

U.S. Mid-Amateur Championship

Press Conference

Wednesday September 26, 2018

Kyler Sauer

Q. You got an early lead and kind of held it for a long time. Talk about the beginning of the match.

KYLER SAUER: Yeah. Well, that was the goal. That's been goal from the getgo. Get the cushion and maintain throughout.

He made a late push, but I knew that I was still in a good position. I was just trying to take my par and get away with it.

Yeah, that's been the goal every round, is to get an early start, make a couple birdies, and capitalize on some mistakes that the opponent was making.

So I'm glad that I got to do that.

Q. Birdie on 3, or a par on 3 and 4.

KYLER SAUER: Right. Yeah, 3 was -- I think 3 was playing a little longer today. I think he played first. Mishit a shot, and all I needed to do was middle of the green, which I did. Took advantage of that to go 1-up there.

Then 4 I just made a good putt. It was off the green and I had a breaker, and just hit it right and got a little lucky. He had a par, and just kind of got lucky with that putt there.

Q. And birdie on 14.

KYLER SAUER: Birdie on 14 -- 13.

Q. 13, yeah, sorry.

KYLER SAUER: I struggled with 13 this whole week, so that is a huge victory there, huge win.

Hit my fairway right where I wanted to. I was playing for the middle of the green and just hit a little cut. Started going to the right of the flag and took the slope down to the hole and had like a six- or seven-footer.

That was a big confidence boost there for me because I've been struggling with that hole this whole week. So that was good.

Q. Then you kind of finished it off a few holes early. How important is that on a day where if you win you're playing two matches?

KYLER SAUER: I think it's more confidence. It's great



for the confidence. You look out and see guys that are still course. I know that Ryan is a great player. He's got a great swing. Definitely helps the confidence knowing I can compete with a lot of these guys out here.

Plus I get a little bit more down time to rest up and get ready for the afternoon.

Q. Few questions. Nothing long. All right, so take me through today. You keep on progressing. Just kind of what's going on mentally right now?

KYLER SAUER: Mentally? Well, I think it's been the same strategy every day: small victories, hit the fairway, hit the green, try to make a putt or get the 2-putt and move on to the next hole.

I feel like the stress level has been the same for this entire week. I was really excited last night to make it to -- and knowing that now I'm qualifying for next year's event, that's -- I mean, I was more happy about that than making it through today.

I'm really excited to go to Colorado next year. So I'm just taking it really slow, yeah.

Q. So you got a little weepy there when they announced that you were going to the thing. Now going to the semis, you now have a two year exemption?

KYLER SAUER: No way. (Laughter.) Holy Nikes. Okay. That's cool.

Q. I was talking to your dad, and I said, Your son got a little emotional when we told him that. He said, Well, we're just an emotional family. And then he brought up your uncle, the cerebral palsy. Is that in the back of your mind? He said he thought maybe this week was -- he said you guys were really close.

KYLER SAUER: Yeah.

Q. Can you talk a little bit about that?

KYLER SAUER: Yeah, I'll try. My uncle Brian has cerebral palsy. I talked to him last night briefly. He's always been in the back of my mind with everything that I've done. He's had it hard his whole life. He's a grown man now, but just seeing how -- it's a reminder for me to be thankful for where I'm at and how blessed

my family is.

The fact to be out here and to be able -- even to swing a golf club, walk a golf course, and travel is something what he has a hard time doing. Every step is a blessing to go out here for sure. It's always in the back of my mind.

Then I was trying to play professionally, I think I put a lot of the press on myself with him because I wanted to play well enough to give him a better life, to give him something more.

Q. Yeah.

KYLER SAUER: And I know it probably wasn't the best because it just put more stress -- golf is stressful as it is.

Q. And then you were tacking on the...

KYLER SAUER: Exactly. He texted me last night and he said, Don't worry, be happy, just like the song. Go out there and just play stress-free and have fun.

That's what I'm trying to do. I'm having such a good time out here. I'm meeting great guys, just like Ryan and Brett today. They're great guys. A lot of personalities out here.

So just being able to talk to guys from all over the country has been really fun, yeah.

Q. So you had never played match play before this week.

KYLER SAUER: No.

