

U.S. Senior Open Championship

Tuesday, June 27, 2023

Stevens Point, Wisconsin, USA

SentryWorld

Jerry Kelly

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We will go with our other Wisconsin native, Jerry Kelly. Just talk about your familiarity with the course here and what it's like to play here in Wisconsin.

JERRY KELLY: I'm pretty familiar. Played here in '84, so vast knowledge. They've had two renovations since I played here, but I did show up last Thursday, Friday, and got a couple rounds in.

I'm looking forward to having marshals and volunteers on the golf course spotting our balls for us so we can find them in the rough.

As I told my caddie, this is a proper golf course. This is a lot more than I expected. I think they did a fantastic job of the renovations. I don't have a whole lot of memory of what was here, but what is here now is really something special.

This is a place that I'd come and visit because it's a great hotel, great restaurant, and a great golf course. It's really fun to play. So I'm looking forward to a tournament setup.

THE MODERATOR: You talked a little bit about it, but some talk about the rough this week. You know the U.S. Open is meant to test every aspect of your game. Talk about what you're seeing out there in detail.

JERRY KELLY: Last time I saw it was Thursday, Friday, and they had just topped it off on Thursday night. So Friday was a little bit easier than Thursday, but it's still not easy.

They can cut it down -- it's so uniform and so thick that, if they cut it down, it's still going to affect every single club that you have.

Around the greens, you know, a lot of places they have just fairway to long cut. They don't have that intermediate cut. You're going to get a lot of shots with a really tall rough behind you.



It's going to take a lot of creativity. It's not going to be, hey, is my short game on? I just hit this shot the way I normally hit it. This is going to be creating a lot of different shots.

It's going to be very difficult around the greens, and if you don't get it in the fairway, you're going to have that difficulty around the greens all the time. So it's fairway, and it's greens.

Q. Are there any fun superstitions in your family about golf?

JERRY KELLY: You haven't been following my mother, have you? My mother carries -- she goes and picks up feathers everywhere, and she has a bag of feathers, and when she follows me around, she plants a feather to grow a birdie.

It's funny now. Every time I'm walking on a golf course and I come upon a feather, I'm like, hey, mom, love you. Step on the feather, try and bury it, but that's my favorite superstition going on right now.

Q. Follow-up question. Has she ever buried an eagle feather?

JERRY KELLY: Yes, she has, no question. She usually sends me pictures, look, I found an eagle feather. Yeah, I know she has, and I know it works. Good question.

Q. Jerry, I know you're kind of a science guy. This seems like a weird question, but with the haze, does it affect your play, and does it affect you walking the course and playing?

JERRY KELLY: I mean, you just know there's a lot of humidity in the air when the air is there. A five-mile-an-hour wind may play like a ten-mile-an-hour wind. You've got to give credence to the humidity because that's just going to thicken everything up and make it tougher. It will make it so things won't dry out as much. So the rough will stay difficult throughout the day instead of drying out and being easier later in the day.

The greens should stay a little bit softer, but I don't know what they've done since Friday there either. So there's some positives and negatives, as there are to all the



different weather conditions. It's something that's always up there for all of us. We just don't see it like Bryson does all the time. We understand it, though.

Q. The air quality is severe, so does that affect you just walking across the course?

JERRY KELLY: It affects my nose. I've got a routine where I've got to do some extra allergy things morning and night just to make sure I'm able to breathe. That really is your energy, your lifeblood.

Yeah, I'll be focusing on my preparation for that. I didn't know the fires were still burning, but that was my guess yesterday. So, yeah.

Q. You were a little frustrated with your game at the Am Fam when we saw you a couple of weeks ago. What have you done the last couple of weeks to fix things and get back on track?

JERRY KELLY: Sunday I felt something, and Jim was there beforehand, and I told him what I was feeling and I was like, oh, man, that's really cool.

So then we worked after that the next week and really kind of ironed in some of those ideas in my head.

It's better. It's new. It's different. It's one of those things that could make me playing better for longer. But it is still fresh, and of course with a new pattern comes new pains. You've got to work through those things as well, what it does to your body when you do something different.

Again, it's putting the time in. Putting the extra work in ahead of the round, ahead of the workout, to make sure you're moving to be able to do what I'm trying to do.

Q. Steve, I was talking to Mark Rolfe a couple of weeks ago --

JERRY KELLY: Steve, I'm Jerry. Thanks. We switched. We look similar.

Q. Coming back here to your home state, you guys love your Packers, your Brewers, and he loves you and Steve. To be back here and play a major in your home state, just how big is that for you?

JERRY KELLY: It's huge. We always called the GMO, we always called the Am Fam -- well, out here, it's our sixth major apparently. But it's our fifth major type mentality.

Now we've got a major in the state, so it a double major? I don't know. Maybe.

Q. Steve has been so hot lately. What is it like having him kind of like your brother, your Wisconsin brother out there? That, and then also are you looking forward to maybe a little bit of a crowd following you around the next few days?

JERRY KELLY: Yeah, we always love the crowd because it just gives us energy. It's the one thing Wisconsinites have given me my entire career is giving me so much energy. That's why we want to give back as much as we can.

What Steve is doing right now is special, no question about it. He is at the top of his game, and I'm sure he's looking at it going, if I would have made that putt, that putt, that putt, I would have won by 12 instead of 6. That's the way we all think. But he is really firing on all parts of his game.

The last thing we want him to do is drop off at all. We want him to keep his trajectory going. We need to catch up. So I need to get better. I need to do certain things to get better. That's what somebody going on a heater does for you, is it shows you, whether you want to say your inadequacies, but it shows you how much better you need to be to compete.

I definitely dropped off with some injuries and not being able to workout, not being strong enough. That leads into the mental, not being as strong as I'd like it to as well. I haven't been able to get back to working out, but I feel like my game is coming around to where I can start doing all of that again very soon, just not this week yet. I'm ready for the challenge.

Q. Right now would you call it a rivalry because of your friendship and because you do want to get to the level he's at right now? I mean, is that where you're at at this point?

JERRY KELLY: I mean, some of the best fights you have are with your brothers. That's the way it is. It's kind of like when I was playing hockey at a young age, at 12 years old I had switch sides of town. Now I'm playing against my brothers that I grew up with, and we had some of the fiercest competition, and then we'd go out and have a beer and have a great time afterwards. Well, not when I was 15. (Laughter).

But that's the way it is with Strick and I. I consider us extremely close best friends. I mean, the families are very close. We seriously love each other, yet, man, I'd see him moving up, I want to catch up. If he's behind me in that rare opportunity that I get when he's behind me, I want to keep going.



It just makes us both better. I know him coming back seeing where I was when he was in his abyss stage, I know it helped him, and we've talked about it a whole bunch too. Our games complement each other so well when we're teammates, we have such a great time playing as a team.

But it's just -- it's awesome to have him wanting to play and play consistently because he's the best addition we can have on this tour.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

