

The American Express

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La Quinta, California, USA

PGA WEST Pete Dye Stadium Course

Nick Dunlap

Virtual Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'll jump right in. We would like to welcome 2024 American Express champion and first amateur to win on TOUR since 1991, Nick Dunlap.

Thanks so much for taking the additional time tonight, Nick, and congratulations on your win today.

We'll go ahead and get started right away and take questions.

Q. There's a lot of people celebrating at Canebrake Golf Club in North Alabama, including Mickey Wolfe and everyone. I just wanted to ask, number one, just how amazing is it to have the support that you've been able to have with your family there at the event, and friends and family and Coach Seawell and everyone, and just kind of what North Alabama has meant to you with your growth as a golf player as you've kind of made your way through Alabama and of course winning this event today?

NICK DUNLAP: Yeah, it's so cool. You know, Mickey did something really cool for me back when I first moved there, and I didn't really have a place to play. I was fortunate enough to get a place to play from him with Canebrake and kind of grew a family from all the guys there. They always send me a ton of texts, rooting me on. I'll get videos throughout the week of them watching me on TV. Just to have that kind of almost family with all the guys back home is really special, and that reminds me, I need to go see him at some point.

Q. I was going to follow up with, what's it like to grow up in an area like Huntsville where golf has really seen a big -- grow recently with Lee Hodges as well? And then obviously being --

NICK DUNLAP: Another Alabama guy.

Q. -- an amateur, you miss out on the opportunity at one point something million dollars. Does that sting a little bit now that it's been a few minutes?

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NICK DUNLAP: (Laughing). It does. But, you know, honestly, it was a privilege to be here, to play in this event as an amateur, and I think I was the only amateur playing. For them to want me in the field that bad was really special to me, and to play like I did, maybe represent amateur golf a little bit while I was doing it and to also show people that amateur golf is really, really good. I don't think it gets spotlighted enough because there's a lot of really, really good players playing amateur golf. I will say that.

Q. I was going to ask about amateur golf. I think Phil Mickelson tweeted yesterday that you and the other crop of young guys around your age are so impressive and he feels like you guys are going to be a force on TOUR for so long. Why do you think you were able to accomplish this at 20 years old and what does it say about the state of amateur golf and college golf right now?

NICK DUNLAP: A lot. I mean, even some of the young guys coming out from the PGA TOUR U, which, you know, the PGA TOUR U, the PGA TOUR is giving an unbelievable opportunity to some of the top players, whether that's a junior or a senior or a fifth year or whatever that is, to go out and compete on the Korn Ferry Tour and showcase what they have, and I think that's been shown with Ludvig and some of the guys on the Korn Ferry Tour coming right out and having success.

I've always said it, you know, to just see some of the players that are playing amateur golf in these college events and, you know, with the USGA, you play well, you know you're getting some spots in U.S. Opens and stuff like that. For me to be able to experience that at such a young age, it only helps me, and especially in some moments like today, to kind of bounce back on that and be like, hey, I've been in a situation like this. Obviously it's escalated now, it's on a PGA TOUR level, but to kind of look back on that, it was really helpful today.

Q. First of all, what was it like to be in a group with Justin Thomas and have Coach Seawell there with the milkshake at the end? And then also, what does it mean to you to be able to represent Alabama from Huntsville to Birmingham to Tuscaloosa on a stage like this with a win today?

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NICK DUNLAP: It's unbelievable. Today was my first time playing with Justin, so that was pretty cool to be able to do that with him, and then Sam, you know, was awesome. He kind of talked me through the round. Both of those guys really made me feel comfortable and made me feel like I was one of them, and that was really helpful to me and kind of gave me a state of comfort out there. Also, playing the first two days -- unfortunately, he had to withdraw the third day, but playing with Wilson Furr, who is a past Bama player and just really comfortable playing. I've played with him a ton in Birmingham, and to tee it up with him at a PGA TOUR event was pretty cool.

Q. It's been seven and a half years since you were winning the 11- and 12-year-old age division at the Future Masters. Going back to then, did you ever think that you would ever achieve a moment like this?

NICK DUNLAP: That's wild to think about. It really is. I always had the belief that I could, but to actually be on this stage, you know, it's everything different than you imagine it being, right? You play this moment in your head of what today's going to be like and what playing a PGA TOUR event's going to be like and it's completely different. It really is.

