

U.S. Amateur Championship

Quick Quotes

Thursday August 17, 2017

Travis Smyth

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Travis Smyth, a 2-1 winner over Will Zalatoris at the U.S. Amateur here at Riviera.

Travis, you were just mentioning you are happy that your practice facility back home has a bunker shot that you could practice, which you probably think is the key shot in the match. Tell us about that.

TRAVIS SMYTH: Yeah, fortunate enough my facility back home at St. Michael's Golf Club in Sydney just has that 40 -- like 30 to 50 meter like long-range bunker shot up a tee. I just got in that bunker and saw my lie and I just pictured being back home just about.

What was running through my was I have played this hundreds of times. Maybe not hundreds, but a lot of times.

Yeah, just the scene was so perfect. Executed exactly how I wanted to. Rolled in a good putt to win.

THE MODERATOR: You're into the quarterfinals and last year's U.S. Amateur champion was from Australia.

TRAVIS SMYTH: Yes.

THE MODERATOR: How well do you know Curtis? Do you connect with him? Do you talk to him at all?

TRAVIS SMYTH: Not this week yet, but I might give him a message. Yeah, we're close buddies. We've played a lot of golf together and traveled around a lot. Definitely good, good mates, so I'll reach out to him.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Almost everybody I talked to before this tournament, before it started, I asked them what their expectations were. I just want to get to match play because anything can happen there.

TRAVIS SMYTH: Yeah.

Q. Did you have a similar frame of mind? Is that your feeling? Can you talk a little bit about the mental framework of match play?

TRAVIS SMYTH: Yeah, the format, it's very, very tough.



You really just want to put yourself into the match play, just that top 64, and then try and play as best you can.

You might play really good and you could versus an opponent that goes just one or two shots better, so it's really kind of luck a little bit. You still got to play a lot of good golf to beat these guys because everyone out here is really good.

We all probably have the same mindset: make the match play. We're all expecting to make match play, all the guys that are here.

Yeah, just try and beat the golf course and not the person you're playing.

Q. But today you played two well-known American players and beat them both. That's a pretty good day.

TRAVIS SMYTH: Yeah. Yeah, well, we had an interview before and said congratulations beating Braden Thornberry. I never played with him before. I heard he's a really good player, which he is, same as Will. But I'm looking at a fairway, I'm looking at a green, and I am looking at a hole.

The more I think about how good these guys are, which is pretty easy to do because everybody is good, I think that's just taking me away from what I need to do.

So, yeah, just one shot at time. Sounds a bit cliché, but that's really all you can do.

Q. You were up 4 with a significant amount to play but not a lot to play, and then sort of slipped away a little bit.

TRAVIS SMYTH: Yeah.

Q. How did you regroup there?

TRAVIS SMYTH: Made a few -- got a bit of adrenaline a little bit on 11 and tried to smoke a drive. In the morning I hit it really far down there and I had just come off a birdie on 10 so I was feeling pretty good. Got out of rhythm there and just sort of carried on for a few holes. Just hit it in some tough spots.

But, yeah, probably got a little bit too far ahead of myself. I went away from doing what I needed to do: one hole, one shot the at time.

In the end I'm glad I got the win. Would've liked it to have been a lot earlier, but being the great opponent Will is it went right to the end.

Q. Pete asked you about Curtis Luck before. Where were you last year when Curtis won the U.S. Am? Were you watching back in Australia?

TRAVIS SMYTH: I was still in America. I tried to qualify. Unfortunately just missed out.

Yeah, I was watching and refreshing all the time. It was awesome to see him win. He's such a great player, but at the same time, we've played a lot of tournaments before and I've beaten him; sometimes he's beaten me.

I can draw a lot of confidence from seeing a mate of mine win the U.S. Amateur.

Q. When did you get into golf?

TRAVIS SMYTH: About 12 years old. A little bit later. I used to play rugby league back home and kind of got a little niggle of an injury and I was out for a few weeks.

One of my football mates had played golf and I had never played before ever. He had been playing for two or three years. Took me down to this football field, and for the first time I had like a little 3-wood and I was better than him. I just picked it up really quick.

I finished football that year and all I could think about was golf. Ever since then it's been no other sports than just golf really.

Q. With golf, sounds like you've gotten to travel all around the world.

TRAVIS SMYTH: Yeah.

Q. Especially coming to the U.S., what's that been like?

TRAVIS SMYTH: Yeah, so I was tossing up whether to go to college or not or stay in Australia and do sort of our system. I'm kind of glad I did, because I've been to a lot of countries and a lot of states and I'm very used to like living out of my suitcase.

I'm pretty comfortable not being at home all the time. I feel like as a tour pro that's what life is. Definitely I think our guys are very used to that. Will make the transition between amateur and pro a lot easier.

Yeah, I really enjoy traveling a lot.

Q. Last question: Since Curtis won last year did you talk about his experience being at Oakland Hills?

TRAVIS SMYTH: Not a lot. Like I didn't see him for

probably a couple months after. I felt like if I just brought it up I would be like one the other hundred that have done it.

I just congratulated him and asked him if he's keen to play the Masters. That little chat. Not a lot.

Q. I guess I do have one more question: When did you start rocking the man bun?

TRAVIS SMYTH: The man bun? Long time before Curtis did. That's my claim to fame. Probably at least three years. I saw Marcel Singh do it on the European Tour one time. Where I come from, like a little beach town just south of Sydney it's very, very popular.

I thought, you know what? There are not many golfers on there with man buns and he's a pro and he's doing it. I might just grow it out.

Q. You said last year you were watching because you tried to qualify. This year you got in with your exemption.

TRAVIS SMYTH: Yep.

Q. What do you think about that, that the USGA is doing that?

TRAVIS SMYTH: Yeah, it's awesome. It's a very hard tournament to get into just being the top 50. Us Aussie having to travel all around the world to play these highly-ranked amateur events, it's pretty hard for us to get inside the top 50. You've got to play a lot of good golf.

So the week before I was actually like 52 or something, and the week of the end, like when the top 50 was announced, I don't know, a few people must have gone out or turned pro or something and I got in.

I was like, yes, I don't have to t qualify. I've tried to qualify I think three times and haven't been through once. That was really good.

Q. You mentioned it earlier, but that was a long exhausting day of golf. A lot of pressure, tough holes. Was there a point on the back nine against Will you had to dig down and find something within yourself?

TRAVIS SMYTH: Yeah, dogleg left, is it -- 10, 11, 12, 13? Hit a decent drive. Just sort of clipped the trees and dropped down. I had no shot. Just overhooked it like so far left.

I don't know, I gave it a lash at it. Got it out there somehow pin high. Hit the perfect spot and I rolled that in to halve the hole and remain I think 2-up or 1-up.

From there, that sort of gave me a boost because I'd

just come off a few holes and he stumped it a few times and made a really good birdies.

I feel like once I rolled that putt in I gained energy again kind of thing. I was getting a little bit flat out there. It was a long day. We've played a lot golf. Not just today, leading up to today.

Yeah, definitely the 13th hole is what brought me back.