

U.S. Amateur Championship

Saturday, August 19, 2023
Cherry Hills Village, Colorado, USA
Cherry Hills Country Club

Neal Shipley

Quick Quotes

Q. How about that; you were 3-down after 10, battled back. How about that scene on 17. Talk through the day and the round.

NEAL SHIPLEY: I mean, 3-down after 10, I wasn't mentally defeated, but I knew I was going to have to do something pretty special and continue to hit a lot of good golf shots, and I think I did just that. I feel like I started to flip the match on 11 whenever I -- I was in that left bunker, and I took a pretty aggressive shot hitting 5-iron out of there to the front of the green. It worked out, and JM happened to be in the right rough, I got up-and-down and he didn't.

On 12 there, he hit it in the water, and then after that it was just got a really good up-and-down on 13 to keep the momentum going.

I just kept plugging along from there, winning some holes. That shot on 17 was so cool, and that scene was just something I'm going to cherish for a long time. That's unbelievable. I haven't really processed it.

Q. It looked pretty cool on TV.

NEAL SHIPLEY: I bet it did.

Q. Talk about hitting that shot basically in the gallery. Talk about the experience of that, the emotion of it.

NEAL SHIPLEY: Well, I mean, after that shot, just raw emotion. I was just so excited. I saw it almost go in and I knew it was tight just because it looked like it touched the shadow on the bottom of the flagstick, and everyone was going crazy, I was going crazy.

It was really tough, after JM gave it to me, I had to calm down and I was on the side of the green saying, he's going to make this, he's going to make this, we're going to have to hit 4-iron on 18 tee, we're going to have to tie that hole. After all that I was trying to focus back in and get locked



back in.

Q. To what extent did you use the energy of the crowd or do you not use that, because I know on No. 2 you didn't hit the best approach shot and then you gave a high-five to a young guy.

NEAL SHIPLEY: Yeah, it seems like the crowd likes me, I guess, this week. Just trying to use that energy when you hit good golf shots, get pumped up, get good vibes going. I think that's super, super important.

Q. How do you recover from the thwarted fist pump? It must have been devastating.

NEAL SHIPLEY: Oh, gosh, it's tough. I'm going to have to go to the medical tent to get it figured out, but I think we'll be okay for tomorrow.

Q. Do you feel a little sheepish, though, emotionally?

NEAL SHIPLEY: Oh, I did, I did, yeah, but that's -- I didn't understand (indiscernible).

Q. That was 14?

NEAL SHIPLEY: 14, yeah. Oh, gosh, I thought that was in the hole the whole way. After I did that, I was like, well, he's going to run this in on me, gave me a big fist pump.

Q. He did.

NEAL SHIPLEY: He did, and I bet you that was (indiscernible) on TV. But that happens.

Q. Looked like he kind of looked at you.

NEAL SHIPLEY: Oh, he did look at me. We walked off afterwards. We had a good banter the entire time. I deserved that one after that, and he's like, yeah, you did.

Q. I think it's pretty safe to say that you and Nick have been 1 and 2 the best amateur players this summer. Does this surprise you at all that you're in this position and to see him as your opponent tomorrow?

NEAL SHIPLEY: Given that he's in the Final Four, after the match he had today, I'm not really surprised. He's a



great player. If you'd have asked me at the beginning of the week when I was here, I couldn't tell you who was going to be there with me because it's luck of the draw, you have to win so many matches and stay in it the whole week. But he's the type of player who's capable of that. He's one of the best players in the world for a reason.

Q. Colorado royalty followed you around a little bit. Did you see Peyton Manning?

NEAL SHIPLEY: Honestly I was kind of zoned out and just trying to put the blinders on throughout the whole match. If he was, that's pretty cool. But yeah, he's someone who I watched beat up on my Steelers every once in a while. (Indiscernible) good guy. He's done a lot for the tournament this week.

Q. You get to play in the U.S. Open. You also get to play in the Masters now. How does that feel?

NEAL SHIPLEY: I really haven't -- I think I said to my caddie, I was just like, dude, we're playing in the Masters. Like that's awesome. Augusta National is one of those places that it's so special for golf, and it's just so sacred. I'm really excited to play in that tournament.

Q. Another golf tradition, right? I don't think anybody from your part of the country has won the U.S. Amateur since 1954. Arnold Palmer.

NEAL SHIPLEY: Well, Mr. Palmer is an awesome figure. Nothing but great things to say about him. I've won the West Penn Open and the West Penn Junior, which he has both won. I'm only missing the West Penn Am, but I think this would be a good addition if we can get it done tomorrow.

It's going to be really tough out there. Nick is a great player and I've got to get some things tidied up and hit some better golf shots.

Q. The 36-hole aspect of it, you've played 36 in a day just a couple days ago, but for the championship, does it change how you approach it?

NEAL SHIPLEY: A little bit. Usually like on 18-hole matches you're just worried about getting to 18 1- or 2-up, but you've just got to keep digging through that last stretch and try to get more and more and more. You can't just worry about winning in the morning because you're not trying to win the morning big. Even if you're down early, you're still in it with 18, 20 holes left, or if you're 5-down, you're still in it. You're just trying to stay composed the whole day mentally. That's going to be really important.

Q. Last summer you were like 1600 in the WAGR. What clicked? How did you do this in one year?

NEAL SHIPLEY: Honestly I think a lot of that has to do with how the ranking system is set up, and being at a mid-major school my first three years, the strength of the events we play aren't very good, so I was still playing well, but I felt like my World Amateur Ranking wasn't really representative of what type of player I was.

Then I got to Ohio State and we're playing in those big events and I started climbing and climbing and had a great summer and got in some really good events and kept climbing and climbing.

I truly believe I'm one of the top 35 players in the world and I have a lot of faith in my game, and I feel like if I play well I can beat anyone.

Q. The players were having fun with the persimmons earlier this week. You did hit the green?

NEAL SHIPLEY: I never really thought the week would end up like this after doing that. It's the start of the tournament, and you haven't even played a practice round yet.

Q. What day was that?

NEAL SHIPLEY: That was on Friday.

Q. A week ago?

NEAL SHIPLEY: A week ago now, so it's been a long week.

Q. Dunlap is sort of like a Tour player in the college ranks, the way he plays the game, the way he carries himself. How would you describe yourself?

NEAL SHIPLEY: I mean, I'd like to think I'm there, too. There's a lot of different characters on Tour. You've got like Pat Perez and guys like that. I think obviously he looks the part and I might not because I'm one of the bigger guys, but that doesn't really faze me, I'm just being myself.

Q. But even the emotion, he's very self-contained, you obviously seem to thrive on the energy. I guess the contrast between the two of you is pretty substantial. If you had to write the headline for the match tomorrow, what would it be?

NEAL SHIPLEY: I don't know. That's you guys' job.

Q. You said people have really taken to you and that



sort of thing. Have you experienced anything like that before in your golf career?

NEAL SHIPLEY: This is pretty special, honestly. The crowd here and the way the members have embraced us and the town, it's been really special. I think in some ways the Sunnehanna Amateur out in Johnstown as a local kid, going for the lead in that, we had a larger crowd there. Not like this. It was maybe 100 people. But it's pretty cool to be embraced like this away from home.

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