

U.S. Open Championship 2021

Saturday, June 19, 2021

San Diego, California, USA

Torrey Pines Golf Course

Russell Henley

Flash Interview



Q. Russell Henley, even-par 71. How would you evaluate your round, and how were the conditions out there today?

RUSSELL HENLEY: Definitely fair. Conditions were fair. I thought it was a great setup. Very difficult. Just so important to hit the ball in the fairway and hit the ball on the right side of the hole, and we're just trying to do that.

Didn't hit it quite as well on the back, but never been in that situation before, so overall I felt pretty comfortable and excited to play tomorrow.

Q. You're about the 10th player who's called it a great setup today. How come more players aren't complaining?

RUSSELL HENLEY: Who all have you interviewed? I mean, I just didn't think there was anything weird going on out there. I thought they put the pins in spots that were difficult but super fair, and they moved the tees up and back at appropriate times, and you got rewarded for good shots, so that's about all you can ask for.

Q. I heard you saying you didn't know you'd ever get in this position.

RUSSELL HENLEY: Yeah, tied for the lead going into the last day of a major, you never know. I'm 32, I don't know how many more good years I have of golf left, but hopefully a lot, but I'm just excited. I'm excited, and you always wonder what it would feel like or be like to be in contention. I'm excited.

Q. What do you think makes you believe that tomorrow can be your day?

RUSSELL HENLEY: I don't have to have it.

Q. You said you hadn't been in this position before today on the back nine. Did you learn anything over the last few holes that you can put into play tomorrow?

RUSSELL HENLEY: Yeah, I think I learned I can do it.

Definitely wasn't a perfect back nine, but hit a lot of good shots, a lot of good recovery shots. Felt like I was thinking well. Just a little better execution. Definitely capable of playing better, and I think I can do it, and we'll see.

Q. Do you distinguish between playing in a tournament and playing in a major?

RUSSELL HENLEY: Yeah, I think so. Most tournaments we play, I've played a bunch of times, played the course a bunch of times. So we kind of know what to expect. Here I've only played one other tournament here and missed the cut. Not as much experience around here, and that's typically how it is besides Augusta. You're kind of learning the course as you go a little bit more.

Q. Arnold Palmer used to say, "I'm a USGA man." Does that phrase mean anything to you?

RUSSELL HENLEY: I hope I'm a USGA man. I mean, yeah, I know what he's saying. I think getting rewarded for being mentally tough and just hitting good shots under pressure is kind of what U.S. Opens seem to be all about. You can't really fake it around a U.S. Open course. You kind of have to have everything going.

I like that. I get what he's saying.

Q. If we had talked on Wednesday, and I had said Saturday night you're going to be standing here tied for the lead, what would you have said to me?

RUSSELL HENLEY: I would have said, wow, really? That sounds great. Yeah, I mean, things always happen kind of when you least expect them a little bit with golf. It's like right when you kind of stop pressing and stop searching for your game, sometimes things just come together. That doesn't mean I'm going to play great tomorrow, doesn't mean I'm going to play bad, but just got to keep doing what I'm doing.

Q. Do you do your regular routine tomorrow?

RUSSELL HENLEY: I think so. I don't really know what else to do. Kind of go to the gym and warm up and hit

ASAP . . . when all is said, we're done.®
sports

some balls and go. That's what I've always done, and I'll just kind of stick to it.

Q. You mentioned you were playing the best, most consistent golf of your career. What over the past year has led to this point?

RUSSELL HENLEY: Well, I think my ball-striking has gotten progressively better since I've been on Tour, and my putting had gotten worse. And so I've started working with Ramon Bescansa on my putting, and I think I was like 190-something in putting a couple years ago in '19, and this year -- I'm not as good now, but about four or five tournaments back I think I was around the top 50. So my putting is better. I feel like I'm still hitting it pretty well, and I feel like I've just spent a lot more time on my short game, chipping and just bunker shots, everything. Just spending a lot of time doing it. I spend a lot of time at home with Larry Mize in Columbus, Georgia. We do a lot of chipping contests and I've learned a lot from him out of the bunker.

I would say just a combination of everything. I've gotten a little bit stronger in the gym. I've been working with trainer the last year and a half, and feel like I'm playing with no pain in my back like I kind of was a little bit in '19. Everything feels a little bit cleaner, and I feel a little bit more confident about everything. We'll see what happens.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports