

U.S. Adaptive Open

Sunday, July 17, 2022

Village of Pinehurst, North Carolina, USA

Pinehurst Resort & C.C. (Course No. 6)

Ken Green

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Ken Green. What does it feel like to be here this week?

KEN GREEN: You know, I know this is going to sound bizarre to the average person out there, but for me, I've been fortunate enough to play in U.S. Amateurs and U.S. Opens, and obviously it's an honor. But that was golf. You were just kind of a stud at golf. Whereas this one, this means -- everyone here has been dealt a bad hand, some numerous hands. They use golf to help them get out of the hole, so to speak.

To me this is far more important, this event, because the USGA is the USGA. They have power, let's face it. All the other amputee golf tournaments are great. But when an organization this big comes to the plate and has a national Open like this, it's just a perfect way to showcase how people can come back from whatever disasters have befallen them, and then the other is how golf is a great way of recovering. Everyone who loves golf always wants to try to get more people involved.

Hopefully with the right PR and the media, this can help people who might never have ever even thought about picking up a golf club, whether they're full out really in bad shape or just a little bump in their road, golf is a great way of doing it. To me, this is an absolute home run.

Q. Has anything surprised you already from being here this week?

KEN GREEN: Oh, boy, this is going to -- I'm surprised you guys did it as well as you did. I think it's wonderful, showcasing all the tents and that. It really gives it the image that it is the big time. This is the big of the big.

The course is definitely a little harder than I was certainly hoping, but you've got to play around here. Whatever scores they shoot and whoever does their best will really show people, if it can get the word out there that this isn't an easy little public track. This is a hard golf course.

Q. Looking at your prosthetic there, how many have



you gone through through these years as far as trying to find something that works the best?

KEN GREEN: Probably about as many fines as I've gotten on the Tour. I really don't -- we've tried everything. I've had the computer ones. We've tried other ones. Now this is /OS tee owe integration. Relatively new here in the States. I think it's only a few years old. I'm loving it at this point. We don't know if the bones will last in there because they drill a hole in the tibia and they put a rod in there. It's actually made in Australia, so I have part citizenship now, by the way, so the big question is will it last for -- I don't know. That's certainly not my field of expertise.

I do think this is the wave of the future, though. So much easier for -- mobility-wise, not to have your leg locked in, your knee locked in is so much better.

Q. It's striking because it just goes straight up into your leg, right? We're so used to seeing the other devices. This is kind of the wave do you think?

KEN GREEN: I do. They can do it above the knee, also, which I'm really fascinated by, because what bone do they stick it in there? But I really do think this is the wave of the future. A lot of the above-knees have the computer, but not every insurance covers those.

It's a very expensive world when you lose a limb or two in terms of insurance is insurance. They're tried to hold on to their money, and it's unfortunate, but eventually things will level off and become relatively fair and then hopefully everybody can get it done.

Q. From a golf standpoint what does this particular device give you as far as --

KEN GREEN: It's helped dramatically with my wedges because you need a little movement down there. When it was locked up before, this couldn't move this way. You need that little move, those little drill pitch wedges and stuff like that.

Unfortunately because I've been spending a lot of time in Arkansas on that CRPS baloney, I haven't really had a lot of work done. I did it in July. You basically have to sit for four months so the bone grows over the metal that sticks in there, which is kind of weird in itself. But I think golf-wise it



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will help people tremendously.

Q. So this is now something that you -- it's permanently attached?

KEN GREEN: Yeah. The great thing about it is literally I can take it on and off in three seconds. You stick a wrench in there and unscrew it and there it is. A little pin sticks out, but it's not like -- we look weird anyway, so what's the difference if we have something sticking out.

Q. So are you able to take it off?

KEN GREEN: Yep, yep. The reason the rods are made in Australia is because that's where the man who invented this is a doctor from Australia and I guess it's not enough of a money maker for someone to do it here in the United States because there's not that many surgeries yet.

Q. When you had your first prosthetic and were playing golf, how difficult was that given the lack of technology?

KEN GREEN: Yeah, it's weird, obviously I probably had an advantage over all the other amputees because I know golf better than most so I was able to adapt, but you become more of a hands player. You don't use that lower body. Although there's some younger kids out here that bomb it.

