

# U.S. Open Championship 2022

Saturday, June 18, 2022

Brookline, Massachusetts, USA

The Country Club

## Denny McCarthy

### Flash Interview



THE MODERATOR: Denny McCarthy, 2-under 68. Denny, can you talk us through your round today?

DENNY McCARTHY: Yeah, I think I blacked out. I don't even remember anything. No, I'm just kidding.

I played really solid golf. I've been playing really solid golf. I played really well yesterday and shot even par. I wouldn't say I was disappointed, but I felt like I could have shot 2- to 5-under yesterday, and I shot even.

Kind of lit a little fire under me. I came out with the mindset today, I'm going to try to play great today and shoot a number that gets me back in the tournament.

And I like playing in hard conditions, so it was a great day for that type of opportunity for me to come out and shoot a decent number and watch the guys in the afternoon have to play this place. (Laughing.)

THE MODERATOR: How were the course conditions compared to the first two days?

DENNY McCARTHY: Firmer. Chillier temperatures. Wind out of the north-northwest. It played a little different. It tilted around a little bit where all the holes played a little bit different today. It required a little more thinking.

Greens firmed up. Required more thinking on where you want to land the ball. Even a couple of holes like -- almost if I get out of position or too far back, you're almost playing to miss it short or into the wind or wherever it's uphill. It's almost not worth trying to take on a really hard shot, if that makes sense, and you're almost trying to miss it in a bunker or short.

That's kind of the thinking that's going on. There's a lot of thinking going on, but hitting fairways are really important. There's a lot of crosswinds quartering in off the left and off the right. You almost need to hit some somewhat "risky" -- what I called it "risky" shots to hold fairways or hold greens.

I think someone up top is probably going to -- I could see someone shooting maybe under-par, but also maybe

struggling and shooting a couple over. It's one of those places where if you are hitting fairways, you can shoot a decent score, and if you're not, it's going to be a fight.

**Q. What are you going to do now the rest of the day? Are you going to flip this thing on and help guys --**

DENNY McCARTHY: I haven't been to a Red Sox game this week. I feel like tonight is a good night for it. A little cooler. Probably go for the first half of the baseball game.

Maybe just hit a few balls and stay loose, and maybe take a little nap. Maybe watch a little of the coverage. I don't know yet.

**Q. Are you going to have the leaderboard up on your phone?**

DENNY McCARTHY: No, not really. Look, there's a lot of guys in front of me, a lot of top guys. I'm looking at the leaderboard right now.

I would expect a couple of those guys to hang around even par today, so I'm going to have to go out tomorrow regardless and do something similar to what I did today and maybe make a few more putts.

**Q. Which holes in particular played much harder than they did over the first two?**

DENNY McCARTHY: No. 10 was a par-5 today. It says par-4, but it's a total par-5. I was almost thinking I couldn't even clear. They didn't move the tee up that much, and 275 covered the cliff straight into a 25-mile-an-hour cold wind, so I don't usually have that in my bag, so I was looking a little more left. That was a really hard hole today.

12, even though 12 is down off the left, it's a front pin. It's really hard to kind of land it and keep it there.

13 was brutal. I birdied 13 today. That might be a skin. Honestly, I hit a perfect smoke draw 3-wood and then a flighted 6-iron to 13 feet and made it. I felt like that was an eagle really.



Made a good birdie on 16 coming in and cleaned up a couple of nice par putts on 17, 18. Trying to think of the other holes. 2 is a really hard par-3. 3 played hard today, straight into the wind. It's just a hard golf course.

**Q. What's the biggest adjustment you've got to make when the wind turns like it has, the temperature drops, and you haven't even practiced this golf course in a wind like this? What are these guys going to face this afternoon?**

DENNY McCARTHY: A lot of into the wind shots where you have to really have good control of your ball and flighting it. I love doing that.

I've lived in South Florida, the Jupiter area, the last six or seven years, so I have played in a lot of heavy winds. I've really learned how to control my golf ball and take a couple of clubs down and just hit it really, really soft. Still making a decent swing, but hitting it 70% -- 65%, 70% so the spin is not rising up on you. So it's just a little more control.

I hit a couple of really, really nice those type of shots today. Then you're going to have a handful of par putts out there today. The greens have firmed up, so you're not going to be hitting as close.

It's hard to then get 40-footers dead around the hole, so you're going to be having to clean up a lot of four- to six-footers around the hole.

It tested all aspects of the game today. It's one of those places where it's like the more I play it, the more I enjoy playing it and am starting to figure it out a little more.

**Q. One quick follow-up: The hole locations today, more challenging than you have seen so far this week, or is it more gettable?**

DENNY McCARTHY: I don't know. Like, 1 is back in the center, and it's downwind, so you can land something in the middle of the green and chase it back to 1. I could see a couple of the guys birdieing 1 right away.

I didn't think they were overly difficult. There's a couple of greens where they can't use spots. Like No. 4 they put in the same spot they have the first two days. There's a couple of greens where they have to put it in the same spots. Like 8, the par-5.

And then they've mixed some holes around. I didn't think they were overly difficult. I thought they were fair. They were difficult but fair. Nothing, like, crazy on slopes or nothing too extreme, put it that way.

