

U.S. Women's Open Championship 2018

Friday, June 1, 2018

Sarah Smith

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We are back again with Sarah Jane Smith, who once again shot a 5-under today at Shoal Creek and is the current leader. You are now 10-under on the back nine here. Why does that part of the course suit your eye?

SARAH SMITH: I don't know. I hope it's just that I didn't play the back nine in my practice round. Now I have seen the front nine, there is no excuse. I think that side sets up nice for a fade and there's been a few pins tucked on the right side of greens and that's made it a little easier for me to get at them, I think.

Q. Your caddie was a hot commodity out there earlier. What was it that works so well for you two out on the course?

SARAH SMITH: We're experienced together. He knows me better than anyone on the golf course and off, probably. So I think it's just a comfort level that comes with that. I think we draw off each other's energy which sometimes can be bad. Hopefully neither of us go get too crazy nervous and keep it under control.

Q. Done early today. What is your plan for the rest of the day and your mentality going into tomorrow?

SARAH SMITH: Just a relaxing afternoon. I might hit a few putts. I don't think I will hit any balls. Try to get out of the sun. Just a nice, relaxing afternoon.

We have got some friends down from Atlanta, so dinner with them and then early night, I think.

Q. You have known Pernilla Lindberg forever. Seeing her win her first event late in her career, at a major championship, is that inspirational for you? Was it something that you have thought about at all?

SARAH SMITH: Absolutely. I have been friends with P for a long time. She works just about as hard as anybody out here. To see that that hard work can pay off was -- it's nice to see.

I was there when she won, but then like we text back and forth over the next few days. She sent me the nicest message I have gotten as a pick-me-up because I wasn't going through the best times. She's been a



great friend. It was really nice to see her break through.

Q. Apparently two things happened before this week. You went back to a previous set of clubs or some former clubs and you also had a lesson with Sean Foley. Could you talk about both of those things and what clubs they are and what you might have worked on in your swing?

SARAH SMITH: Yeah. So my went back to my old clubs I have been using for a couple of years, I guess. I have got PING irons, TaylorMade driver, PING hybrids. Then I actually put a Callaway 3-wood in last week which has been really good.

The clubs I had switched to after ANA, they were great, I felt good about them. I think I rushed putting them in. It was a short week after ANA before Hawaii. I like to hit a lot of little shots on the golf course, whether it's chip shots, three-quarter shots, and I just had no control over how far I was hitting it. I think they could have been really good if I had taken the time to do it in the offseason. I felt like it was good change at the time, but turns out it wasn't.

I flew home after San Francisco and missed the cut there. Picked up my old clubs to take to Texas.

Sean is in constant contact. We send videos and that, but there's something about in person that he seems to get a pretty good gist of what's going on even on the golf course. So we had a really good lesson before Kingsmill and then I actually missed the cut in Kingsmill, but felt like I played really well.

I sent him a text message on Sunday and I said, I don't know what I'm doing. I'm playing well, and it's just not sort of coming together. I said, is there a book or something I can read? He's pretty -- he always has a good thing to say to keep you on track.

He called me on Monday. And he's like, there is no book, you idiot. Keep showing up, it's going to turn around. He just kind of set me straight.

Q. Do you change your mindset going into the weekend or will tomorrow be just another day at the office?

SARAH SMITH: Well, I haven't been in the position

before, I but I hope to show up like it's another day. I'm happy with the way I'm playing. I feel comfortable on the greens which has been something that has been a little bit off laterally. So it's nice to be able to feel like I'm seeing the greens really well and seeing some putts go in. Hopefully that keeps going.

Q. What's the secret to being married to your caddie? Are there any special rules to be followed?

SARAH SMITH: No. I think we (indiscernible) quite often. It's probably a bad time to ask with five missed cuts. We've had a few don't-speak-to-me moments after the rounds. Duane is probably one of calmest people I know, and I don't get crazy out there. I think between the two of us, we stay relatively calm generally.

But I think we both appreciate -- I mean, it's obviously difficult sometimes, but when it's good it's worth every second that it's a little harder. I'm sure sometimes it would be easier to have someone you could say see you later at the end of the day and a come back fresh.

Sometimes we spend so much time together that it's hard to come up with constant things to talk about on the golf course. But he works really hard to do a good job for me. I feel really comfortable with him.

Q. It was a quick turnaround between last night and this morning. Did the swing carry over like it felt yesterday?

SARAH SMITH: It kind of did. I didn't get a whole lot of sleep by the time we got to bed. It used to be my favorite time, late/early. Somehow you always find a positive in whichever side of the draw you get.

If you had a good round, it's nice to have a quick rest and something to eat and come back and do it all again.

Q. Once you got to like 10-under at the turn, what were you thinking?

SARAH SMITH: It was like oh, wow. Just it was weird. I just felt really easy. It was strange, the front nine. I was sort of holing a lot of putts. I didn't hit a great shot into 13, and then holed maybe a 40-footer for birdie there. It was just like the front nine felt really nice.

Q. Were you happy (no microphone)?

SARAH SMITH: I felt like I played really well. I hit a couple squirrely shots in the middle, but made some nice up-and-downs. Had a couple of funky putts where I misread them for birdie on 6 and 7, I think.

Obviously it sucked to have the three-putt on 8, but can't complain too much.

Q. A couple of times in interviewing Duane a few minutes ago he described your demeanor or on the course as cruisy. What does he mean when he says that?

SARAH SMITH: I think that I don't like yell at him, maybe. I don't know. I try to be like that. Sometimes I get -- my bad habit is get quick and rushed. I think my insides are constantly going faster than what the outside is. I try to take it pretty easy out there.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.