

U.S. Senior Amateur Championship

Thursday, September 3, 2026

Lutherville, Maryland, USA

Baltimore Country Club (East Course)

Mike Sposa

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Hey, Mike, congratulations. You just won the 71st U.S. senior amateur. What's your first gut reaction right now, emotions?

MIKE SPOSA: Honestly, I think that this will really go a long way to possibly having an opportunity to captain a Walker Cup team. I just don't think that you can do that without being a USGA champion. Now that box has been checked, so that's kind of my initial reaction.

Next is that my name is in Golf House and on that amazing trophy forever with some unbelievable names. You know, it's beyond humbling and hasn't truly hit yet. I'm sure it will as soon as I get in the car.

Yeah, it's really unbelievable to say I won a USGA Championship because there is not many of them.

Q. Let's talk a little bit of golf. Todd opened up with a birdie on No. 1. What were you thinking after that?

MIKE SPOSA: I mean, you know, I still had a decent putt for par, so, you know, if I would've come out of the first hole with a half it would almost be like stealing.

I didn't think much of it. He hit a really good drive. Hit a good second shot. Buried the putt right in the middle. Wasn't anything I could do. I got lucky on the second hole that my ball did not go in the rough, and then hit a horrendous second shot but caught a decent lie in that bunker, and, you know, was able to get that up and down.

That calmed me down a little bit.

And then certainly him hitting it long on three after he hit a really good shot. I mean, the ball just kind of jumped on him, whether it squirted or whatever, over that green you're going to be forced to make something pretty long to save par.

To get it back to even that quick was -- actually that was to go 1-up at that point -- really got me calmed down and I



started making some good swings. I really hit the ball good the first eight holes and started leaking a little bit.

Yeah, he made some mistakes that were very uncharacteristic of him. Like the wedge shot he hit heavy on seven. Missing the birdie putt on six and mine curling in. Hitting it super close on five. The whole thing just kind of fell in place for me and I got a pretty good sized lead.

At that point I wasn't really thinking, you know, all right, this is mine to lose or, you know, nothing. I was just like, let's hit the fairway, middle of the green, two putt, which has been the mindset all week.

I got away from that. I got caught up a little bit with, you know, the potential outcome of this thing, and fortunately was able to calm down and right the ship.

Hit a pretty good 6-iron on 13, that par-3. Actually hit a really good approach shot on 12. I was shocked that came up short. And then on 15, that 5-iron I hit on 15 was probably the best shot I've hit in decades. Just it was just pure. It had to be because it was borderline carry club for me.

I smoked it and got lucky and caught the slope. Came down really in a good spot. He got a little bit unfortunate with his ball coming up short. I mean, Todd is such a steady player and he has a great mental game and his short game is really second to none, so to come out ahead is -- I'm lucky honestly.

Q. Heading into today's 18 you knew the conditions were going to be a little wet. Do you think playing yesterday afternoon in similar conditions helped you adjust to the fairways and also putting on the greens?

MIKE SPOSA: No doubt. No doubt. Because the golf course when we went back out for the afternoon match yesterday really completely took on a whole different thing. I mean, it was soft. The balls were starting to spin with shorter clubs. It was almost impossible to get the ball to the hole outside 20 feet.

Yeah that helped out a lot today, especially when I woke up this morning and got in the car and saw it was wet and it had been raining. I was like, it's going to be similar to yesterday afternoon.

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So absolutely that helped.

Q. And we talked about the good, but No. 9 was a little tough pill to swallow with what happened there. Walk us through that hole and how you mentally reset from there.

MIKE SPOSA: Yeah, I didn't have enough club to get there without having to hit a 7-wood, so that in itself was the first problem.

I hit a horrendous putt. Should have hit a chip down there. Still had maybe the mindset they're fast enough maybe it will come back and kind of drift down inside six feet. Always thinking about just getting to the hole so it doesn't come off that false front.

And then he ran his putt by. Now he's got a putt that's breaking a foot or more from eight feet, seven, eight feet, and I guess I just got a little greedy and maybe hit that putt trying to make it and hit it on the low side and gone all the way back down there, and that was the end of that hole.

And then I hit just an awful putt on 10 and Todd hit a terrible putt, too. I literally hit the same putt he did from almost the exact same spot.

Then another terrible approach shot on 11. That was when I was like, we got to step back here for a second and recalibrate. All the rounds that we played here this week, never had that type of mindset where it was a result mindset. It was always like let's get the ball in the fairway, let's put the ball in the middle of the green preferably slightly below the hole. Even if that means short of the green.

I just got out of that and, yeah, I guess 13 kind of snapped me back in there. I did hit -- I pulled the tee shot on 14, the par-5. Caught a decent lie in the grass lip of that fairway bunker and I actually hit a 4-wood out of there because it was the only club that I would be able to clear the Hell's Half Acre.

That really was a pivotal shot for me mentally at that time.

And then he hit a heavy wedge shot again and came up short and, yeah, the bunker shots and getting the ball up and down out here is so difficult because you're so far below the green surface. You don't have like green level bunker shots. Everything has got to elevate six, seven feet in the air and then check real quick and can't do it.

That was a turning point. Like I said, that 5-iron on the next hole is one of the best shots I've hit in knit a very,

long time.

Q. Let's talk a little bit about --

MIKE SPOSA: That's the 5-iron you have, too, by the way.

Q. Yes. It's treated you real well. Let's talk a little bit about just your mental toughness heading into today. You were playing with a friend, first of all. Also playing against someone you beat last year, and you had a quick lead. You could have really just let your mind go and not stay focused.

MIKE SPOSA: Uh-huh.

Q. Did you have to dig deep basically?

MIKE SPOSA: You know, my 25, 30 year old self would've probably gotten a little bit ahead of the game at that point.

I spend so much time coaching and helping the kids that we work with through our Next program at Callaway. I coach them from the things that I've learned and that great players have told me, so I'm really teaching them from my errors, not do what I did. I'm helping them do what I wish I would've done.

At this stage now at 57 years old, I kind of talk to myself on the golf course, a little self-talk like I'm talking to one of our players. It helps a lot. Really does.

Q. You were already a part of USGA history with your 1991 Walker Cup team victory and now you have your own solo USGA recognition. You kind of talked about it in your speech, but what does this honor mean to you?

MIKE SPOSA: Gosh, it's really unbelievable. So many of my friends that I admire and look up to are USGA champions, and even though I played on a victorious Walker Cup team in '91, that is still not a USGA Championship because you haven't done it on your own.

And to have been playing in these championships since I was a teenager all these years at all the levels, to finally have my name in the Golf House is pretty humbling. It'll sink in probably when I'm on that flight tonight.

But, yeah, it's awesome.

Q. And then flying over to Ireland, across the pond. You get to celebrate with a lot of the really good friends as well. I know it's going to be in a few hours, but how does that feel being able to celebrate with a great group of people?

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MIKE SPOSA: It's going to be awesome. So many of my lifelong friends are USGA staff. I played junior golf with Kevin Hammer. He was like our little brother and now he's the president of the USGA. And Mike Whan is a friend.

So to go over there and see them, especially after having claimed this victory, is going to be unbelievable.

But I'm there to watch the U.S. team win hopefully. I'm very interested to see how Nathan has coached them along to be prepared for what they're going to be dealing with as far as an away crowd, because it's way different. You know, when the matches were over here, you know, Cypress Point and then at Seminole and LACC, just in recent memory, it's easy to be in your home country and the patriotism and all that really hits you and inspires to you really play great golf.

But over there it's in reverse, and if they get up early, you know, the crowds are going to let our guys know it. They have to be able to dig down. I'm just very excited and curious to see how they handle that.

We have an incredible team, one of the youngest teams maybe ever, but some incredible players. Hagestad is going to be almost a second captain to Nathan. The two of them are so accomplished in their amateur careers through the USGA, that the guys are going to be getting incredible advice.

Stew is a great leader. He's just a slayer when it comes to individual match play in the Walker Cup. He was incredible last year at Cypress Point. I'm looking forward to seeing him continue that because the guy is a killer. I love watching it.

Q. Two more questions.

MIKE SPOSA: Yeah.

Q. You've had a really good career. Won previously on the TOUR. Where does this kind of rank for you in terms of accomplishments?

MIKE SPOSA: Gosh, I mean, it's up there with the best. Seems like all the big accomplishments, victories throughout the different stages of my golf career meant qualifying for something.

When I won the Dixie Amateur it kind of solidified that I was going pretty good to make the Walker Cup. I had done a lot of other things, but not win.

And then when I won the Boise Open, that locked me

getting onto the PGA TOUR so that was a big thing.

Now, winning this with the Walker Cup meaning so much to me and really putting a potential future captaincy on the plate is likely not going to happen if you're not a USGA champion.

They certainly pride themselves on that, and it was for sure one of the biggest reasons that I got my amateur status back. Now that I'm a USGA champion, I think that my chances went up greatly to hopefully get a nod one year.

Q. Finally, if Baltimore Country Club could talk back to you or if you could talk to Tillinghast about the course, what would you say to him?

MIKE SPOSA: Oh, boy, you know, it's amazing. These golf courses were constructed pre-1900 and have stood the test of time all these years. It's truly amazing how they were forward-thinking. You know, whether they were thinking of it at the time or not, but every one of the great architects, whether it's Tillinghast, Donald Ross, Alister MacKenzie -- I'm missing lots of names -- but none of them are easy to get the ball up and down. And all of them, even though the courses don't have to be tight, they all require you to be in the right portion of the fairway to get the right attack angle for the next shot.

Over time, mowers have changed. I don't think they were thinking when they created these greens in to 1898 that they were going to be running 14.

But, it's still very playable, and that really is a true testament to the great architects. That's why people love playing those golf courses that those people have designed. That's what I would say to Mr. Tillinghast, is way to go to honestly be 138 years -- is that right?

Q. Yeah, 100 years-ish.

MIKE SPOSA: And to still be able to test the best players in the world male or female, is quite a feat.

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