

U.S Junior Amateur Championship

Thursday, July 22, 2021

Village of Pinehurst, North Carolina, USA

The Country Club of North Carolina

Luke Clanton

Round of 16

Quick Quotes

Q. Talk about this day. You take out the medalist this morning and the local favorite in the afternoon. What kind of a day in golf is this for you?

LUKE CLANTON: It was kind of funny because me and Ben were talking on the first tee and we kind of knew the whole day was going to be one-sided with the crowd. But it was an unbelievable experience with everyone out here. I can't even think -- I was looking down an iron shot and I saw like a bunch of people surrounding the green, so that's kind of cool.

I just said one shot at a time, and I played really well today. I think I only had one bogey and five birdies. It was just kind of one of those days where I took it one shot at a time, and Jackson is a great opponent, great player, known him for a while. It was fun today, and I just played a little bit better today. That's it.

Q. You dominated the par-5s. Do you attribute that to driving or what was going well with your game today?

LUKE CLANTON: In the morning I knew with Kelly I kind of had -- that's the only way I can really get to him because he's such a great player with everything else. I have a little bit more distance than him, so I was kind of trying to take as much advantage as I could on the par-5s. So I did really well today with the driver.

God, I hit the thing perfect basically today, so I can't really say anything else. It was just a good day.

Q. Particularly in this match, really the difference was the three par-5s. Tell me how you played those and how you took advantage of those holes.

LUKE CLANTON: I mean, on 9, I kind of -- same thing goes back to it. I hit the fairway, and when you hit the fairway here on the par-5s for me I have kind of a shorter iron in, so it's not too far for me out here, especially on this hole.



In the morning match I hit it over the water. That kind of stuff is a big advantage to me. I've been working on that really hard for the past year, kind of getting a little bit more distance and kind of seeing how it's working out now is pretty cool.

Q. This area has been good to you. You played in the '19 Amateur over here. How do you feel about playing in this area, too?

LUKE CLANTON: I mean, people are great here. I love it. They're so welcoming every single time I come here. The golf courses are unbelievable. This is probably one of the best golf courses I've ever played in my life.

The local restaurants are also awesome.

But everything here is awesome. I love coming to North Carolina. My dad is from North Carolina, so I come up here probably twice a summer, so it's pretty nice.

Q. So it's almost like a second home for you?

LUKE CLANTON: Yeah, basically. He lives in Boone, so he lives up in the mountains and we go up there and play golf all the time, so it's pretty cool.

Q. Can you rate this as one of the best days of your young golfing life?

LUKE CLANTON: I'd definitely put it up there for sure. I think it's more the experience. I played well. I still have a couple things I want to work on, but all in all it was a great day. When I won the two matches against probably the two best people in the field, I knew it was going to be a hard day today, so to close them out coming down the stretch is pretty cool.

I've been working on one thing, and that is just committing to the shot, and it's been working out pretty well.

Q. Obviously you're on a great high right now. How do you bring yourself back down to play your matches tomorrow?

LUKE CLANTON: To be honest with you, I'm not really on a great high because I know I've still got a lot more



matches to go. My goal is to win. That's basically about it. I came here to play well and just take it one shot at a time. I know I've got still plenty of matches to go, so I'm going to take it a little slow here tonight.

Q. You mentioned on the first tee the cheers. I think you gave a little wry smile to your caddie. Did you feel almost like a villain out here?

LUKE CLANTON: Yeah, that's exactly what it was. I told Ben, it's going to be like the villain basically. No disrespect to Jackson; Jackson is an amazing player. But it was really one-sided with the crowd. I knew it was going to happen like that.

Q. It's always been like that for even the North-South a couple weeks ago?

LUKE CLANTON: Yeah, he's been the hometown guy. I knew I was going to be kind of the villain out there, but I just really stick to one shot at a time. The crowd really didn't bother me out there today. I really made sure I was 100 percent in the shot every single time.

Q. You had a couple nice little long par saves or even some birdies to get some halves. What did that do for your game, even sort of take the environment or emotion out?

LUKE CLANTON: Yeah, it was a big confidence booster on kind of the early holes too to make those pars, and kind of on 11 when I made that birdie because I knew he was going to make it, there was no doubt, and those kind of putts really do save the round almost because those are big. If you lose that hole, it's kind of momentum builders for the next hole and everything. That's what match play is.

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