

U.S. Open Championship 2024

Thursday, June 13, 2024

Village of Pinehurst, North Carolina, USA

Pinehurst Resort & C.C. (Course No. 2)

Neal Shipley

Flash Interview

NEAL SHIPLEY: -- came to the front. Caught a weird lie on the pitch shot. Got it over the green. Gave myself a good look for bogey.

This is going to happen here over a long week. Just have to try to minimize those mistakes moving forward.

Q. What is it about you and hard golf courses?

NEAL SHIPLEY: I think my game really comes out when the golf course is really difficult. I can separate myself from the field because I drive the golf ball so well.

When you're playing some golf courses in college golf, it's like a wedge contest or putting contest. When you come out to majors, it's not like that at all. Feel like my game is really suited for these tough, tough conditions.

Q. Do you notice a big difference in the nerves, how you felt mentally so far this week compared to the Masters?

NEAL SHIPLEY: For sure. I feel a lot more settled this week. Augusta, the first major, definitely the one I love the most. There's added pressure there for me.

But obviously U.S. Open, there's going to be some nerves. Doesn't really shake me as much as I was at Augusta on the first tee. I think having had that experience in April has really helped me out this week.

Q. Is that something you feel you can ride to a degree, whether it's comfort or...

NEAL SHIPLEY: For sure. For sure. Knowing I'm comfortable out here is just huge. Knowing I can compete on hard golf courses against the best of the world, making the cut. It's huge knowing when I come in here I have the ability to play well.

Q. The golf course any different today from practice?

NEAL SHIPLEY: It's a lot firmer in the fairways. Balls are rolling out. Greens are starting to get a little bit crispy.



Starting to feel like the U.S. Open, so...

Q. What was the discussion or was there any discussion about potentially turning pro after NAAs, just trying to qualify for this?

NEAL SHIPLEY: No, we talked about it, but the experience, that's really what we're after right now. It would be great to get a check this week, make a cut. At the end of the day I want to guarantee that I get that experience out here.

It's a marathon really, it's not a sprint. So what happens here this week and the next nine months, it's not going to define my professional career. I know there's a lot of good golf ahead of me. I don't feel the need to press my luck qualifying.

Q. Where did you finish PGA TOUR?

NEAL SHIPLEY: Great question. Wasn't even top 25.

Q. Even with the Masters?

NEAL SHIPLEY: My first year my world amateur ranking is so high because of my play in the summer. None of that really counts. I think it's just how those things go. I was able to get my card at Q School last week. I'm really excited for the opportunity that's coming up here next week.

Q. What is your pro debut at?

NEAL SHIPLEY: It's going to be I think Uplands Golf Club in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

Q. Been up to Canada before?

NEAL SHIPLEY: I have been up to Vancouver before. This is a ferry ride from Vancouver. I know it's a beautiful area. I'm excited to travel to Canada. Things could change if we play well this week.

Q. At least it's close to here?



NEAL SHIPLEY: (Laughter).

Q. Do you consider yourself or like to think of yourself as a big-stage kind of guy?

NEAL SHIPLEY: I just feel like I'm a great competitor. I've had two weeks now where my game's in great shape. I feel like I have the mental tools to really deal with what goes on during a major week.

Q. When you come here, what's your goal?

NEAL SHIPLEY: Have fun. No one expects me to win. I think it would be really fun to do that. There's no reason I can't if I go out there and have three really good rounds coming in. Takes something special. But we shoot for that.

If you don't win, don't play well, it is what it is. I'm here at a major when a lot of other guys aren't. It's just great to be out here.

Q. How did it feel to get your name on the leaderboard?

NEAL SHIPLEY: I did for a little second there. It was fun. It was fun. Definitely the potential to shoot some good numbers out here.

Q. Are there some birdie holes out there? You made four of them today.

NEAL SHIPLEY: Yeah, I think four of them. You can birdie almost every hole out here, but you could almost double every single one out here, too. Just kind of depends on your approach shots and drives and all that.

Q. What course did you grow up playing?

NEAL SHIPLEY: St. Clair Country Club, south Pittsburgh.

Q. What kind of course is that?

NEAL SHIPLEY: Greens are pretty wicked fast, similar to this.

Q. (No microphone.)

NEAL SHIPLEY: I'm pretty comfortable. I'd say it's pretty tough, especially when you're a young junior golfer, it's good. Got to play Oakmont. Did well. Great experience on some long and difficult golf courses.

Q. You caddied at Oakmont?

NEAL SHIPLEY: Yeah, I have a little bit.

Q. What age?

NEAL SHIPLEY: Gosh, it started during COVID. I did it for three summers pretty much. I caddied a couple times last summer. Kind of a part-time thing. Not my full-time job. Really enjoyed my time at Oakmont.

Q. You caddied last year?

NEAL SHIPLEY: A couple times, yeah.

Q. How did you get to go to St. Clair? Did you go to St. Clair High School?

NEAL SHIPLEY: No, I went to Central Catholic.

Q. You look more fit.

NEAL SHIPLEY: Yeah.

Q. How much weight have you dropped?

NEAL SHIPLEY: I mean, I don't really know. Not keeping track.

Q. Am I right, though?

NEAL SHIPLEY: I think I have dropped a little bit, but not something I'm trying to do intentionally. I think it's just I've had a long, long spring. It's going to happen when you're traveling this much, so...

Q. You go late tomorrow?

NEAL SHIPLEY: Yeah, late tomorrow.

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