

PGA Championship

Tuesday, May 16, 2023

Rochester, New York, USA

Oak Hill Country Club

Braden Shattuck

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone. The 2023 PGA professional champion Braden Shattuck joins us now. First off, congratulations, and welcome to your first PGA Championship. You became a PGA member just over a year ago. Could you have ever imagined that one year later you'd be standing here just days away from your PGA debut.

BRADEN SHATTUCK: I could definitely imagine it, but I didn't think it would actually happen.

THE MODERATOR: What do you think of Oak Hill so far from what you've seen?

BRADEN SHATTUCK: Looks like a tough golf course. I haven't actually gotten out to play yet. I'm going out right after this for my first round. Just spent the last two days practicing, so I'm going to go take a look this afternoon.

Q. I think in New Mexico you mentioned that on the golf course you don't usually experience a lot of nerves. You're pretty even keeled. Do you think that might change when you approach the first tee on Thursday?

BRADEN SHATTUCK: That's a great question. I think we're all going to find out the answer to that one at the same time.

Q. What are your expectations coming here?

BRADEN SHATTUCK: My expectations would be to make the cut this week. I don't think it's reasonable to think I can win the golf tournament and beat the best players in the world, but I think I can definitely make the cut this week.

Q. What did you show yourself in winning to get here? Is there anything you learned about your game or learned about yourself in winning a big tournament to get here?

BRADEN SHATTUCK: Yeah, I learned that despite everything that was on the line for what we could win

winning that golf tournament over in New Mexico, that I could still, despite the nerves and distractions, still get the job done.

Q. I'm just curious, after your car accident, how long were you not able to practice?

BRADEN SHATTUCK: Yeah, it was about two years that I took off from golf and put the sticks down.

Q. I was talking to your dad earlier today. He told me about dropping you off, being at the club for 12 hours practicing. How did you deal with that, with that time off?

BRADEN SHATTUCK: As you can imagine, it was tough because golf was pretty much everything and my main outlet. You have to mentally get over that hurdle, which was the hardest thing.

Physically you can't even play golf, and mentally it's tough because now what else do you do with your time.

It took a lot to get over that hurdle. It took a lot.

Q. What did you do with your time?

BRADEN SHATTUCK: I worked as an assistant golf professional at a couple of different clubs. I was at Concord Country Club for a year over Westchester area in Pennsylvania, and then for two seasons I was assistant golf professional at Bidermann down in Wilmington, Delaware.

Q. What was the process of rebuilding your swing like?

BRADEN SHATTUCK: Yeah, it was more of an experiment than anything. I knew what exactly in my golf swing hurt, so I figured if I could do something with my setup and my golf swing to take some pressure off of those areas, that even if I didn't fully heal that maybe I could still swing a golf club with minimal pain.

It was just a process of trial and error until I found



something that worked.

And then you kind of have to relearn the golf swing a little bit. I can take what I know as a golf instructor and apply it. It was almost like I was building somebody else's swing it. It was kind of a neat little experiment to be honest with you. It was cool.

Q. How are you different now compared to where you were from a player standpoint than you were before getting hurt? Are you shorter? Are you longer? Sort of the results of this new swing.

BRADEN SHATTUCK: Yeah, I hold it very weak like you kind of do with like a putter. I would say with the irons swinging a little bit more upright with the irons I lost a little bit of distance. My spin rate went up a little bit.

But my driver numbers actually went better. My speed went down a couple miles an hour, but my launch conditions we so much better. I was able to hit up on it a few degrees, brought the spin rate down, took the loft out of my driver, so I actually ended up hitting it a little bit further and straighter with the driver.

So it was kind of a little bit of both worlds there.

Q. I wanted to compare notes with some of the TOUR pros here this week. In talking to them they said this is one of the toughest golf courses they've played in a major and one of the toughest setups in a while. Was it a shock for you coming here and saying, whoa?

BRADEN SHATTUCK: To be honest with you, I haven't even seen the conditions out there yet. I've putted on the putting green and chipped around a little bit. The rough is very thick and thatchy. It's not super long, but it's really dense and the grass kind of lays in different directions.

So I think I heard some of the guys saying there's going to be a big importance on hitting fairways this week, and just from what I've seen so far, the little I've seen, that seems to be the case.

Q. Have you had a chance to have interactions with some of the guys, players that you knew already or didn't know and gotten to meet them?

BRADEN SHATTUCK: Just some of the guys that I played with over in New Mexico for the professional championship over there. I got to see those guys and say hi and hang out with them, have some breakfast. So it was pretty cool.

Q. Who do you expect to meet and talk to this week of the top players of the world? Or who would you like to

meet and kind of pick their brain or talk to them?

BRADEN SHATTUCK: I don't really have anybody in particular in mind. I'm just kind of going about my business this week.

Q. It doesn't rattle you that you are in the middle of all these big guys?

BRADEN SHATTUCK: No.

Q. Can you help us fill in the timeline a little bit of where you were in your life when the accident occurred? Were you on a PGA track? Is this what you wanted to do with your life at the time? What happened with the accident and what your recovery was like.