Playing with Justin and Sam and Wilson, the support they gave me throughout the week helped me a lot and, like I said, it really made me feel like one of them. They didn't treat me different at all just because I was an amateur. To play some practice rounds with some of them and learn from them kind of how they navigate around here was also helpful.

Q. You mentioned a couple times about belief, and I'm wondering, where does the belief come from? Did you always have it? Did you have it getting to Alabama? Did you have it after the U.S. Amateur? When did you start believing?

NICK DUNLAP: All those events helped, obviously, but I think you have to have some kind of belief in yourself. I think a lot of non-belief goes from a result outcome. Hunter and I had a great game plan today and that's to play the best golf that we could. Obviously, I'm going to hit bad shots. Whether that's at the wrong time or the right time, we had no idea. You can't think about that. I knew I was going to make bad swings and I knew I was going to make great swings today.

But all I could do was do me and if somebody beat me and I gave everything I had, then hat's off to them. I did everything I could.

Q. Has it sunk in really yet?

NICK DUNLAP: No, it hasn't.

Q. Are you still in shock?

NICK DUNLAP: I'm still in shock. I really am. I've never seen anything like this in my life. The amount of cameras and people and people on the green and interviews, no, it hasn't sunk in at all.

Q. I heard you say that you haven't had a chance to think about turning pro, but before any of this happened, did you have a game plan in mind how long you were thinking you would stay at Alabama, stay amateur, try to defend the U.S. Amateur title, anything like that?

NICK DUNLAP: Well, of course, yeah, and I think it goes back to the new PGA TOUR, whether it's the Accelerated program or the U program, that they have given a lot of opportunity to college players to stay in college. Obviously with the Accelerated program, you know, Gordon had just got it, and so that's a really cool opportunity.

But I've had goals outside of that for a little while, one of them being No. 1 player in the world as an amateur, and I've always wanted to win a ring with Alabama. But no, everything kind of moving forward, and as far as me turning professional, that's something that it doesn't just affect me, it affects a lot of people, and that being my teammates and my coach, you know, they, obviously, probably didn't think that I would ever consider turning pro after this week. But, like I said, I need to, obviously, talk to them and a lot of other people before I make any kind of decision like that.

Q. Have you or any of your representatives been contacted by LIV, and if so, do you have any interest in that league?

NICK DUNLAP: As of right now I have no idea, I really don't. I know, you know, Kevin Canning is my representative from GSE, and, obviously, I think he has Jason Kokrak, and maybe somebody else on LIV. But as far as me, I've always grown up dreaming of playing on the PGA TOUR, and making a putt just like a little bit ago, to win a PGA TOUR event. That was always my dream, to do that. I've always tried to chase something that nobody else has done. That's why I always put in the work that I do, I want to do something special, and something memorable, not only for me, but maybe to leave something behind for somebody else to try to follow and gauge at. For me, that's Tiger, right. Like I probably won't ever even close to some of the records he set, but I always try to set myself, you know, I'm trying to chase him. I know that's an

extremely high bar, and I don't know if that comes off really cocky or not, but for me that's something, I consider him the greatest ever, and for me to try to chase that, and even to be in somewhat of a conversation with him is, like I had said, it's a dream come true, and it's why I do what I do.

Q. You mentioned Lee Hodges, all these Alabama guys in and around the tournament this week, and so many guys you're familiar with and teammates and former players there. You mentioned Lee, just walk us through if you have any sort of relationship with Lee, and, of course, Lee winning his event, the 3M, back last year during the season, kind of really puts a stamp for North Alabama golfers there competing at the highest level.

NICK DUNLAP: Absolutely. I think Davis won last year as well. He was out here. I saw Robby earlier this week, and played with Wilson, got to play with Justin, so I hacked two of them off just playing with them in a golf tournament, which was neat. But I think it's a family. Everybody that goes to Alabama, we keep up with each other. I know all of 'em well. You know, whether I hung with some of 'em and, you know, obviously, past player, Hunter Hamrick, on my bag this week, and I saw Robby Prater, who is an agent, saw him out here supporting me, I grew up playing a lot of golf with him in Birmingham. So, I just think it's one big family, everybody kind of supports each other, and roots for each other. Justin had a lot of cool things to say, even coming down the stretch, the last chip, the last putt, after I made it, it's like, Hey, man, you're a PGA TOUR winner forever, and just let that soak in, let everything around you, the people, the moment, just take a second and let it all in.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you so much, Nick for making it work. We really appreciate your time, and again, congratulations on your win today.

NICK DUNLAP: Thank you guys so much.

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