

U.S. Mid-Amateur Championship

Press Conference

Tuesday September 25, 2018

Kevin O'Connell



Q. Well, this was one of those where you got up on top of him quickly.

KEVIN O'CONNELL: Uh-huh, yep.

Q. Couple birdies in those first five holes.

KEVIN O'CONNELL: Couple birdies in the first five holes, and then a really good break on 4. We couldn't find his tee shot. I was in a bad spot off that tee as well, and so to go 3-up through 4 there was really nice.

And then I hit it close on 5.

Again, yeah, 4-up through 5.

Then I didn't make any bogeys from there, so I made it pretty hard on him.

Q. Tell me about the birdies on 1 and 5, how you made those.

KEVIN O'CONNELL: 1 just hit the same club off the tee I've been hitting all week to about the same number. Hit it in about ten feet and made the putt. It was a great way to get started.

Then 5 he conceded my birdie putt. I hit it in nice and close.

Q. What did you have and what did you hit in there?

KEVIN O'CONNELL: I had 141 with the uphill into 5; hit my 50-degree wedge.

Q. What's it like here playing in your home state in a national championship like this? Feel like a home game? More pressure because you're home? What's it like?

KEVIN O'CONNELL: I don't know about more pressure. It's certainly nice to be able to drive here. You know, obviously growing up down here I'm used to the grass, but I've never played Charlotte Country Club. I've played Carolina Golf Club a couple times. So it's a treat to be here at Charlotte Country Club.

But as far as added pressure, I don't think I feel that. There is enough pressure at any USGA event.

Q. You talked about the grasses. How tough is this rough?

KEVIN O'CONNELL: It's tough.

Q. Having seen it before growing up in North Carolina is it easier for you to deal with it?

KEVIN O'CONNELL: So I played the Amateur at Pinehurst in '08. I would say that's pretty similar, two and a half, maybe three inches of bermuda rough.

Maybe where there is an advantage is knowing how to assess whether or not you can get a 7-iron, for example, on it or not. You know, I've seen some guys trying to hit some long irons out of it. You can embarrass yourself pretty quickly.

I think maybe just assessing the lie there is a little bit of an advantage for sure.

Q. Where is your confidence level right now?

KEVIN O'CONNELL: Feel like I'm hitting it really well. I know you get down to the final eight everybody is playing well.

So to some degree, if we all continue to play the way we've been playing, it's just a matter of who is going to make the most putts from this point forward.

Hope to get some more confidence with the flat stick. I've been rolling it fine, but I think I need to improve with it if I'm going to end up winning.

Q. The excitement now of you don't have to qualify next year for the Mid Amateur. You're automatically exempt as a quarterfinalist. How crazy is that?

KEVIN O'CONNELL: It's crazy. It's cool. It's the first time I will ever be exempted into a USGA event. It's really cool. I feel honored to have made it this far.

Q. Is that something that ever golfer aspires to try and do?

KEVIN O'CONNELL: Oh, there is not question. It was actually interesting. For this particular Mid-Am I think entries closed, call it August 5th or something like that. If you're ranked in the Top 400 you get your exempt in.

The week prior to close of entries I was inside the Top 400. Of course I got bumped out the Wednesday that entries closed. So I was really close.

But, yeah, I mean, obviously exempt into a USGA



events, I mean, for amateurs, that's as good as it gets.
Yeah.