BRADEN SHATTUCK: Yeah, so at the time I was 23, maybe 24. I was working a couple jobs and playing golf full time, so I was playing the mini-tours in the northeast, down in Florida, playing Monday qualifiers, Q-school.

So I was fully immersed in golf at that time. Then pretty much just a full 180 from there getting into the golf business itself.

Q. What year was your accident?

BRADEN SHATTUCK: 2019.

Q. So you were playing mini-tours, aspiring to be out here?

BRADEN SHATTUCK: Exactly.

Q. Did you think golf was out of the question? What was the recovery and the return like to get back here?

BRADEN SHATTUCK: Yeah, for a while there I thought golf might be out of the question. You kind of rely on uncertainty there for a while, which kind of sucks.

But yeah, definitely the goal was still to get back here. It was tough to watch all of my colleagues and friends that were still playing and having some success moving up to Korn Ferry and even to the PGA TOUR.

So I was happy for those guys, but it was tough because I couldn't play. I'm just glad to be back out here now.

Q. What exactly was your accident and what were the extent of your injuries from it?

BRADEN SHATTUCK: So I was driving through an



intersection and got T-boned about 45, 50 miles an hour, and I herniated some discs in my lower back.

So I was just having a lot of back pain and nerve pain down the legs and all that good stuff. Had a concussion and just some other minor stuff along with that.

Q. How long did it take you away and how slowly did you get back in?

BRADEN SHATTUCK: So I did physical therapy three days a week and every kind of alternative therapy you could think of besides surgery for a good 18 to 24 months. I'd say it was probably almost the full two years before I was able to play nine holes, and even once I was back, I wasn't able to practice.

I couldn't do a full range session. I could maybe go hit balls for five minutes. I would always have to take a cart. Walking was a little tough. Even now walking is still a little tough on my body. Unfortunately I'm 28, but I feel a lot better now, but then it was just a slow process to get back to where I am now.

Q. Did it change your perspective on being able to play this game? The mini-tours can be a grind, it can become a job. Did it change how you view the game or your approach?

BRADEN SHATTUCK: Yeah, I had a little bit more of an intense outlook when I was younger. Now I just feel a lot more fortunate to be out here, so I feel like I'm playing on house money. I'm a lot more relaxed than I used to be.

Q. You mentioned the pain while you were trying to rebuild your swing, trying to figure out what worked. Does it still linger? Is it something you still deal with or have you found something that you can by and large kind of deal with?

BRADEN SHATTUCK: Yeah, it kind of lingers. It comes back every now and again. Even last year in the fall, I made it through pre-qualifying for Korn Ferry qualifying tournament and went on to first stage, and then had to withdraw after the first round because of my back again.

It still creeps in there and I still have to deal with it. I still have to do my exercises every day and my stretching and still stay on top of it. I still go to physical therapy twice a week back on home, so I still have to stay on top of it unfortunately.

But if I stay on top of it and make sure I am diligent with everything, I usually can stay pretty healthy.

Q. Winning gets you into, what, six events or something like that. Have you plotted a course after this week?

BRADEN SHATTUCK: Yeah, so you get six events with that, so I'll be able to start those at the beginning of next year, which will be awesome. Give me some time to practice and play a little bit and get ready for those.

Michael Breed was actually nice enough to call me and he's going to help me work out my schedule a little bit so we can figure out what feels might work best for me.

Q. Curious, for a kid who buries himself at the range, I asked you did, did he go out on the course? He goes, no, he would just sit there and hit balls or would he putt or whatever. How did you not -- an elementary school kid, I've got two, they got ADD, right? I mean, they're all over the place. How did you not get bored sitting there pounding balls all the time?

BRADEN SHATTUCK: I don't know, and even still I don't get bored sitting there pounding balls. I can't hit as many as I used to when I was like seven, but for whatever reason, I even remember it now just in my backyard just with plastic clubs, just back and forth, back and forth, hitting little 30-yard pitch shots all night long until it got dark. I can't even tell you why I found that enjoyable, but I guess I was just always trying to get better, even from a super young age.

Q. Did you tear up the yard pretty bad?

BRADEN SHATTUCK: Yeah, my dad wasn't happy at times, but the grass grows back, so it's all good.

Q. How many folks are here this week to watch you?

BRADEN SHATTUCK: Yeah, so I have a lot of friends that came up. I have some family members that came up. Scott Chisholm, head golf professional at Rolling Greens, is here with me, and his fiance Lauren. Everybody has been super helping me out. I've got a great little team around me. Very happy with it.

Q. What's your workweek like at Rolling Green? Are you teaching?

BRADEN SHATTUCK: Yeah, so I got off the plane Thursday night from New Mexico, and first thing Friday morning I was on the range teaching again all day. Saturday same thing, teaching for 11 hours.

I've got a busy schedule, five, six days a week, teaching the juniors, ladies and all of the above. I work a full-time

job, so it's tough to compete against guys who play this game for a full-time job.

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