

# U.S. Senior Open Championship

Thursday, July 8, 2021

Omaha, Nebraska, USA

Omaha Country Club

## Jay Haas

### Quick Quotes

THE MODERATOR: Jay Haas, thanks so much for coming in. Good round today. 1-under 69. Four birdies, three bogeys.

JAY HAAS: Probably the key early on was birdies at 12 and 13. You get a 5-iron out of the first cut on 12 to about three feet with a slippery straight downhill putt, somehow made that, and made a nice wedge to 13 to about five feet and made that. Then got me back to 1-under par. I felt a little more a part of it, I guess, after bogeying 10 starting off. I had a lot of opportunities. Gave myself some chances, drove the ball well, probably only missed two fairways today and neither one really hurt me that badly.

So that's a real key for me. I think that I'm a pretty straight driver, but the pressure's on for me to drive it straight because I'm not very long. I need to continue to hit fairways. Hit a lot of good iron shots too. Overall, very pleased.

THE MODERATOR: Age 67, oldest player in the field. Playing in your 16th U.S. Senior Open. Did it come into your mind to shoot your age in the U.S. Open? I know you've done it a few times before, but to do it in a U.S. Open maybe would be a little different.

JAY HAAS: Well, this would be pretty legitimate if I did it on this golf course, yes, and I did that think that. I played very solidly early. Kind of a lazy bogey at No. 10, and then I missed a makable putt at 15 coming out of the bunker, made bogey there, and a very bad bogey at No. 1.

But made enough birdies. You know, five birdies out here is certainly enough to do that with a par-70, to shoot 3-under par. Today was my day, I think, because I think they let us play a little bit today. I think the tees on some of the holes were up a little bit. After yesterday, I hit woods and hybrids to -- I played the back nine probably five or six of the holes, so I was a little concerned about the length of the course, but the tees were up somewhat. With the weather getting better, I think the course will dry out and



play a little faster, which will be good for me.

**Q. You played with Fred Couples a little bit yesterday and saw some of the course. You were also here in 2013. How did the course play, compare differently from 2013 to what you saw today?**

JAY HAAS: I think it's much softer this time. The ball is not running out of the fairway like I think it did. I recall a lot of tilt to the fairways, and I had a hard time keeping it in the fairway. I didn't drive the ball very well that year, I think. It was faster. The ball was moving on the fairway and then on the green too. So there were a lot of hit and skip into the green. The softness, the rain that we had a couple nights ago, I think allowed us to fire at the flags a little bit more than in '13.

I didn't have much luck. I made the cut, I think, on the nose last time and kind of stayed in the back of the pack. So I thought this course was hard. It didn't change my mind in the practice round. Again, I'm very pleased.

THE MODERATOR: 10, 15, 20 years ago, would you have seen yourself still playing competitively at age 67?

JAY HAAS: No, I would not have. I played with Gary Player in a practice round one day. I'm pretty sure he was 73, and he said -- maybe 72, somewhere in there. He said, Jay, do you see yourself out here at the same age? I kind of chuckled because I thought that that would be -- you know, I'd miss that by ten years, but here I am at 67. I know the window's closing and all that, but I still enjoy it, certainly when I play like today. I'm not drawing a line in the sand, this is where the end is.

When I consistently play poorly or play really good and shoot 75 or 76, I don't want to do that. I don't want to play as good as I can play and shoot over par. I don't think that does anybody justice. But, no, a long-winded answer, but when I first started the PGA TOUR at 23, I thought I'd play till my mid-40s. So here I am 23 years past that. It's pretty incredible, a second life, get to play on a great golf course like this. Very, very fortunate.

**Q. How well do you think you played today?**

JAY HAAS: I won't say as good as I can play, but, again, I drove the ball really well. I missed the first fairway, and I



still had a wedge left, and I missed No. 12 in the first cut and hit it a 5-iron on the green close and made birdie. So I drove the ball well, gave myself those opportunities.

I'm not judging it on A, B, C, D. I played very well and gave myself some really nice chances. I three-putted for bogey at 7 but made a great two-putt out of the fringe on No. 8. All in all -- you know, I hit two bad chips, and I'm disappointed in that, but other than that, I played really solid.

**Q. A lot of the younger guys earlier this week, Ernie, Alex, talked about this is a course where you need to hit it long and straight. Can someone who doesn't hit it long have a chance on Sunday?**

JAY HAAS: Well, tell me the course that long and straight isn't good.

**Q. Yeah.**

JAY HAAS: I think that, if I could trade 30 yards and not hit as many fairways, I would do that in a second. Now, this course is probably as thick a rough as we've seen ever. From Winged Foot in 1974, I was an amateur. That was probably the hardest course I'd ever played in the USGA setup, but I don't remember rough this thick and high in my recent time at a USGA event or a PGA or anything like that.

The course to me, it lends itself to putting the ball in the fairway. If you can do it from an extra 20 or 30 yards, that's wonderful, but the course didn't today, didn't play overpoweringly long. I still hit a few hybrids, and I hit a 3-wood into No. 8, uphill into the wind, but overall I didn't feel like I was out of my league distance-wise.

But anybody -- you put Retief Goosen, Ernie Els, Fred Couples, any of these longer hitters, if they're on and I'm on, they're going to beat me every time. It's just a fact. I need to play pretty perfectly, and they need to play not so great.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports