

U.S Junior Amateur Championship

Saturday, July 24, 2021

Village of Pinehurst, North Carolina, USA

The Country Club of North Carolina

Nicholas Dunlap

Quick Quotes

Q. First of all, talk about winning this championship and being a national champion.

NICHOLAS DUNLAP: My heart is still beating 100 times fast. This is unbelievable. In junior golf, this is the big one, and to have my name on it is -- I can't even put it into words.

Q. Were there any doubts in your mind today that you were going to win?

NICHOLAS DUNLAP: Oh, yeah. You like to stay as positive as possible, but in match play, in 36 holes, it's going to sway-back and forth a couple times, and my caddie Jeff, he did a great job keeping my calm, keeping me in the match, and in the end it paid off.

Q. There were a couple times you were in difficult situations where you had to punch out. How did you maintain your composure in those situations?

NICHOLAS DUNLAP: You know, especially in match play, it can be a little bit different in stroke play, but even if you're going to make a bogey or a par, you still -- especially on 15 is what I was trying to do. I was trying to make a par, obviously, but to try to force him to make a 4, as well, and not just give the hole away. If you do make a par, it can flip the match big time, which happens and it doesn't happen sometimes.

Q. When you go to the back nine, you're all even, tied. What kind of pressure is that for someone who wouldn't know?

NICHOLAS DUNLAP: I can't even tell you how many deep breaths I took. My hands -- you can ask my caddie, my hands on 15 tee, I couldn't even stop shaking. You just have to go back, you've done this so many times. Keep telling yourself that, a ton of deep breaths, and just trust it and hit it.

Q. You were fortunate you have a guy like Jeff Curl on



the bag who's actually played in the U.S. Open and made the cut. What did he do to help you get through all the pressure and manufacture the shots in your mind?

NICHOLAS DUNLAP: You know, more words than I could ever say to thank Jeff. He's been there through all my ups and downs. He's taught me so many things. He had, gosh, 20, 40 times this week he would either call me off, different club, different read on a putt, and without him this week there's no way I would be here.

Q. One of the benefits of winning this championship is you're going to the U.S. Open next year, and you don't have to qualify, you're automatically in the field at the Country Club. What's that mean to you?

NICHOLAS DUNLAP: It's my first PGA TOUR event, first major. I'm sure I'm probably going to be this nervous or even more. As a 17 or -- I don't know if I'll be 18 by then, it's just going to be a learning experience for me, and I'm going to go into it with as much confidence as I can and play my game.

Q. Who do you want to meet there, someone in golf that you always wanted to meet that maybe that'll be the first chance?

NICHOLAS DUNLAP: You know, I've always looked up to DJ. I've played in his event a couple times. I feel like I can hit the ball a fairly good ways off the tee, and I'd like to try to center my game around his and try to mimic his mental game. I think it's unbelievable how he carries himself on the golf course and just meeting him would be awesome.

Q. To go back through your history with your caddie, how has he seen you develop your game?

NICHOLAS DUNLAP: I believe he came up to me on the range when we were seven or eight. He knows my game in and out. He knows how I think. He knows if I look a certain way over a shot, and it's the same way for me to him. If I ask him a certain thing I can tell if he likes it or doesn't like it, and just to have that bond, it helps a lot.

Q. Going back to the ground up, that putt on 8, what did you feel like that did for you? Obviously it wasn't what you wanted that first putt -- how you wanted it to



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go but you were able to come up with that par there.

NICHOLAS DUNLAP: You know, he came up to me before I hit that putt, and I probably can't say it in an interview to be honest with you, and it just gave me a little bit of momentum, gave me a little bit of confidence and just stepped up and hit a perfect putt.

Q. On 12 you end up right; that's where you sort of like to hang out on 12?

NICHOLAS DUNLAP: I like to move the ball left to right off the tee, and this golf course was -- it wasn't -- I'm not going to say -- obviously I played really well. It kind of set up a little bit better to my eye I would say. When we saw the ball, we got a great break on 12, great break on 15 which I think you need to win something like this. You need some breaks. That's the same thing, just try to make him make a 4. I'm not going to say fortunately, but I think he hit a great putt, and I had that putt earlier and missed it, as well. It just doesn't move. I'm speechless.

Q. What happened to you on 5 where you hit the tree with the second, and the third went into the water? Did that influence your decisions on punching out later in the round?

NICHOLAS DUNLAP: You know, I felt like on 5 I could cut it around the tree and just get it on the middle of the green and force his hand to make a birdie, and I couldn't pull it off. Fortunately it's match play. I think I'd have made about a 9 on that one. You've just got to forget that. It's one hole, it's one bad shot, and just go on to the next.

Q. You seemed to be really in sync on the 15- to 18-putt foot today. Did you feel like you had the speed down of the greens?

NICHOLAS DUNLAP: I did. I felt like I've been really solid inside of 10 feet all week. I've hit a lot of great putts that 15 to 20 that just haven't gone in, and fortunately they did today.

Q. On this last bunker shot basically to a kick-in, what did you hit out of the bunker, and how did you execute that shot?

NICHOLAS DUNLAP: I hit a 60-degree, and it's a shot -- I don't know if you heard Jeff say, it's just a basic 21 game back at home. It's a chipping game we play if I'm with him every day we'll play for three hours, and back home it's not quite this. This golf course is perfect, everything, bunkers, greens, you never have to worry about a blemish. I fortunately pulled it off.

Q. Is this your greatest day in golf and why?

NICHOLAS DUNLAP: A hundred percent. I've won tournaments in the past, but nothing like this. This is unbelievable. The setting of it, in Pinehurst, to win -- hopefully maybe I can win and defend next year, but to win this year at Pinehurst on this golf course, I'll remember it forever.

Q. I want to take you back to when you were in Punt, Pass & Kick and your manager was Al Del Greco, who's a pretty good golfer himself.

NICHOLAS DUNLAP: He is.

Q. What did you learn from him maybe as a golfer, too, at that age?

NICHOLAS DUNLAP: I know Al fairly well. I was eight. I can't say I remember much of what he had to say. He seemed to have a similar mindset, just super calm, didn't let much bother him, and for a field goal kicker, I think you need that. That would probably be something I took away from him.

Q. Your 2021 has been pretty good; how would you say this has been a buildup of what you've been able to do the last seven months?

NICHOLAS DUNLAP: You know, from the start I went on a seven-week run where I played every week. I don't remember the last time I've had a rest day, to be honest with you. I'm playing and trying to win each event, but they're all adding up to this one. This is my major. This is the one I want to win the most, and I felt like my game was in great shape coming into it, and fortunately it was.

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