

# U.S. Open Championship 2018

Thursday, June 14, 2018

## Russell Henley

### Flash Interview

THE MODERATOR: Next on the flash podium, Russell Henley. Russell shot a 69 today and is 1 under for the championship.

**Q. You're not in large company in the red numbers out there. I know you ended with a bogey, but how do you feel about the round?**

RUSSELL HENLEY: I felt really in control of my game. Off the tee, I felt like I was going to hit it right where I was lined up. Gave myself a chance to have a good round, hitting a lot of fairways.

So I feel -- physically, I feel good, and mentally I'm excited to be here, excited to be playing. I think this is my seventh U.S. Open, so it's about time I start playing a little bit better.

**Q. You look at some of the numbers that some of the best players in the world put up out there, I mean, it clearly is a tough, tough, tough test. Especially to be able to do what you did. How do you feel?**

RUSSELL HENLEY: I feel good. I also know I've got a lot of golf to play, but I do feel good about my name. I've beaten all these guys before. I've won out here on Tour. Haven't won a Major yet. But I believe in my game, and I just try to stay patient.

I knew it was going to be a tough day with this wind. As the day went on, the greens got firmer and crustier and harder and harder to make putts. So you just got to be patient out there.

**Q. Sounds like you've got confidence coming into here. Is there a particular reason why? Is there something that's been clicking for you? Why do you feel this week could be one that's good for you?**

RUSSELL HENLEY: I just feel like I'm coming in with a good mindset. I got to see the course two times. I like the golf course. I feel like this next half of the year is going to be good for me. I think I'm going to play well, and I'm excited to -- I'm excited to play. I think that's the biggest thing is if you can be excited to play golf, then that can always help you.

**Q. What makes you confident? What makes you -- did you change anything in your game?**

RUSSELL HENLEY: Did I change anything? I didn't change anything. I just stuck to my game plan. I hit



my driver somewhat low, and I think that's good for these conditions.

I think starting the week, I was -- my accuracy with my driver, I think I'm 14th on Tour. And so I'm used to hitting a lot of fairways, and that definitely helps out here.

**Q. Did watching the morning players start slowly help you to determine how you were going to attack the course in the afternoon?**

RUSSELL HENLEY: I didn't watch the morning players. I saw a couple guys were over par when I got here hitting some shots, so I figured it would be hard. And it was blowing 20, 25 when I got here. I just knew I would have to hang in there the best I could.

**Q. Is there something about this course you feel like maybe plays into your game?**

RUSSELL HENLEY: I hit my driver straight, and I just feel like if you can hit fairways out here, that's a huge advantage. The rough's -- they give you a decent amount of room to hit the fairway. So if you can hit a decent shot, it really sets up the hole. It's really tough to play from the rough here, obviously. We're at a U.S. Open.

**Q. What do you consider the highlight of your day?**

RUSSELL HENLEY: I would say birdieing No. 7. That's a pretty -- I hit one of the better shots I hit today on that hole just to get it on the green. It was downwind right to left. The green slopes right to left and away from you. I hit a cut 7 that landed about two feet, three feet from the hole and then wound up about 30 feet and hit a putt like I wanted to. That's a tough hole.

**Q. Is the mentality here just to survive a day like this when the wind is blowing, where maybe you can't challenge some holes the way you want to?**

RUSSELL HENLEY: Some holes you can challenge. I hit it close on 15 because that's a pretty simple pin there in the front. I hit a wedge in. Then on 16, I had a wedge and hit it close. I didn't make birdies either one of those holes. There are opportunities. Majority of the time, you're just trying to hit it on the fat side of the pin.

So, yeah, I mean, you've got to try to take advantage when you get a chance for sure.



**Q. Your score showed a difference, obviously, between the front and the back. Was the back playing harder for any reason? I'm just curious if there was a difference in those two.**

RUSSELL HENLEY: I think it was -- I think the greens were a little firmer, a little crustier, maybe, on the back. Yeah, but, you know, I don't think I played No. 10 the right way. I hit it down to the bottom of the hill, and I hit a wedge like I thought I hit it, and I wound up 60 yards over the green.

So there's just a couple weird ones there. But I think it got a little bit firmer on the back nine.

**Q. What's the biggest lesson you learned on what it takes at a U.S. Open from those previous six times you've competed here?**

RUSSELL HENLEY: I think it takes -- you have to be in control of your emotions. Last year, I had one of my better Majors going into the last nine holes, and I finished with a bunch of doubles and quads and ended up finishing like 27th.

I just lost it mentally. I was -- I got emotional and just started just trying to hit stupid shots. It just takes one or two, you know, bad decisions to make it compile on top of each other, especially on a course like this.

So I think emotionally, you have to be in control and really believe in what you're doing out there.