Q. For some reason I just found that astounding. Obviously it's working for you. Do you like it?

KYLER SAUER: I do. It's weird. I feel less stress now than I do playing stroke play. I don't know why it is. I mean, I know that it's a different game altogether because you're not worried about making bogey or triple bogey.

Q. Yeah.

KYLER SAUER: But you can be really aggressive, you can be not aggressive at all, and I like that. I like the idea of you can go for this hole now or, Hey, middle of the green, two-putt, and it's fun.

It takes almost like less stress off to make a birdie or make an eagle. So I'm enjoying it. I'm surprised that I made it this far and I'm 3-0 or whatever throughout match play.

Q. What has been working? Your dad said you've been playing -- he said he was surprised that you started practicing to be competitive again.

KYLER SAUER: Uh-huh.

Q. Have you been playing tournaments back home, or were you just, Oh, I think I'm going to go qualify for the Mid-Am and put some work in for that and then you qualified and here you are?

KYLER SAUER: Yeah.

Q. Have you been playing tournaments at home?

KYLER SAUER: No. So I got my amateur status back about a year ago. With fire department, we have a probationary period of one year. You are at work first thing in the morning, first one there and last one to go home. Every shift you're given rookie drills and classes and there is not a lot of free time on your days off because you're studying always.

Golf is like, you know what, I'll pick up the sticks later. I can focus on my job and then pick up golf later. I hopped on the USGA and thought, You know what? I played in the U.S. Am in 2013; maybe I'm play again.

I went out and didn't make it there and signed up for the Mid-Am. This is my second competitive round, the qualifier was, in probably two or three years. Yeah, and I made it. I didn't think I was going to make it. I only shot 1-under. Made it in a playoff.

I called my folks and said, Hey, we're going to Charlotte? They were like, What? They thought it was for fun. He just wants to go out and see where he is. They're like, No way. You're lying.

So, yeah, I just think it's the lack of stress. Just me having fun and seeing my grandpa all giddy and my parents all excited, that's just really helping me.

Q. Now, you played how many years professionally?

KYLER SAUER: Just one.

Q. One?

KYLER SAUER: Yeah.

Q. And just...

KYLER SAUER: Didn't work out, yeah.

Q. Just feel like, I want to get on with life?

KYLER SAUER: Yeah, I needed -- well, I was working at a bar at a golf course. I met a great guy who wanted to help me out. He ended of up being my sponsor. He's a great friend of mine. Ended up helping me out financially. He said, Go try the pro thing out. We'll see what happens.

So I got status on the Canadian Tour my first year and then I hurt my knee; needed surgery. That put the

kabbash on that. I ended up not going back to golf. I started pursuing fire fighting, which it's what I wanted to do.

You know, my dad, grandpa, uncle, they're all fire fighters or retired. It's what I wanted to do. I wasn't really getting that life satisfaction of playing golf.

Q. We talked to Matt, the former -- was a fire fighter. Followed his dad's footsteps. What is it about seeing your dad and then wanting to emulate that?

KYLER SAUER: It's something special. It's kind of like -- it's hard to explain, but everyone calls it the fire family. It's just another family that's outside of your own home.

Obviously as a little kid you see the big red fire trucks with the lights and the sirens and it's fascinating. Then to be able to go and see it and touch it as a kid growing up when my dad was working -- granted he was gone a lot and missed a lot things when I was growing up -- but the time spent at the fire station, it was like, my dad gets to go to work and hang out and have sleepovers with his buddies every time he goes to work. And he gets to help people who don't know what to do on their worst day and call for someone to help.

So that was -- to see the impact my dad had on the community we grew up in, that was something I wanted. Not only my dad, but my grandpa and uncle.

Q. The grandfather that you speak of that's here, he's a fire fighter?

KYLER SAUER: He's retired. He's my mom's dad.

Q. But he was a fire fighter?

KYLER SAUER: Yeah.

Q. What's his name?

KYLER SAUER: Gary.

Q. And then you have an uncle that's a fire fighter?

KYLER SAUER: Uh-huh.

Q. What's his name?

KYLER SAUER: Dan. Gary Preston and Dan Preston, yeah.

Q. And then your father. And then your uncle Brian, is that B-r-i-a-n?

KYLER SAUER: Yeah.

Q. All right. I think that's pretty much all we needed.

KYLER SAUER: Thank you, sir.