

U.S. Mid-Amateur Championship

Wednesday, September 29, 2021

Siasconset, Massachusetts, USA

Sankaty Head Golf Club

Stewart Hagestad

Quick Quotes

Q. An amazingly long day; you went 23 holes in the morning. Can you just talk about how that played out?

STEWART HAGESTAD: That's maybe the best match -- that may be the best 18-hole match I've ever had -- 23-hole match, whatever you want to call it. Stephen is a heck of a player, and I knew that we had our hands full this morning. That much could have gone either way.

Obviously I'm thrilled with the result, but he's a heck of a player, and I'm sure that we'll be seeing a lot of him down the road.

Q. On the 23rd hole, was that -- not make or break, but did you decide to try to knock it down there? Has that been your strategy?

STEWART HAGESTAD: I did the same thing this morning and I didn't hit a great one. If it's downwind like it is today and the way the hole kind of sets up, it almost forces you to go for it. You're not going to hit 4-iron, wedge. The green is so receptive, and the pin today was in a hole so it was almost asking for it. I'm sure you guys on your end, you saw the forecast, and you talk to I'm sure the head pro and Deiter and some of the guys who knew there was a bowl back there. I'm sure that was kind of by design when they saw the forecast.

Yeah, I did it earlier, and I think just about everyone in the field hit driver, so I don't know if I'm individual in that. I played the hole, and hit a nice drive, and it worked out well.

Q. Got to the quarterfinals, and here we are, it's been a long, long week, obviously, with the delays and with the luck of the draw --.

STEWART HAGESTAD: Getting here.

Q. Just getting here logistically. How do you feel getting to this point? Is it even just a great accomplishment to get to the semifinals in this field?



STEWART HAGESTAD: Yes, it's a great accomplishment to get to the semifinals. It's great. But I've been fortunate to have been here three times before, and yeah, I'm thrilled, of course, to be in the semifinals and to keep playing, but there's a lot of work still to do because last I checked, unless you win it, no one remembers who was in the semifinals.

Q. Do you think you have an advantage by having the experience of being in this spot a few times before?

STEWART HAGESTAD: I certainly think it helps, but every year the guys get better and better. I mean, you look at guys -- Stephen never turned pro, Chris did, but you get a lot of guys that are young. Shoot, I'm on the older side now; I'm 30. I played two guys who are younger than me, and when I started doing this, it was kind of the opposite.

I certainly think it's an advantage from a personal expectation standpoint, but from the standpoint of being ignorant or naïve like I was when I was 25, maybe not. I think there's pros and cons.

Q. What about this golf course -- is it a great match play course in your opinion?

STEWART HAGESTAD: When it blows it is. When it blows it is. Everyone in the field is so good. I mean, it's a great golf course, great setup, a lot of fun. Easy to see why it's renowned around the country.

The field is so good, and if the greens are soft, the boys, they can go out and they can shoot good scores. I think when the wind blows and it make you think a little bit more and it adds that extra variable, dries out the greens a little, makes it play a little more linksey, which is I think the way the members want it to play and the designer intended it to play, I think it's a far better test as is but also for match play.

Q. Do you hope it keeps blowing like this the next couple days?

STEWART HAGESTAD: I do, and I'd be really surprised if anyone said that they wanted it to be calm. I think everyone wants it to blow.

Q. Can you tell me a little bit about No. 15 on the



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green, the situation? Just a little explainer of what --

STEWART HAGESTAD: Yeah, basically what happened was he went long, which is not a great spot to be, and I hit a great shot in there to we'll call it 10 feet. I wouldn't say it was coming down to the wire, but he needed to make something happen. He pulled the pin and asked me to move my mark. I moved it one left, and he chips, he misses and he probably had we'll call it eight feet, maybe nine feet, putting back into the wind, uphill. Second round, so greens are getting a little bumpier. I hit a great -- okay, so I move it, he chips, I go through my whole routine, I'm setting it up, and literally I don't know if I pulled the coin or lined it up or what, but he made the comment, hey, did you move it back, and I didn't, and people remember Tiger's U.S. Amateur, whatever it was, it was against Steve Scott, I don't know the year, but Steve had the presence of mind to kind of remind Tiger, who is a total killer, greater ever of a generation, but he asked to move it back -- if you hit the putt, you lose the hole. He told me to move it back, and I would have hit it. I was fully locked in, had it kind of all ready to go, and end up moving the thing back and I hit a great putt and I missed it. I don't know if I was thinking about it before I hit the putt or after, but it just felt like the right thing to do to give him the eight or nine-footer just -- for him, he could have easily said nothing and I could have lost the hole. I don't really have a reason, but it felt like the right thing to do, and I think everyone in the field would say that -- with their friends or with anyone, like that's just -- it was the right thing to do.

