

U.S. Amateur Championship

Quick Quotes

Wednesday August 16, 2017

Will Zalatoris

THE MODERATOR: Okay, Will Zalatoris, 1-up winner over Philip Barbaree first round match of U.S. Amateur here at Riviera.

Quite a birthday present for you, 21st birthday. Congratulations; happy birthday.

WILL ZALATORIS: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: You had some spectacular shots, some up and downs that are what everybody refers to as the vagaries of the match play.

Take us through some of those shots.

WILL ZALATORIS: Yeah, you know, on 10 I put myself in a pretty tough spot in the front right bunker. All I was trying to do is fat it out to just kind of the front left side of the green and hopefully it stayed to about 20 feet.

I actually got underneath it hit it a little too heavy. Any time you get a good lie around the greens out here you can just seriously put some good spin on it.

I really liked that chip that I had. It's just one of those that happened to go in. Hit it exactly how I'd been practicing with Cam. On 12 was just potluck. I mean, that shot, I didn't real it needed to basically hit almost a full flop just to land it on the green. Didn't really trust the lie that I had to bank something short.

You know, exactly like you said, it's just what happens when you play match play. You never know what's going to happen. Like even making the bomb on 18. I still have to assume that Philip is going to chip in. I mean, he almost chipped in on the one on 12; obviously went by 15 feet, but almost caught the hole and went in.

So that was a long day today. That was a really tough match. Obviously I'm excited to come out on top.

THE MODERATOR: You're a USGA champion so you know to expect the kind of things that happened. When you get a first round draw like this, do you just kind of go, Well, I got to play?

WILL ZALATORIS: Well, you know, you're in your U.S.



Amateur. You're going to have to play really good players. That's the part that -- look at Braden Thornberry. He comes in from behind and he's playing the No. 1 ranked player in the world.

That's just what happens with match play. You just have to go out and play good golf. I really did not hit the golf ball well today, but to win a match and still not hit the golf ball well with usually ball-striking being my best part, that was a huge positive and actually gives me a lot of confidence for my next match.

Q. On 13, what was the drop?

WILL ZALATORIS: Yeah, so the lining around the tee box, there is a little -- I don't know if it's cement or plastic, something where they put the wire for one of the mics. I was standing on it with my right foot -- or with my -- yeah, with my right foot.

So the way I would take a drop is I would go farther into the rough. I could take a drop with a driver and actually take the club and go back onto the tee box. What I ended up doing was there is -- everything that's on -- or the rough side of this little cement or whatever it was was kind of tilted like this.

All I tried to do was just land it right on top of that little whatever that was and it kicked left onto the tee box and it wasn't closer to the hole.

That was a huge break. Obviously I hit a terrible shot from there to hit it that far long and left.

Q. So it wasn't the crevice or the wire being buried?

WILL ZALATORIS: No, the wire actually wasn't buried. Yeah, I would've just moved the wire. It was more of this little kind of divider between the rough and the tee box.

You know, that's what happens. I won 1-up, and little breaks like that you just have to appreciate.

Q. Can you just talk about the winning putt and how you acquired some knowledge about what may happen previously?

WILL ZALATORIS: Right, yeah. I played with Bill Haas in that college showcase in 2015. I had about a 25ish-footer behind the hole to a very similar hole location.

Bill hit it over the back of the green in the rough, and he purposely hit this really high, soft, flop shot that landed kind of up on my ball, and it just kept going and going and going.

I remember I was so scared in 2015 I left like a 20-footer like eight feet short and grinded it out and made it, but I just realized how quickly and how much break that took, and basically ended up taking about eight feet of break.

Just one of those that happens to go in. I had a great putt. I didn't think it was getting there, but after watching Bill's and kind of knowing how fast some of these putts are around here, believe me, I was more than shocked that it went in.

Q. Were you pretty much lined up on Barbaree's ball?

WILL ZALATORIS: Yeah. Actually, the original line we had was Scott wanted to go just at the edge of his bag stand and I wanted to go just right of it. By just right of it, I went about three feet right of it. I knew that he wasn't going to like it but I just went with it, so...

Q. What are your plans after this?

WILL ZALATORIS: Yeah, I mean, hopefully make that Walker Cup. I assume you're talking about the in fall.

Q. Yeah.

WILL ZALATORIS: I am going to go to Q-School as an amateur. I signed up for web.com, but I may also look into going to Europe.

I'm getting my degree. I'm going to play all five events in the fall. I'm fully committed to Wake this fall. Just don't know what I'm doing in the spring.

If I make it through, great. If not, go back to school and be a kid for another six months.

Q. You played Europe this summer. How did that come about?

WILL ZALATORIS: That was fantastic, and that's exactly why I'm thinking about maybe doing that as well. I obviously have to pick and choose after first stage, but a friend of ours, a mutual friends, got me in on a sponsor's invite and then actually my teammate, Paul McBride, also got in.

It was really eye opening because I obviously had never played a European Tour event, and now I've played a few PGA TOUR events, one Web event, and one European Tour event, so I know kind of the lay of the land a little bit.

Just good experience. Now that I'm 21, once I get out there I know what to expect and I can start building routines now.

Q. Did playing here prohibit you from playing in the Western Amateur?

WILL ZALATORIS: I could have done it, but that would've been five weeks in a row. You know, it would've been two weeks on the road going from Kansas to Washington straight over to Europe and then back playing and then prepping for this.

This is my last U.S. Am and I really prepped hard for this. I spent a lot of time with Cam and had a lot of really good conversations getting ready for this.