

U.S. Open Championship 2022

Friday, June 17, 2022

Brookline, Massachusetts, USA

The Country Club

Nick Hardy

Flash Interview



THE MODERATOR: Nick Hardy, 2-under 68. Nick, two rounds in the 60s to start the U.S. Open. You have to be pleased.

NICK HARDY: Very pleased. Couldn't be a better start. Really happy with my game. Really happy with how I'm driving the ball. It's key out here.

If I can keep doing that, it'll be a good weekend.

Q. What have you learned about the course so far?

NICK HARDY: You've got to play to spots. You can't -- it's not really a course you can just totally overpower, and I appreciate that about it. Very slopy greens and small greens, so you're just trying to play on the right side of the hole the whole day and not necessarily try to make a lot of birdies, just try to be stringing together a lot of good holes.

Q. We talked to Coach Small earlier and he talked about how you're probably the most positive guy that he's coached. Do you know where that comes from, and how has that helped you this week?

NICK HARDY: That's a good compliment. I mean, I don't know where it comes from. I would say just golf being tough. You've got to be positive. This game will beat you down sometimes, but if you stay resilient -- I'm just a super competitive person, so I'm always looking to get better, and I feel like I've been doing that my whole career.

Q. Can you tell us exactly what the wrist injury was?

NICK HARDY: Yeah, the term is I subluxated my ECU tendon in my wrist and I tore subsheath. That's the doctor's term. I hit a shot on No. 4 in the final at the Zurich Classic and I felt a pop at the bottom of the swing, and I finished the round, but luckily I didn't do any extra damage. I talked to some players out here who had kind of a similar injury before, so that was helpful. I was out a month. No swinging for like 30 days.

But yeah, that was tough.

Q. You are a certified -- that's got to be the longest you've been out. As somebody who lives, breathes golf, what did you do during that month? How did you keep --

NICK HARDY: That's a great question. I actually learned a few lessons from that injury. I really did. I learned that look, I don't need to be out there six, seven, eight hours a day grinding. Sometimes taking a step back and just looking at it from a different perspective, I think it totally changed my perspective on things.

It showed me how far I've come in this game, I think, because I don't need to be touching a club every day to keep at it and keep my feels right. So that's crucial.

But it slowed me down. I made some changes kind of in lifestyle things. I started doing some things that helped me slow down my daily activity, and I think that helped a lot.

Q. Any new hobbies?

NICK HARDY: No. That was one of my goals going into the injury is like, get a hobby. But it didn't work.

Q. What lifestyle changes?

NICK HARDY: I started using this Neuropeak Pro, kind of breathing mechanism, and that's helped me a lot, just focusing on my daily breathing. I think that helped a ton.

Then I started listening to my fiance more on diet issues, diet things, so that helped.

Q. Was this your first injury, like significant injury, and do you wear that thing on your wrist just as a preventative thing?

NICK HARDY: Yeah, definitely my first significant injury of my career. I can't remember much time more than a couple days being off because of an injury. That was definitely one of my first ones.

I wear the thing just because the doctor said it would be best if I wear it for the time being, but it's definitely pretty



close to 100 percent by now.

Q. Did you hit a rock or something?

NICK HARDY: No, no, I just tried to hit a gap wedge really hard and it was stupid and it was a bad swing. I think it just -- my swing, sometimes I pull the club down and get narrow, and the physios I saw said it was a factor of just being super tight in my forearms and just that's how it happened.

Q. You wrote a letter to your dad when you were in grade school about you could get good at golf and maybe be famous. What would you have thought if somebody told you then that you'd be in contention going into the weekend at a U.S. Open?

NICK HARDY: It's pretty cool. I mean, it's always been really my goal to be playing many U.S. Opens and winning U.S. Opens, ever since I can remember, as early as I can remember.

Just to be here now, I'm super thankful, super blessed to have this opportunity this weekend, and I feel like I'm ready for it.

Q. You said you learned that you didn't need to be out there beating balls six, seven hours a day. How is your prep this week different than the first three U.S. Opens?