Q. It was a returning of the favor, it was an in-kind gesture, right?

STEWART HAGESTAD: It's more important to be a good guy and do the right thing than anything else. Obviously winning the hole is a plus, but no, it was the right thing to do, so I would do it again.

Q. It highlights the kind of people that are in golf, and everybody wants to win, but everybody wants to do it the right way, and I just wanted to applaud you for that just on behalf of us.

STEWART HAGESTAD: Well, that's very sweet, so thank you. I hope everyone else would do the same thing. It was nice of him to do, so it was just returning the favor. Thanks.

Q. Just in general, obviously you've played, this is your fifth, right? You've reached at least the semifinals four times, right? So again, it's not new territory for you. What do you have to do tomorrow to get to that final? Just in a nutshell.

STEWART HAGESTAD: Yeah, well, we've got to play great. Everyone at this level is really good. You can't give away holes. You have to go out and you have to win it. If you go and you play your game and you execute and go through your process, whatever you need to do to prepare, that's all you can do. Just go out and try and execute.

Q. Can you tell me a little bit about your caddie?

STEWART HAGESTAD: Pete? So I belong to LA Country Club and his father is a friend of mine who's also at LACC. A month and a half, two months ago he shot me a text and kind of said, hey, if you have any interest, I know they aren't going to have any caddies for the Mid-Am. My son Pete, who I knew -- we would hit balls -- I didn't know him really well but I knew him well enough to say hi. He's like, he's done the caddie camp at Sankaty for four summers. I don't know, I was just like, yeah, sounds great, let's do it. So he came back here and he's been a great help.

He's 18, but he's much more mature than a regular young -- much more mature than I was at 18. He's not afraid to call me off and tell me no and give me a little sass, which is, I think, really important in a relationship like that when you're out there playing. You need to kind of light at times but serious at others. He's been great, so I owe a tremendous amount of credit to him for helping us get this far.

Q. Any local knowledge at all involved in that?

STEWART HAGESTAD: For sure. I mean, just how the wind plays. It's a heavy wind. Just certain spots around different pins, how to approach them.

I think that he's learned a couple things from me, and I've learned a couple things from him, and it's been a very symbiotic type of relationship. It's been great.

You know, I would say, again, I think it's really important when someone is on the bag for you, they need to have the ability to say no or that you're wrong. Anyone that's ever seen me play golf knows I'm on the quieter, more direct and intense side, especially when match play comes. In stroke play it's different but it's more collegial, and match play is a little more one-on-one.

I think for him to be able to have the peace of mind and to kind of be able to relate things, it's been very helpful.

Q. This afternoon, I know you're coming off the 23-hole match. When you get into that final match, that 18 --

STEWART HAGESTAD: The second match?



Q. Yeah, the second match. How much is it mental at that point versus the physical?

STEWART HAGESTAD: I was so much more tired mentally, so much more. It wasn't even close. That's a great question. I came in to lunch, and my mom and this person that she's staying with kind of came in, they gave me a hug and I could just kind of tell her, I don't want to be rude, I have such little time to go decompress. I need some me time. I think Pete and I ate alone. I went downstairs to go sit down alone, did like a small stretching routine. I just needed -- I was far more mentally tired. You saw me get food after the ninth hole in the second match. I kind of made a mess of 9. Thankfully I came away with the win, but I just could feel just mental fatigue, just being tired. Thankfully we were able to get some food and we came out okay.

Yeah, it's a great question.

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