

# U.S. Adaptive Open

Wednesday, July 12, 2023

Village of Pinehurst, North Carolina, USA

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

## Kip Popert

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Here with Kip Popert, champion of the U.S. Adaptive Open. How does that feel?

KIP POPERT: Yeah, pretty sweet. Yeah, I'm chuffed.

**Q. How about just this entire week, accumulating up to a championship? What about all that work that goes into it and now standing here with the trophy?**

KIP POPERT: Yeah, I obviously worked really hard for many years. Didn't envision winning it with a double, but sometimes you got to win ugly. It was good out there. Previous two days played incredible. Played well today. Just was burning edges probably for the last 35 holes.

But, yeah, I'm extremely chuffed. Big thank you to Ben. We work well together and sometimes we make good choices and sometimes we make bad choices, but he definitely helped me save shots out there.

**Q. You just said you made double but still won. What happened off the tee and how nervous were you staring down Simon with a putt for force a playoff?**

KIP POPERT: So we've been hitting driver down that hole all week. The previous year we hit driver down that hole all event. We spoke about it last year, maybe choosing to hit 3-wood because the OB on the right comes into play with my driver.

Annoyingly basically I hadn't hit a bad drive, or you don't even have to hit a bad drive to be out there. I hit it perfect every time we've played that hole. I hit what I thought was a good drive and it was just on the two trees I tend to same just a bit left. Ran it OB.

Ben then, we had to again -- obviously three off the tee, Ben said you want to hit 3-wood. I said absolutely not.

Get a second attempt and crunched the drive that time. We've been joking, we've been having 120 into the flags all day, all week, and had 120 there, so to hit a nice pitching wedge in, the putt I hit rolled over the mark I wanted. I



don't really know how it didn't go in.

But, yeah, I'm just very thankful to get the victory.

**Q. So you're going to have your name in the USGA Hall of Champions, next to names like Tiger Woods, Justin Rose, Michelle Wie. How special is that?**

KIP POPERT: Yeah, my career is only starting, so hopefully I'll get my name in there a few more times. Been a lot of good work for 20 years.

**Q. This is the first day you got to really play against somebody on the leaderboard beside you. How did that help you, go in your favor today?**

KIP POPERT: Yeah, I'm used to playing up and near the lead in the previous events, but I think weirdly having four people was a weird one. You were trying to keep track of all three at once where normally it's only two or one person.

But Ben and I played really solid. Hit a lot of good shots. Just burnt a few edges with the putter. I won, so I'm very pleased.

**Q. Came in this field being the number one player in the world rankings. Obviously a lot of expectations. What does it feel like to fill out the expectations?**

KIP POPERT: Yeah, I think pretty cool to get the victory. I think more so to get the victory -- I've always said I feel like I score well when I'm not playing my best.

So to steal the win there on the last after hitting it OB, I think that sums it. I like being under pressure and having my back into the wall.

**Q. What about the view coming down 18?**

KIP POPERT: Ben said something to me a few months ago. Basically Chinese farmer, and I don't know what it means, but it basically -- I've thought I was going to hole the putt. Like I thought the reason I hit it OB was to have to go down there and clutch and make a five.

I was trying to basically think that there is a reason it's gone OB, and it's to win by one in an up and down with



wedge. We nearly did it.

**Q. Do you think that way a lot, like there are reasons that happen and things are on purpose?**

KIP POPERT: Not really. I think just basically if you're going to win, you just have to -- you got to be your bigger supporter out there. You can't beat yourself up. I think that's what I'm best at.

Ball went OB, focused on the next shot and the next drive. If you want to win you have to -- that's got to go the main priority and above everything else, above your emotions and above just your ego really.

That's what I was trying to do. Just make sure I won.

**Q. How old were you when you started playing?**

KIP POPERT: About three. My dad started when I was born. He used to play cricket and I just got three siblings, so being able to spend time with my dad one-on-one was really special. I'm better than him, so that's good as well.

**Q. What's been the biggest challenge of your golfing career, hardest part of getting to where you are now?**

KIP POPERT: I think the hardest part is probably the reason I am here as well. No one else thought I could be this good. When I was off a five handicap everyone was like, oh, that's really good for you sort of thing. Obviously I was aiming for scratch. When I got to scratch, everyone was like, oh, that's really good. Well done. People would say, don't push it too hard.

Basically if you want to get somewhere you have to keep going and press on. That's the family motto, so that's what I've done. That's why I'm quite good up against the wall. I was the only ever one that believed I could be this good at golf and I have a lot more to achieve and I can be a lot better as well.

**Q. Maybe it was your dad who kind of led you on this golf journey or been the most supportive.**

KIP POPERT: I'll get emotional. My dad for the first 21 years and then Archie.

My cousin passed away four years ago, so...

**Q. His name is Archie?**

KIP POPERT: Yeah. So I was a nobody four years ago, and I've had a lot of wins since. Just trying to get as many as I can for him.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Kip, congratulations, you're a great champion. (Applause.)

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