I know Jordan Thomas who's a good player, he hits it 300 yards without even blinking. Youth is still youth, whether you're missing a leg or two legs. You can still get it out there.

Q. You mentioned the feel of sort of feeling -- you walk in and it feels like an Amateur, feels like a Junior Am, the tents and all that. What do you think that means to people who maybe have waited to feel like they were part of that? You've been part of it, but for someone who hasn't had that experience.

KEN GREEN: Oh, I think it's a memory that -- let's go, okay, we're on our deathbed. It's one of those top-10 memories you're going to have in life. They're never going to forget playing in -- well, the first one is always unique. But no matter how many they play, this will always be the highlight of their life basically. One of the highlights. What else can you ask for but not to have a great memory? It's what we live about.

Someone -- I was doing an interview the other day, and it was like, well, how important is it? You have played in U.S. Opens and the Masters and all that kind of stuff, and it's like, well, look at it this way: Jack Nicklaus on his deathbed is not going to say to his wife and kids, gee, I

wish I had spent less time with you and worked harder on the golf course and won a few more majors. He's going to talk about all the good times he had with his family and all the great memories come from life. They don't come from golf. Golf is a great way to live life, but now you're connected with both. This is a memory that no matter what I shoot, this course is a little out of my league, but it's an honor to be here, and to me it's as good as it gets.

Q. You went over to say hello to Dennis. Everybody knows Dennis; everyone has seen his show. He's probably hit more golf shots than anybody else out here but all of them from one spot. What do you think it means for a guy like him who's given so much to the game to get a chance, even if his game isn't quite up to what you're talking about, just to be out here and participate in a thing like this?

KEN GREEN: Well, that's that hidden bonus that we're all going to get, that we're out here competing, and you never thought you'd be doing that again. Maybe I played a couple of PGA seniors or something like that, but I wasn't competing, I was just there to go to a hospital, talk to kids, et cetera. Where here you honestly feel like you can compete, and that's another adrenaline flow that everyone is going to get.

You're going to have to earn it. In Dennis's case, gosh, what's he been doing this, 30 years, 40 years now he's been doing this? But he hasn't played score golf, and that's a huge difference, hitting shots on the range and goof shots -- as great as he is, I think he's been working a lot with Pat McGowan who used to play the TOUR when I played, and trying to retrain the brain how to score because the key to scoring, especially for an amputee, is not making the high numbers, because everyone is going to hit a shot that goes, oh, my Lord, it's just the way it is, whether it's based on -- created by a lie that you have, and then you go deeper into that world where you can only imagine some of the tough lies he's going to -- I don't even know how they get out of bunkers. Just think about that. If you get one of those awkward lies, what do you do?

On an off note, I was reading one of the rules they were talking about, if you drop it in a penalty area and you end up dropping it in an area that's what they conceive you're a little uncomfortable with, they bone you with another shot to drop it a little farther. I was like, that is just cold. We've got to talk to the USGA on that one; that's not right. But that's what he has to live with.

Not hearing what he said, he's got to be stoked for this. There's nothing better than mixing it all together.

Now you get the opportunity to kind of live a dream that

you never would have had otherwise.

Q. From a competitive standpoint, how difficult is this course going to be?

KEN GREEN: You know, the tricky thing about this course -- for me it's the length, and obviously you're not going to hit as many good shots when you're hitting 4-irons and 5-irons and 5-woods, but for the kids that can bomb it, they still have to get it around the greens, and these greens are nasty. They're elevated, so they're tricky. One of the hardest things to do in the amputee world is chip and pitch because you're just never comfortable. Your body is always kind of moving.

When you're trying to get it within say seven, eight feet or less, you'll find guys making, oh, whoops, and you skull a shot that you wouldn't normally skull simply because of the way the greens are contoured here and the elevation.

Q. So a tough one?

KEN GREEN: Yeah. And then the other thing that probably no one has given much thought to is with as hot as it is, mentally you make mistakes when you're hot and you get a little fatigued, because that's all part of golf, but that's the challenge of golf.

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