

U.S. Open Championship 2023

Friday, June 16, 2023

Los Angeles, California, USA

The Los Angeles Country Club

Wyndham Clark

Flash Interview



Q. 3-under 67, back-to-back great rounds. How are you feeling?

WYNDHAM CLARK: Yeah, I feel good. I'm looking forward to getting some practice in. I didn't have my best on the approach today, so I'm hoping I can improve that and feel comfortable going into tomorrow.

But leading a major at any point at any time is always a good thing.

Q. What did you see out of the course today that maybe you didn't see yesterday?

WYNDHAM CLARK: It was definitely playing longer. I think there was maybe five or six tees that were put back, and then not only that, a lot of times when they had a back tee, they had a back pin.

So it was playing pretty long. I'd say it was definitely some of the tougher pins today.

The golf course on our last probably three, four holes when I was out there were starting to firm up, so I'd imagine this afternoon with the sun coming out it's going to get firmer and will probably be firm this weekend.

Q. You had an up-and-down on 14 that looked like -- it's early yet, but maybe the up-and-down of the tournament. How many times out of 100 do you think you get that thing up-and-down? You were laughing after you made the putt on 16. What were your thoughts after that thing went in?

WYNDHAM CLARK: Yeah, that up-and-down obviously was very risky. If it comes up short, I for sure probably maybe bogey. And then if it comes out hot and long -- I brought bogey into play, but I thought I had a really good chance of getting it up-and-down, or at least getting it on the putting surface.

Out of 100? I had a good lie, so I'd say I would do 70 or 80 out of 100, honestly. But it still takes -- if it wasn't a U.S. Open and a tournament, I think it's that number. But in a

tournament it's probably way less because you have the nerves.

I just felt like I kind of manned up and hit the shot, and then obviously making that putt was huge.

Then on 16 I was laughing with my caddie because I hit that putt like three or four times in practice different days, and then we had a putting game closest to this disc in practices with Luke List and a couple other players, Adam Schenk, and I misread it every single time.

So I kept playing like a foot out left and I'd miss it four feet left. So as we were walking up, I go, at least we know this putt; it's a foot out left, right? My caddie laughs and he goes, what do you see? I said, I'm not reading this, you read it.

He is like, you played roughly 16 inches out on the right, and then to make that putt was just funny because we just laughed it off because I literally did nothing other than hit the putt because I didn't know where it was going to go.

Q. I was told that you've had some experience playing this golf course before this week. Can you tell me about how many times you've played and just your impressions of it coming into the week?

WYNDHAM CLARK: Experience might not be the best word for it. I came in on Tuesday and just played 18 holes.

But what I will say is I came out with my good buddy, PJ. He's a member out here. He's a good player and he really knows the golf course.

That 18 holes was the equivalent of probably playing 27 to 36 because I was able to -- he was telling me how certain putts -- how they break, how this one is faster than this, this plays this way. If you're here, you want to go -- he was spot on.

So when I left that practice round on Tuesday I felt like I could have come here and not even played a practice round. I felt like it was that in depth.



Q. This was last Tuesday?

WYNDHAM CLARK: Last Tuesday, and then I had Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday here, so I had a light week. I just played nine holes each day and took it easy, so definitely helps having a little experience out here.

Q. This season your approach play I think has taken off. Could you walk us through the process on how you've turned that aspect of your game around and how important that was for you to do?

WYNDHAM CLARK: Yeah, I think it's a combination of an equipment change, an adjustment on the lie angles of my clubs. I did it about a year and a half ago. I adjusted my irons 3 degrees upright from being relatively flat to more upright.

And then I'm working on my own on the my golf swing, so it's myself and my caddie pretty much monitor my golf swing. I don't have a swing coach. That's helped me own my swing and own my game.

And so when I'm out there, if it doesn't feel right I at least know what to do. I think in the past I was too reliant on someone telling me what to do that I didn't own it.

So I would just say those are probably the three main differences.

Q. You said you have to work a little bit on the iron play today. What's the diagnosis?

WYNDHAM CLARK: I feel like I'm a little steep to protect it from going left right now, so I'm kind of not hitting my irons as crisp as I would like. I'm almost playing a swipe cut that is going a little bit shorter than my normal numbers would.

What I will say is the last couple irons I hit did feel better. Like the one on hole 9, my 18th hole. I flushed an 8-iron and actually hit the correct yardage.

But we're going to probably go out there and try to hit some tight draws and get my swing back to neutral so that hopefully going into tomorrow I feel confident about it.

Q. Who's PJ, and how did you guys become friends?

WYNDHAM CLARK: PJ Fielding, he's a good friend of mine. I've known him for probably six, seven years. We've played some pro-scratch tournaments together. He's an amateur. Every time I'm in LA I hang out with him. We go play some golf either at Brentwood or here. We hang out and have dinner.

