

U.S. Senior Open Championship

Thursday, July 8, 2021

Omaha, Nebraska, USA

Omaha Country Club

Stephen Ames

Quick Quotes

Q. Talk about your round; did you get any local tips from your caddie?

STEPHEN AMES: Yeah, he doesn't play here very often. We did our homework prior to this. We walked nine holes on Monday, played nine on Tuesday and on Wednesday obviously, but opposite nines just to prepare. Like a lot of players have noticed it's an endurance test this week with all the walking and the hills and everything. So we decided to take it very easy this week, and luckily for us, the weather's changed and the cold front has come through and made it nice. It was very pleasant this morning, which was very comfortable to play and a lot of fun to play.

THE MODERATOR: Stephen, great round today, 5-under 65. The lead in 2013 was 3-under 67. So you're a couple better than that, at least so far. Take us through the card a little bit, maybe some of your birdies, clubs you hit in, putts you hit. You started with birdie on hole No. 2.

STEPHEN AMES: I hit my second shot just short of the green, hit a poor chip. Unfortunately, I hit it like 20 feet short and made that putt, which was nice.

THE MODERATOR: Bogeyed 5 and then went to the par-5 6th.

STEPHEN AMES: 6th, hit driver, 4-iron right in the middle of the green and two-putted.

THE MODERATOR: Nice number starting at No. 9, three in a row.

STEPHEN AMES: First fairway missed was on 9, hit 8-iron to about four feet out of the rough there. 10, I hit driver, 6-iron up the hill to about 12 feet, pin high 12 feet, made that. 11 was an 8-iron to about 20 feet, made that.

Now I'm going into my bad ones. 12 I missed from six feet. 13, missed from three feet. I'm like, whoa, could have been a lot lower on the back nine, which is unfortunate.



14, I hit the nice driver and the 9-iron to about 15 feet and made birdie there. Then the par-3 down the hill, I hit it four inches. That helped.

Q. What club there?

STEPHEN AMES: I hit 6-iron there. Slightly down off the right, 200 yards. I had to stand on it to get there, so I did what I needed to do and hit a good golf shot there.

Q. You're hitting fairways.

STEPHEN AMES: I missed two fairways today, 9 and 18, yeah, that's pretty good.

Q. On this course, that's what you have to do, I'm sure anywhere, but especially here?

STEPHEN AMES: I think in any U.S. Open you have to hit a lot of fairways, in some respects, depending on the length of the golf course, but it helps for sure.

Q. Could you just tell us a little bit about your relationship with Troy and how much you two have worked together and he's helped you?

STEPHEN AMES: Well, beginning of the year for Troy, we started -- well, we started communicating a little bit down in Florida, and Peter sent me a text saying Troy's looking for a job because I'm not going to continue for the rest of the year. Peter Jacobsen. I decided, okay, I'll give him a trial run, and our trial run started off with a 10th in Birmingham and a second in Atlanta. I'm like, okay, what are you doing for the rest of the year? That's how it ended up, and obviously we won in Des Moines, just up the road from here. It's been a good year so far for me, for us.

Q. Stephen, was there a certain hole or two where Troy helped you out today at all?

STEPHEN AMES: No. We kind of had a game plan set on where to go. The main thing for this golf course, I think, is if you're in the fairway, it's a plus. Too, you've got to figure out where the pins are on the greens where you can give yourself the easiest putts, so you've got to be left of it or right of it, and you don't want to short-side yourself because it's going to be a tough up-and-down. We were



diligent on where to hit it and where not to hit it towards the pins. We did our homework and got ourselves ready for that, and I hit some quality iron shots today, which helped.

Q. You're staying at his house too?

STEPHEN AMES: For sure I'm staying at his house. Yes, I am, yeah. He has a basement suite, so my wife and I are in there this week. Lucky us, that is for sure.

Q. When did you two feel a bond, you and Troy out here?

STEPHEN AMES: Out here this week or just in general?

Q. Just in general.

STEPHEN AMES: Well, when we started off in Birmingham, it was like I was going through the round, and one of the key things that I mentioned to my wife was the fact, you know, when you caddied for me, you never asked me how I felt about this shot. He was very adamant about how do you feel about this club and all that? I was like no caddie's ever asked me that. So in that respect, he was just a little too nice. We thought there was something wrong with him. He's just way too nice.

The bond has been unbelievable there. He's a great guy. It's been a great friendship going forward right now so far, and we've had a lot of fun on the golf course and off the golf course too.

Q. Stephen, is there anything else -- you talked a lot about Troy, but your game has been really sharp for the last two months. Like what else?

STEPHEN AMES: I've done a lot of work with Shaheen, obviously, my coach that I've been working with, obviously remotely, and that's been a good key, seeing things I've been working on, just trying to be diligent on that, and I've started working again with my old psychologist that I left when I finished playing the PGA TOUR. I brought him back onto the team, and we started working this year. We've done a lot of good work mentally, mentally and physically, to get myself ready for this year.

So it's been a good plus in that respect for sure.

THE MODERATOR: A couple top 10s in the U.S. Senior Open in your career. These tough tests, what does it kind of bring out in your game?

STEPHEN AMES: I don't know. I always thought I had a better record at the British Open than I did U.S. Open, and I looked back, damn, I actually played better at a U.S.

Open, and I prefer playing the British Open, which is kind of interesting. I don't know what it is. Obviously, it's a test when we play a U.S. Open. The USGA do set it up extremely tough for us, especially the younger guys. I have no interest in playing those again. They're tough.

They're just extremely tough.

You've got to play the golf course a lot more for bounce and roll than anything else than we normally do when we play a PGA TOUR event. It's a different test of golf altogether.

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