

U.S. Amateur Championship

Wednesday, August 12, 2026

Ardmore, Pennsylvania, USA

Merion Golf Club

Niall Sheils Donegan

Quick Quotes

Q. Walk me through the match. What was going on out there?

NIALL SHEILS DONEGAN: Yeah, I just got off to a hot start. Birdied the first hole and just played very solid from then on. I don't think I really missed a shot until the 14th hole. Hit all my spots, and just kind of -- Wheaton is a great player, and just managed to get the better of him today.

Q. Obviously you made a birdie just to avoid the playoff yesterday. Can you walk me through that hole?

NIALL SHEILS DONEGAN: Yeah, coming down the 8th, I was talking to Stew Hagestad, and we were both on 2-over, and we were both like, let's just make a birdie coming down these last two. He goes and holes a 12-footer on 8, and I'm like, well, I've got to join him. Hit a solid drive down the 9th, hit a pretty bad wedge shot to about 40 foot and boxed it from the back of the green. Kind of went crazy after that. I was so happy to get some sleep last night and be fresh for today.

Q. After your amazing run last year, what did you learn from that, and what are you looking to accomplish this week? Obviously we all want to win, but is there something you maybe are specifically looking at improving coming into this year?

NIALL SHEILS DONEGAN: Yeah, obviously everyone is looking to win. But I think for me, it's just -- I'm still working on the same stuff from last year. I'm still working on staying in the present, not getting too high or too low and really just trying to take it one shot at a time.

Obviously I want to hit it close every shot I can, but I know that isn't going to happen. It's just still working to learn to accept that.

Q. Can you talk about the difference of playing in front



of your home crowd over there versus coming to this year?

NIALL SHEILS DONEGAN: Yeah, it's been great, actually. We've had a good group chat going with those guys, so they've been egging me on. They heard about the 40-footer yesterday, and they were pumped. It's obviously different. They're not here shouting like crazy hooligans, but I think it's a different -- I think I'm still trying to do what I was doing last year, which is trying to -- I was trying to ignore the crowd for most of my matches, and this year it's just easier.

Q. How much different is your confidence coming into this week, now that you're a match play competitor, compared to last year? Can you compare and contrast the change, what that's been?

NIALL SHEILS DONEGAN: Yeah, I think I'm confident just after the past couple weeks, just the work I've been able to get in. Last year at Olympic gave me a lot of confidence with match play. I feel as though I've got a good chance any match I go into, but I know that every match is a new situation. You're going to face new challenges.

This course is a completely different test to Olympic. It's focusing on different parts of my game that I've had to work hard on for the past couple months getting ready. Yeah, I'll just go from there and see what happens.

Q. You mentioned you missed a shot to the 14th hole. When you're flowing like that, what's the game plan at a place like this? Is it just follow it the way you want it to, and how is that going to change over the next few days?

NIALL SHEILS DONEGAN: Yeah, I had a game plan going into every hole today. Kind of talked to my caddie before every shot. There was no time where we were trying to get too aggressive because the minute you get too aggressive, you end up short-sided, screwed, trying to make par at best, probably looking at a good bogey.

You just have to always stay vigilant and make sure that even though I got off to a big lead early, I couldn't slack off. I needed to keep on trying to press forward and just play every hole as if I was all square.



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