

# U.S. Senior Open

Press Conference

Sunday July 2, 2017

## Kirk Triplett



KIRK TRIPLETT: I didn't have the game to do it today. I just didn't play very well. I was off balance right from the start. Kenny played beautifully. I was beating myself. I was just trying to make some solid contact. I feel very fortunate to have gotten it down to that two-shot gap with a couple holes to go.

17 and 18, I had not makable putts, but they're putts to knock them in and put more pressure on the guy. When I'm playing 8, 9, and 10 -- or 8 and 9, I'm thinking I'm not going to have that putt. I'm glad I had a good back nine. I'm glad I recovered. I'm glad I sort of made him feel like he earned it instead of someone gave it to him.

### Q. Were nerves part of it?

KIRK TRIPLETT: I'm sure it is. The more you want something, the harder it is to get it. Warmup was fine. Hit some okay shots early in the round. I had a three-putt on 5 that kind of knocked me off balance a little bit. Just some very poor irons, bad contact on 7. Really misjudged a couple of pins. Didn't realize how severe some of the spots were.

And I just started paying a little bit more attention. Golf course is definitely tougher today.

### Q. One other thing. I was there on 5. Did you rush that par putt on 5 a little bit?

KIRK TRIPLETT: I misread it twice. It didn't break left, but I putted it up from the bottom tier, and then I stood over the next one and hit it on the right edge, thinking it was going to break left. Maybe I did. Maybe I -- maybe if I'd gotten behind the hole and looked at it, and I'd have realized the green was coming off that front bunker slope. Certainly, after I missed it, I realized, oh, man, I played that putt in the complete wrong spot.

THE MODERATOR: I'd just like to point out, before we continue, Kirk finished the championship with a score of 14-under 266, which is a record low score by a non-winner in championship history.

Kirk, you obviously played beautifully. Played beautifully all week from the very first hole of your first round. What do you take out of this week? You mentioned just making Kenny earn it. Do you take some good positives out of this week?

KIRK TRIPLETT: Yeah, for sure. I've been struggling

really since probably April. I'm still not going to say I played great golf. I scored really well. I hit a lot of those shots. I had a tremendous short game. Tremendous. Made a bunch of putts. Hit some incredibly difficult chips and pitches and made some pars from some places I had no business making pars from.

You know, otherwise, I'm down there in the 4, 5, 6 under range. That should give me some confidence going forward.

I'm struggling with my contact a little bit, starting to make a few bad swings, feeling a little bit off balance. We'll go to our next Major, our Senior PLAYERS Championship, and hopefully get off to a good start there and try to compete again.

### Q. Talk a little bit about how the golf course conditions changed today with the windy or drier conditions and how the greens firmed up.

KIRK TRIPLETT: I think the course, you had to be a little more conservative off the tee. You could play some shorter clubs and rely on some bounce.

The pins were significantly tougher, I felt, than the first couple of rounds. They were in some different portions of the green. I told my caddie, I hit a very poor shot in at No. 9, to my left. I've been pin high all week. Two shots and a birdie. I don't think I can keep this thing on the green. I had no idea it was that steep.

I did the same thing on 13. I got that great rough and just kind of played from the left edge of the green. Just bank up and down. No chance to get that ball down.

There were a few places where I thought I stumbled from a management point, and I had some mis-strikes. Man, I couldn't even look at the leaderboard because I was so busy trying to clean up my own mess.

THE MODERATOR: Can you talk about you obviously had some struggles on the front nine. Then you come out and make a really nice birdie on 10. Kenny obviously had a great par save from the trees. Would you say that and 15 were a couple of the big turning points that didn't allow you to get a little bit closer to him?

KIRK TRIPLETT: Yeah, like 10, there's a lot of room over there. You would have to kind of get unlucky really or frozen up against a tree. We're only 125 yards from the green. I figure he's making 4 there anyway. So that wasn't a huge deal.

The putt on 10, I told him -- I hit a putt on No. 1 that looked like it was going in and broke the other way, and then he made it.

On No. 10, I had already read my putt, that it was going to break to the left, and then he hit his putt, and it was going on the same line as my putt, and it broke to the right.

I was just looking at it, and I thought, well -- and I'm still trying to make it go to the left, even after what I had seen. And I finally aimed far enough left and knocked it right in the jar, and I said, well, we're even now. We showed each other the line.

So I think the pin placements were that tricky today that we weren't even getting the direction of the break right sometimes, and the speed has been difficult to manage all week.

THE MODERATOR: Let's take some more questions.

**Q. Kenny had missed a short one on 14 and hit the poor tee shot at 15. Looked like there might be an opening there. In hindsight, that putt he made, how big was that as far as keeping the gap where it was?**

KIRK TRIPLETT: Let's go back to 11. 11 was playing very difficult with the pin placement. He had a beautiful shot in there, probably four or five feet, and he missed that putt.

And then he just played kind of -- he looked like all of a sudden, okay, I'm going for 30 feet. And then, yeah, exactly, 14 he missed the birdie putt.

15, very poor iron, and he played the right chip. You know, he couldn't pitch it to the hole. It takes a lot of courage to play the ball away from the hole, but he had three in hand too.

And then to hole that putt, I mean, that's a championship putt right there. That's awesome. Just makes him feel good, right? I'm still not really thinking I'm beating the guy, but it makes him feel like I'm not beating him. It meant more to him than it did to me.

Then I felt lucky to sneak one in on him on 16. We're both about 30, 40 feet on 17 and 18, so there's not really a chance there to make two shots up unless somebody does something crazy.

THE MODERATOR: Kirk, thank you very much. Wonderful playing this week. Best of luck the rest of the year.

KIRK TRIPLETT: Thank you. Hope they pick this place again. It's awesome.