

U.S. Senior Amateur Championship

Thursday, September 1, 2022

Marion, Massachusetts, USA

The Kittansett Club

Rusty Strawn

Quick Quotes

Q. How does it feel to be a USGA champion?

RUSTY STRAWN: It's amazing. I mean, I never thought that I'd have this -- I thought I'd have the opportunity, but if I could actually pull it off, that's what I was always questioning myself. I felt like that I had the game if the right conditions and the right course setup, because I have that determination. But it's just amazing, really amazing.

Q. Talk about the early lead you got up after winning some of those holes early on when Doug was struggling a little bit and then leading into the birdie on 6.

RUSTY STRAWN: Right, yeah. I got off to a good start, and I just wanted to make pars. I wanted to hit fairways, I wanted to hit greens, I wanted to make pars, and then of course that birdie at 6 was a -- it kind of settled me down a little bit, when you make that first birdie, and then of course -- but I'll tell you, I think the real key was making a par on 7 after I hit it in the hazard off the tee, and I got it up-and-down from about 50 yards for par. That gave me confidence moving forward to the rest of the round that I wasn't going to go crazy, so to speak. But that was a good par.

Then I got up-and-down on 8, so my short game really kept me in it today overall.

Q. Did you feel a little bit of pressure when he got two back? You still had a 3-up lead but what were you feeling on that tee heading into 12 or 13?

RUSTY STRAWN: You know, not really at all. I knew I was hitting the ball well. I was focused. Even though he won 11 and 12, it didn't faze me. Now, it would have fazed me if I wasn't hitting the ball well and I was losing it, but I was like, I'm not losing this, he's doing the right things to get back into the match. But no, I never lost my confidence, which was a good thing for me, because sometimes I'll go through a round and lose my confidence and really struggle. But today it just didn't happen.



Q. Has it started to sink in yet like all the exemptions you get? Now you're going to be in the USGA Champions Hall of Fame, you're into the next 10 Senior Ams --

RUSTY STRAWN: I told my wife, I'm in the next -- it is so hard to qualify for one of these things. I've only had to try to qualify once, and because of my WAGR rating I've been exempt, but I have so many buddies that try so hard. You go to a spot, there's 25 players for one spot, and it's so hard to do. That's why this is such a coveted trophy is that 10-year exemption. It's awesome.

Q. I think you've got a local exemption for the U.S. Open now for two years. Going to give that a run the next couple years?

RUSTY STRAWN: Oh, sure. I mean, I'll try, but I don't know if I've got the game to be in the U.S. Open because I'm getting older, a lot older, but I'll try it for sure.

Q. Sum up the week, how it's been having your wife here for the victory.

RUSTY STRAWN: Well, I've always told her, I've been very fortunate to play with a lot of amateur tournaments, invitationals, national championships, and when I go to these things, I don't like it if I'm not with her. It just makes the week longer, and the first day I'm there I'd just rather be home.

I just ask her to please come with me because it just gives me a sense of being home, and it just makes the experience a lot more fulfilling when she's there. It means a lot. I wish I could have had my whole family here, but this happened so quickly, it just didn't happen.

. Q. Talk about your nerves heading into today.

RUSTY STRAWN: I don't know what it is. People talk about nerves, I never get nervous. Last night I couldn't sleep. I literally woke up -- when I did go to sleep, I would wake up eight or ten, 12 times. I was just thinking about, okay, this is for a national championship. I almost decided just to get up in the middle of the night just to get up. At least I'm rested. But at 5:00 I got up and said, okay, let's go to battle here.



Q. Yesterday you said the goal, your goal coming in was just to make the cut. If I would have told you before the championship that you were going to take this thing home, what would you have said?

RUSTY STRAWN: I would have said it would have been divine intervention. I'm just being honest. I would have never thought I would have taken you around with me the whole way.

Q. A win like this, what does it do for your confidence and your game going forward into the next -- are you playing in the Georgia Senior coming up?

RUSTY STRAWN: Right. Well, anytime you accomplish something of this magnitude, it obviously gives you a step up in confidence. It makes you feel like, hey, even as nervous as I was, I can do this.

I'll be able to look back and build on this. I don't know what else I can build on because this is the pinnacle for us. But yeah, there's no doubt it'll provide me with confidence in tournaments for sure. So that's cool.

Q. From the Georgia side of things, how did it feel to have three of the four semifinalists be from Georgia? Both you and Doug are from Georgia. How is the group of you guys?

RUSTY STRAWN: Well, like I said in the acceptance, it's not surprising because the depth of our competition in Georgia is phenomenal. We help each other. We beat up on each other on a very regular basis, but we help each other, too, because then when we're playing in regional events or national events, we're like, this isn't any different than playing in our state amateur. It's actually probably sometimes easier, because when you go up against like Bob and Doug and those guys, because they're experienced and obviously national champions, and you're able to beat them, it just gives you more confidence, no doubt.

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