. Feherty always gets mad at me. Every time he sees me, he says I'm the reason why he's out of golf.

**Q. Right. So, apparently, to win here at Salem, you have to win at Pleasant Valley first. So what do you think of the fact that you and Bruce Fleisher both**

**did that?**

KENNY PERRY: That's pretty cool. When you told me that story on Thursday, I thought there's a little karma there that might come my way, and it sure did.

**Q. Just what does this mean to you to win it for a second time?**

KENNY PERRY: Everything. You know, for the last two years, I have struggled. I haven't done very well. Played very poorly, average golf, didn't know where I was going, what I was doing.

And then I changed caddies. Ryan Cochran, Russ Cochran's son, caddied for me last week and this week. I just started using him, and I changed to a different putter. Next thing you know, I'm making putts, and it's like I'm a kid again out there.

I've been driving the ball beautifully all week -- all year. I switched to this vertical groove driver, which has been fantastic. I just couldn't get the ball in the hole. Then for it to all show up here this week at this championship is amazing. It means a lot to me.

**Q. Kenny, congratulations.**

KENNY PERRY: Thank you.

**Q. We talked about this the other day. But, again, as well as you drive the ball and the distance you still can hit it and so forth, it's still as your putter goes, you go. Is that fair to say?**

KENNY PERRY: Very fair. It's all about my putting. I'm a streaky putter, and when my putter gets hot, I usually win golf tournaments, and that's exactly what happened this week.

**Q. What putter did you switch to this time?**

KENNY PERRY: It's called Argolf, A-r-g-o-l-f. It's a new company. They're from France. They're all NASA guys. This putter has got all this NASA they do. They build rockets, and they're telling me all that. I'm like, yeah, right, whatever.

**Q. And when did you switch to that?**

KENNY PERRY: Wednesday.

**Q. Wednesday?**

KENNY PERRY: Yeah.

**Q. Very recently.**

KENNY PERRY: I told them, I'm going to put it in play on Thursday. We're going to try it. I shoot 65 right out of the gate with it, and the rest is history. Took me all the way.

**Q. What do you attribute just the late career burst, going back to the winning in your 40s? It's just**

**been very impressive.**

KENNY PERRY: I won 11 times in my 40s on the PGA Tour, and now I think this is my eighth or ninth win --

THE MODERATOR: Ninth.

KENNY PERRY: Ninth win on the Champions Tour. I attribute a lot of it to my family. My kids are all grown and married, and Sandy and I were able to kind of focus in on my career a little bit harder. I was not trying to be such a great dad and travel back all the time. I think that's the reason why my 40s freed up, to where I actually could look back and play hard and kind of refocus in on my golf. It was kind of my time then.

Now it's their time again because I got six grandkids, 6 and under. So now it's back, it's crazy. Christmas is chaos.

**Q. That's good. One other thing. You basically hadn't won in almost two years. Were you wondering if that was going to --**

KENNY PERRY: Yes. I thought that might have been my last -- I didn't think I'd ever be holding the trophy again. You never know. That's how golf is. When you win, you don't think you're ever going to lose. And then when you're losing all the time, you think you're never going to win. That's just how brutal our sport is. Thank goodness it showed back up again.

**Q. Good timing.**

KENNY PERRY: Good timing, yeah. Timing is everything.

**Q. Kenny, even for a split second, did you think of any other option at 15 other than playing it out to the right?**

KENNY PERRY: Yeah, that's the only play. I mean, I was playing for 4. To me, that was unreal, that putt went in the hole. It really was. That I had the nerve to hit that putt with that perfect speed to make that putt at that stage of the tournament with him up there close, going to make par. For me to knock it in in front of him, that was huge. That really gave me a lot of confidence.

**Q. And then, secondly, just the shots you were striking on the front nine, you just looked really quietly confident. Did you feel calm inside?**

KENNY PERRY: Yes. I had a great warmup session on the practice range. My swing was in order. My swing was better today than the other three days by far, in my opinion. The way it felt, the way the ball was coming off the club face.

I knew, when I hit that 5 iron on 2 from 215 or whatever and it looked like it almost went in the hole, I knew it was game on. I knew my irons were going to be be

good, and I knew my driver was going to be good.

To me, it was just a matter of is the putter going to work? I mean, am I going to be too nervous to handle it, or is it going to happen? I rolled some putts in. I really didn't roll a lot of putts in, but I sure hit it close enough to where -- you know, I missed those two little easy birdies on the back nine, which kind of got me backtracking a little bit. The little one on 11 and that little one on 14 really hurt. If I could have made those two, it would have been a cake walk in.

Hey, it didn't go in. It made me have to kind of refocus and stay in and and get after it.

**Q. How did it change things for you, if at all, to be in that group of two with kind of no one in range, and then at one point you had a four-stroke lead? How did it change things to be so far ahead of the rest of the field? We talked it maybe feeling like match play. Did it?**

KENNY PERRY: Definitely. Yeah, it was definitely match play. I knew, looking at the scoreboard -- the golf course was set up hard today. It really was. I knew it was a par kind of golf course today.

To me, it was middle of the green -- down the fairway, middle of the green, two-putt, get out of there, get to the next hole, and put the pressure on Kirk. Once I kind of got three up on him, I knew, if I could keep pounding fairways and greens, he was going to have to start attacking the flag to catch me.

I knew with some of those pins, it could very easily -- you could make a bogey in a heartbeat, you know, getting aggressive, short-siding yourself or whatever. So it worked. My plan was flawless. I mean, I played great. I played exactly the way I pictured it in my mind, the holes, how I'd set them up.

Ryan, my caddie, did a great job with me out there today. Great kid. Just ecstatic to be two weeks with him and we already won. So it's going to be a fun rest of the year.

THE MODERATOR: Kenny Perry, your 38th --

KENNY PERRY: One more.

**Q. Kenny, like you said, you drove it so well all week. You've driven it well this year. How long have you been using the vertical driver?**

KENNY PERRY: About three months.

**Q. And just what does it give you?**

KENNY PERRY: Well, to me, my ball flies pretty hard

right to left. It actually slows the right to left down. Most of my misses with the Callaway driver I used or the TaylorMade would end up starting a little left and then continue on into the left rough, where this one may start a little left but it hangs on for me, for whatever reason.

I don't know if that groove stuff works or I'm just hitting it -- I don't know. This driver, this CG, whatever, it's a bigger, kind of a longer head, and it just seems to hold the spin of the golf ball. Doesn't put as much side spin on it for me. I've driven it great this year. I just have not been able to get it in the hole.

So now I've got this new putter, maybe the sky's the limit. Who knows?

**Q. How are you going to celebrate with that nice piece of hardware?**

KENNY PERRY: Well, we did drink out of it. So you never know.

(Laughter.)

THE MODERATOR: Kenny, congratulations. Great victory.

KENNY PERRY: Thank you.