I asked him last week if I could come in and play and if he would caddie for me, and he was up for it. I mean, he really knew the golf course. A lot of times when you take out a local caddie, sometimes they give you the information that you can see and you already know, but he had some really good insights on putts and speeds of putts and also how the fairways when they get really firm they do this and you've got to be here and lines off the tee.

He's helped a lot.

Q. Did you play with him or did he caddie for you?

WYNDHAM CLARK: He just caddied. He couldn't play. He wanted to play. He would've like to take my money, but he just caddied.

Q. Did you pay him?

WYNDHAM CLARK: No, I didn't pay him. He would have done it for -- he did it for free, and he would do it again for free. He's a good friend.

Q. You are currently leading the U.S. Open at 9-under par through 36 holes and the guys that you're one ahead of are just now teeing off. Which of that surprises you, if anything?

WYNDHAM CLARK: No, nothing surprises me. I imagine I won't be leading by the end of today. I imagine someone is going to go out there and get to 10-, 11-under, if not more.

But yeah, I am glad to be done, and I get to relax and work on my game and get ready for tomorrow.

I like the spot I'm in. And nothing shocks me.

Q. I caught the tail end of what you were saying out there, but you said you treating Wells, the win, almost like a major in your own mind? Is that right?

WYNDHAM CLARK: Well, yeah, it's na elevated event with some of the best players in the world that are here. That's a major championship golf course, and it demands a lot of the same things this does and a U.S. Open would demand, which is all parts of your game being on.

For me, winning any tournament was big, and then that one in particular felt like a major. I just feel like I can compete with the best players in the world and I think of myself as one of them.

Q. Three of the par-3s today are playing as some of the most challenging holes on the course. Is it the



sheer length, or if not the length, what is it that makes those holes so difficult?

WYNDHAM CLARK: Yeah, if we go out to hole 4 they have a back tee to about -- it's about 215 yards to a front left pin and the greens are starting to get firm.

That one is more of a setup. It's just really hard to hit it close. Guys aren't really going to be making birdies, and if you miscue there it's an easy bogey.

Yeah, the other two are probably simply because they're 280 yards. It's a par-4 in most golf courses. If you mis-hit it on one of those holes, you're going to have 40 yards to try to get up-and-down, and even the best players in the world, we might even be 50 or 60 percent from that distance.

So for me, parring -- actually I bogeyed one of them, but playing them 1-over today was I think probably right on par with everyone else, or maybe even gained some shots.

Q. Could you talk about the idea of play big and where that started and how important that is to you?

WYNDHAM CLARK: Yeah, it's very important. So my mom passed away. It's been about 10 years now, and when she was sick and I was in college and she told me, she's like, hey, play big. Play for something bigger than yourself. You have a platform to either witness or help or be a role model for so many people. And I've taken that to heart.

So when I'm out there playing, I want to do that for her. I want to show everyone the person I am and how much joy I have out there playing and hope I can inspire people to want to be like me and be better than me.

Q. How would you say your mom's impact on your life, how she shaped you not just the golfer you are but the person, as well?

WYNDHAM CLARK: Yeah, actually, you bring that up, I was walking down yesterday and I kind of was just smiling as I was playing well, and I go, man, I wish you could be here, mom, because it's a dream come true to be doing this at the highest level in front of friends and family that are out here.

Yeah, I wish she could be here.

But I know she's proud of me, and she's made a huge impact on my life. I am who I am today because of her. She was kind of my rock and my always-there supporter. So when things were tough or when things were going

great, she was always there to keep me grounded and either bring me up or keep the high going.

Yeah, I mean, I'm getting a little choked up. She's everything, and I miss her, and everything I do out here is a lot for her.

Q. What were your three mini goals today, and how do you think you did on them.

WYNDHAM CLARK: Yeah, pretty simple. For me it was enjoy myself at a beautiful golf course. It was be cocky out there. It was remind myself of the first two.

Those were honestly my three goals, and I thought if I could do that and keep myself in the best mindset, that the golf would take care of itself.

Q. When were you feeling cocky out there?

WYNDHAM CLARK: I would say after I got up-and-down on 14 I was feeling a little cocky about that. It was a tough shot, and making birdie there was huge.

As the front nine, I started leaking a little bit of oil and was grinding to make pars and even made a bogey, I kept reminding myself, hey, let's get back to that cocky player, and I hit a great shot on 6.

Unfortunately didn't make the putt. Then a really good up-and-down on 7 and a birdie on 8, so I kind of brought that cockiness back.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports.