

U.S. Senior Open Championship

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Omaha, Nebraska, USA

Omaha Country Club

Jerry Kelly

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: It's my pleasure to welcome Jerry Kelly here in the interview room. A two-time Senior Open runner-up and playing in your fourth Senior Open. A runner-up the last two that were contested, 2018 and 2019. What about your game has translated well to this U.S. Open, U.S. Senior Open type setup?

JERRY KELLY: Fairways, no question. That's my game. I hit the ball straight. I'm able to hit more drivers than a lot of long hitters are able to hit, whether it be a dogleg. I'm going to hit driver any time unless the fairway runs out at my distance. Tightness is really not going to make me back off of it, and that's an asset that I've had over my career. I feel like that's the straightest club in my bag.

So I don't -- if I'm worried about hitting a fairway, I don't necessarily ever go back to a 3-wood to hit it straighter because driver is my straightest club. That's a good thing to have in the arsenal when you've got a course like this that is pretty long for us at a par-70. It's solid.

THE MODERATOR: Coming off a win and a runner-up finish in your last couple starts, what about the game is feeling good going into this week?

JERRY KELLY: I'd just say all of it. I'm doing it all pretty well. I just had a good tune-up with my swing coach Jim Schuman. There's definitely some things. I was having some shots come out that I'm not used to seeing. My club path was a little strange. We've always been working and always will work on making things better. I kind of got to a point where I overdid some of the good things and got a little worse, but it made for very consistent misses, and I was getting the ball to the right section of greens, to the right section of fairways.

So I'm looking forward to kind of being able to let it go a little bit more this week, but whether that translates to better play, it will sooner or later, but I'd like to have it happen right away, but it's always a progression. It's always kind of get through your valleys and try to ride the



high points.

Yeah, the game is really good. The ball striking hasn't really been my best.

Q. Have you been to Omaha before? And what do you think of this course setup the way it plays like today?

JERRY KELLY: I don't know where I played the Nike Tour event. It started with a W. Do you know where the Nike Tour was played? Champions. So that was mid-'90s, '93, '94, '95 area, like that. So it was a regular stop for me, always enjoyed it. Those were some low scores shot at that golf course. That's not going to happen here. This is a fantastic golf course.

I heard Perry Maxwell, and I knew it was a good golf course, but I wasn't prepared for what I saw today. It's a championship golf course. It is really quality and might have got me a little scared (laughter). Come and play a nice midwest Perry Maxwell course, that thing will hit you in the teeth right there. It's solid.

Q. I'm curious, when you have time to just think about your game, do you think more about the come up just short in the U.S. Senior Open, or would you think more about maybe a victory at the Am Fam a couple weeks ago when you think about where you're at right now?

JERRY KELLY: I tend to always kind of think about what I don't do, what I didn't get done, much more than -- I've never had the luxury of like relaxing in my career. Hey, I won the Am Fam, great, but then you get to Firestone and don't hit it my best, and Steve putts like Steve, and next thing you know I'm in second. Happy, but I'm always trying to get to that spot that I've never really gotten too.

I know I'll never get there, but it's kind of that chip, it's that extra motivation. I've learned to use it with a smile on my face rather than with anger like I used to. It still burns what I want to accomplish, not what I have.

Q. I saw recently on Twitter you took your first golf trip with your son. Where did you go, and what was it like to share a few days with him on the course?

JERRY KELLY: It was so overdue. We've done some baseball trips, but that was our first kind of like, hey, let's



vacation together. Let's go somewhere just with the boys, and it was fantastic. I had such a great time with him. We went to Shinnecock and Maidstone. To see Shinn without any grandstands on that golf course for the first time, that was incredible. That was beautiful. I absolutely loved it.

I'll tell you, I've got to give my props to Maidstone because that is my new favorite course possibly on the planet. I really enjoyed playing there. I really enjoyed the ambience, the club right on the water, those beach cabanas down there with the pool. I just thought it was awesome. The course, I guess -- I didn't even know that Coore & Crenshaw came in and redid it, I guess, reclaimed a bunch of the dunes. I don't have a whole lot of pictures of golf courses in my phone, but I've got pictures of that one. Pictures with my son in those at the right points, I'll remember that memory forever.

Q. Rocco Mediate talked about prepping for this by playing Hazeltine, and I'm just wondering, obviously, you just played Firestone and it was set up pretty tough. Is that going to help you get ready for this one?

JERRY KELLY: Yes, but I'd have to say Firestone -- you never want to say Firestone is easy. Firestone is a difficult golf course. Very similar, but this is a different golf course from Firestone, where we play it, which is not that far up with that golf course, but here at a par-70, that makes a huge difference. You've got some length out there. You've got some elevated shots. You've got a lot of downhill tee shots, which are very difficult. Downhill tee shots, the ball is just in the air that much longer. It can be moved by the wind more. Your shape gets taken further over.

There's a lot of difficulty around this golf course, and the rough is actually higher than it was at Firestone. It was a great prelude to it, but this is going to be a tough championship this week.

Q. On a different track, I know you've got hockey in your background. Are you watching the Cup, and who are you rooting for?

JERRY KELLY: I am. I am. My caddie is a big Lightning fan. We've got Cole Caufield just breaking his way into the Canadiens, and McDonagh is playing for the Lightning. So anyway, we're going to have a University of Wisconsin player hoist the trophy, which is what I look for after my Blackhawks are out. I've got a lot of friends in the league, and it's just good to see good hockey.

I think Kucherov might have missed that one on purpose last night just so they can go back and clinch it in Tampa Bay. They're going to come out firing this next one, and they've got an awful lot of firepower. You've got that boy in

the net for the Lightning, you just can't get it by him. He is so tough.

Yeah, I called Lightning in four, but I'm going to have to call Lightning in five now.

Q. Speaking of which, who's going to win the West this year in Big Ten football, knowing where you're at?

JERRY KELLY: Well, that quarterback situation has been kind of crazy the last couple years, and I think because of the quarterback position, our running back position hasn't panned out like it should. I think we've got some studs back at Running Back U, and I think the second that -- you know, I've always -- I talked to Coach Christ years ago, and we were talking about his play, but he has an NFL offensive mind. If he can get somebody in there that can really believe -- not believe in, but learn more of the plays in that playbook, it's going to open up the offense at Wisconsin better than it ever has.

We need that knowledge in there. We need somebody who can really throw the ball, yet really understand the NFL-type offense so we can implement that type of offense. I think we've got that now. He came out and completed his first 18, 19 passes last year and then probably thought this was easy and the game tells you it's not. Very similar to golf. I think he'll come back this year and play pretty impressively. I hope our linemen are as solid as normal.

I think our biggest in-division threat is always Nebraska, and that's a team that you always expect to be just in that conversation, in that talk, and I think you guys went through the same thing we did where you just didn't know -- kind of because of the quarterback situation -- what kind of team are we? What are we going to do? You get caught in between the two, that's tough for a team to follow a plan. I'm waiting for both of them to be stronger than the other side. Michigan and Ohio State, look out, Nebraska and Wisconsin. Come on.

THE MODERATOR: College football, hockey, golf, it's been a well-rounded conversation. Jerry, have a great week. Thank you.

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