NICK HARDY: Yeah, that's a good question. I learned through my first few U.S. Opens that look, it's fun being out here, the scene, the week, but it's a long week, and I've learned how to -- I've kind of learned myself more and I've learned that you need to keep your energy and can't spend it all on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday having fun in practice rounds and stuff, and it's more about rest and maintaining that.

I kind of only played 18 holes Tuesday and just played a few holes Wednesday, and I felt like I was pretty ready after that.

Q. None Monday?

NICK HARDY: None Monday, no. I took Monday off.

Q. What would have been the most practice round holes you had played going into a U.S. Open?

NICK HARDY: I've probably done 36 and 45, maybe 54 sometimes. But having played in Canada last week, just getting the rest going into Thursday was definitely more important.

Q. Any new favorite foods from the new diet?

NICK HARDY: Not really, just more greens. That's for sure.

Q. When did you find out that you were officially into the field? Because it was sometime last weekend --

NICK HARDY: Friday night. Yeah, Friday night I got off the course in Canada, was bugging Robby Zalzneck about hey, where am I at on the list, blah-blah-blah. There was a certain exemption they were holding off for last week, and I knew that kind of opened up, and I figured maybe I was next up, and Robby told me I was in.

Q. So you weren't aware you were next up, you were just hoping that was the case?

NICK HARDY: Kinda. I kind of had an idea but wasn't super clear.

Q. What's it like to then realize, okay, now I'm in and I've got to refocus on something, a major, moving forward?

NICK HARDY: Yeah, it was definitely important to refocus, but also it was important for me to stay in the moment and focus on the weekend I was playing in Canada. It was easy for me during Friday's round to kind of daze off and think about next week. But I was definitely more set on, okay, let's finish this week strong and be more excited about next week.

Q. Could you name the players that you talked to about your wrist and what advice if they gave any to you, what it was?

NICK HARDY: Yeah, Sahith Theegala had this injury but it was a lot worse. He had it I think in either high school or college. He tore the tendon that I hurt and he was out eight months.

He told me, he's like, Dude, don't rush this. It's just not an injury you want to mess with. That was good advice because I definitely am the type of personality to rush an injury.

Q. Is it a girlfriend or fiance?

NICK HARDY: Fiance.

Q. What's her name?

NICK HARDY: Liz.

Q. When you came out of Illinois, did you have any idea how difficult it would be to try to make it out here on the PGA TOUR?

NICK HARDY: I think so. I mean, I was in a couple U.S. Opens during college. I kind of got a feel for things out here and the competition. Then Clair Peterson at the John Deere gave me a couple spots, exemptions when I was in college, and that was super big for me. So I kind of knew what the level was when I was in college, but I knew I just had to keep getting better and better.

Q. As a guy who says you've had your eye on U.S. Opens since you were a kid, do you think that's part of the charm of this event, that you can find out on Friday that you're playing and a week later be in contention for the weekend?

NICK HARDY: Yeah, it's super cool. I think it's super cool that 10,000 people try every year to get into this event, and I think it's just one of the coolest kind of national events there is for sure.

Q. You've been a pro for a couple years now; why do you think you're ready to handle the stage of U.S. Open on the weekend?

NICK HARDY: I feel like I have gotten better and better year after year since I was a really young kid. Maybe not as fast as I would like, but I kind of progress at my own pace, and I feel like I have understood that for a while now.

I feel like I have enough experience under my belt to be ready to play well this weekend.

Q. Your short game, obviously that was a pretty crucial up-and-down at the last hole. You had a couple more of those, 7 too. I know you entered the week fifth to last in strokes gained around the greens. What have you worked on or what's been the key for that?

NICK HARDY: Yeah, I feel like I'm a lot better than what my stats show around the green, but unfortunately the stats are the stats and that's what they show. But I feel like I have a lot of confidence around the greens right now. I've gotten a lot of help from my swing coach Brett Packee, a lot of help in general, and tips there and there. But Coach Small is here this week. He's always a big help. He's got a great short game, so yeah, I've worked hard on it ever since I left college and I've gotten better and better. It's just still definitely something I work the most on.

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