**Q. You've played in a ton of USGA tournaments throughout your amateur and pro career. How does The Country Club rank in terms of just naturally difficult golf course of those courses?**

DENNY McCARTHY: It's up there. This is the second USGA event I've played here. I played the Am in '13. There's an element -- I like it because it's different.

This place has a lot of blind golf shots, and we don't play that many places like this, so you have to really be committed and trust your lines.

If the fairways were maybe ten yards more narrow, it would be extremely hard. I wouldn't say they're forgiving, but they're not super narrow.

On the harder holes I agree with what they've done. They've kind of graduated the rough. If you are just off the fairway, you can get a lie where you can play from. You can get it up. It's not just, like, hacking out, which I really like what they've done this week with kind of graduating the rough on the harder holes.

Then, some of the shorter holes if you miss the fairway, the rough is thick right off the fairway, which I agree with. If it's a short hole, you're going to get a wedge. You should be able to hit the fairway, and you should be penalized for missing the fairway on a shorter hole.

I think they've done a really good job with setting it up this week, and I would say it's -- I played Oakmont and I have played Chambers Bay in U.S. Opens. Those were difficult as well. It's hard to say because I feel like I've gotten a lot better since I've played my last USGA event.

**Q. Just as a quick follow-up: I think in recent years we've seen really distance be kind of a prerequisite at U.S. Opens. This week we're seeing a ton of variety. Obviously, you're a player that -- I don't want to demean your distance, but --**

DENNY McCARTHY: Let's just say I'm average. I'm probably slightly below average, but let's just say I'm average.

**Q. We'll say average. What is it about this course that's kind of allowing it to be a little bit more democratic with the wide range of players?**

DENNY McCARTHY: I think there's options. You can hit driver and force it up there, but there's maybe a little more risk on some of those holes.

And I have even chosen on some of those shorter holes to

lay back. Like 7, for example, is a great short hole. I've hit 4-iron off the tee every day. I actually ballooned one up into the air and had 5-iron on for my second shot, which I don't want to do again.

You can hit driver up there if you want to. You just have to hit a really good drive, and you can leave yourself a shorter shot.

I'm trying to think of a couple of holes. You can take driver and take on a little more risk. I've always been -- I'm really good with my 3-wood and hybrid and burning a 4-iron, and I like with my iron play is at right now, so I'm kind of taking I'm going to get it in the fairway and get a good iron shot and get it on the green and give myself a look. That's kind of what I've been plodding along trying to give myself as many looks as possible.

**Q. Then as you came back from -- I know it's been nine years since you played here, but were there any memories that triggered in your mind this week walking around?**

DENNY McCARTHY: Yeah, they changed the routing up a little bit, so I remember looking at an aerial a couple of weeks ago after I qualified to kind of get my footing, see what the holes were doing.

Then when I got out here, I remembered a lot have the holes. I would say I remembered 14 or 15 out of the 18 holes. There were a couple I was unsure of. Maybe they changed. I know they took a couple holes from the other nine holes, so it's a great venue.

I grew up in the Northeast playing Poa Annu and Rye rough around the greens, so I'm very comfortable on this grass. Yeah, this is just a cool place to play golf.

**Q. Is there any one shot in particular today that is the hardest shot to execute just in general?**

DENNY McCARTHY: The tee shot on 13 is probably one of the hardest shots out here in my opinion. Tee shot on 10 today was -- I would say the tee shot and second shot into 10 are both really, really tough, and the tee shot on 13, you've really got a right-to-left hole with the fairway sloping this way.

Today we at least got the wind more in. The last couple of days it was off the left. You almost needed hit a stupid shot to hold the 13th fairway, honestly, just because the wind was just humming off the left, and you really needed to kind of turn it against it. You can't hit a cut and hit into the 13th fairway, promise.

**Q. Do you consider yourself kind of like a unicorn out here in that you have never really struggled with the putter? That's always been the best part of your game.**

DENNY McCARTHY: No, I don't really look at it like that. I'm just out here trying to get better. I've been out here for five years now as a pro -- or five years on TOUR, seven years as a pro, and I feel like I've gotten every year. I feel like I've been doing the right things to try and get better.

You can't just play this place just putting. I hit the ball great today. I shot 2-under par. I hit the ball great. If I made a few more putts, I could have shot 4-under, 5-under.

My ball-striking has kept me in a lot of tournaments really. I've played hard golf courses as well. I played well at Memorial two or three weeks ago. That's no slouch of a golf course. That's a really hard golf course, and I hit the ball really well there too.

I wouldn't say I'm a unicorn with just the putter because I do other things really well, too. People just might not notice it all the time.

**Q. Not just the putter, but is it comforting knowing that that's not something that you have to worry about like some of these guys?**

DENNY McCARTHY: I get off every now and then. My off might not be as off as somebody else's off, but I get off every now and then.

Sometimes it requires a little extra work, and sometimes getting the sight lines and checking in where I'm aimed and stuff. Like I said, there's still been a handful of putts the last few days that to me they were very makeable, and I would like to have back, but I don't really think about it like that. I don't know. I don't know how to answer that properly.

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