

U.S. Open Championship 2020

Thursday, September 17, 2020

Mamaroneck, New York, USA

Winged Foot Golf Club

Daniel Balin

Flash Interview



Q. Daniel Balin, 4-over 74.

DANIEL BALIN: No, 3-over 73. Good rally. Thanks.

Q. Wrong stuff. How did the course play today?

DANIEL BALIN: The course played good. I think it probably played the easiest it could play. There's not a lot of wind. The greens aren't too firm yet, but you could see them firming up. Fairways are firm.

All in all, I think it played probably the easiest that it could have played.

Q. Danny, you played here a ton of times. Do you feel like you should have had a lower number today given what you just talked about and some red numbers out there?

DANIEL BALIN: Based on the amount of fairways I hit, no. But, yeah, of course. I didn't hit my driver very well. I missed a lot of fairways. I think I only hit three or four fairways out there. I was playing out of the rough all day and bound to make bogeys. I made a double on the first hole, hit it in the left bunker, and then three putted. I think it was more just nerves and shaking, kind of playing in my first U.S. Open on my first hole.

Once I settled down and I missed the fairways, I kind of got it back in play and made some good up and downs from 100 yards and in to kind of keep with it. Could have been a lot higher playing from the rough, but I started straightening it out on our front nine -- our back nine, which is the front nine. I shot 1 under. Could have been a little lower. I started hitting the fairway.

Q. Just a quick follow-up. Given where you were playing from, are you pretty happy with that number?

DANIEL BALIN: Yeah, absolutely. I know that, if I don't hit it in the fairway and hit it from the rough, I know I'm not strong enough, based on certain lies, to get it on the green. To advance it and get into a spot where I can get it up and

down or have 100 yards and in, which is more of my strength, was kind of the game plan. That's what we did.

Am I unhappy with my score? In one way, yes. In another way, no. I still shot 3 over in a U.S. Open playing from four fairways.

Q. How was it hitting the first tee ball?

DANIEL BALIN: It was nerve-racking. Any time you play in a Major, even if there weren't any fans. It was my first U.S. Open. It was 6:30 in the morning, so it was still early. I got 4 iron into a par 3, which is very difficult. All in all, I hit it solid. I missed it in a spot that I shouldn't have, but like I said, the nerves. They're still out there.

Q. Did they tell you that they were going to have the Westchester guys go first?

DANIEL BALIN: They did not. So I actually got a text with a video from one of my brothers yesterday that said, during their press conference, that they were going to have Brandon Wu off 1 from Scarsdale and me off 10 from White Plains. So that was pretty cool.

Q. What time did you have to get up and start prepping?

DANIEL BALIN: My daughter did not sleep all night, so I was up all night, unfortunately. It is what it is. Having a 2-year-old, I probably got a few hours here and there. I was here at about 5:15, 5:20.

I tried not to warm up as much as I usually do. I tried to keep it light and quick and get out there. Just knowing that it is a Major, it's mentally and physically a grind, and I didn't want to wear myself out this morning. I actually made my routine a little bit faster than I usually do.

Q. Danny, did you get any calls over last evening from Michael just to make sure Mark was still going to be on the bag?

DANIEL BALIN: I got a bunch of text messages from him. He's a good man, and we had a good time. It was a lot of fun.



Q. What was that experience like? Obviously, it was a fun thing to do. Did it turn out to be a little bit more than you thought it would be?

DANIEL BALIN: No, I kind of knew it was going to be more of me training him how to be a caddie. I don't know how much he knows about golf. I know he knows a little bit about it, but to show him what it's like to prepare for a Major Championship.

The first day it was just all fun and games, and we just did nine holes. Then the next day on Tuesday, we played 18. I only kind of let him carry the bag for the first nine, and I kind of let my normal caddie get after it on the back nine, just so we could kind of get into a groove and get into a rhythm going into a Major.

Q. Did he say how much money he was able to raise with that?

DANIEL BALIN: He didn't. I know he's been posting it all over his social media accounts to try to raise money for all the caddies. Most of the clubs in the area have done that, whether it's a Go Fund Me page or some sort of gift from the members to the caddies to help those guys out.

Being in the Met section, we have a big tradition or a long lasting tradition of having caddies in golf being a big recreation to the average person here, and also caddie programs. It's very unfortunate that some clubs kind of -- I don't want to say got rid of their caddies, but put them on hiatus for a little while. Those guys need to make money too.

Anything that anybody has ever done to help support and donate money is truly appreciated by all those caddies.

Q. I know it's still only halfway through the first round here, but any idea what you probably got to post tomorrow to be here for the weekend? Any number in mind?

DANIEL BALIN: I think even par probably. I don't know what the scores are. I haven't seen a leaderboard. I imagine they're going to be somewhat low today or lower than usual or lower than we all thought maybe because there is no wind and it's still a tad soft out there.

Listen, I'm going to try to hit more fairways. That's what I'm going to do. If I can do that, then hopefully good things will happen.

Q. What will you do the rest of the day now?

DANIEL BALIN: I got my coach here, Bobby Heins, from old oaks. We're going to spend some time hitting drivers on the range. I've got to get it in play.

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