

U.S. Senior Open

Press Conference

Saturday June 30, 2018

David Toms



THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome David Toms to the media center here at the 39th U.S. Senior Open at The Broadmoor. 66 today and 3-under for the tournament. Tied for second. Bogey-free round and ties for the low round of the day with Bernhard Langer.

David, great start, three birdies in the first five. Tell us how you were feeling and what you did on those holes today to get to those birdies.

DAVID TOMS: 1's a difficult driving hole the way it sets up with the left-to-right wind we had today. So just getting that ball in the fairway is key. And I had a pitching wedge in there about, I guess, 12 feet or so. Just trying to get off to a good start on the greens, really.

I hit a great putt and made that. Then I hit it very close at No. 2. Just a tap-in. Then I guess I birdied 5. I had a pretty good shot in there, just left of the hole and made a nice putt up the hill. So had a couple near misses on the front after that and I could have had a really low first nine holes. Then I birdied 11? Did I birdie 11?

THE MODERATOR: 13.

DAVID TOMS: 13. Yeah, I just -- another nice little medium-range putt there that I made. I think the key for me today was obviously keeping the ball in the fairway. But when I did miss greens I had -- my up-and-down game was really solid today. I think I had three or four up-and-downs where I almost made some chips. And so that was nice to do that, kind of what you need to do in a U.S. Open to keep a good round going. And so I was able to recover and just had a real solid day. My key for today was to try to get in the hunt for tomorrow. That's really all I wanted to do.

I obviously didn't have a score in mind. I just wanted to play well and give myself a chance. And I was able to do that. So tomorrow we have an opportunity to try to have a really good tournament. So that was what today was all about, and I accomplished that.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Having won at Castle Pines at the International, is it a coincidence that you're playing well here again at elevation, or is there something about the

altitude that favors your game?

DAVID TOMS: I think playing at altitude really helps me not get ahead of myself. I tend to rush a lot when I'm just playing golf and not thinking through my shots properly. And you really can't do that here. Then when have you a bad hole, you have to really -- you still have to, like I said, you have to do your yardage, you have to figure out what the green's going to do and the mountains and where the wind is here.

So it really -- it helps you settle down, even if you've had a bad hole or two. I've always seemed to play pretty well -- I played well in Reno, the same type of thing before. And I think it's all about really getting into what I'm doing one shot at a time.

I know it's easy to say, but a lot of times it's hard to do when you're out there on the golf course in competition. So I think that's, it's really helped me over the years. And certainly I feel confident playing in this area, winning the International and playing well there before, and plus this is a great spot to be. A lot better than Shreveport, Louisiana this time of year. So kind of get excited just to go out on the golf course.

Q. Did you make any adjustments today? 70, 71 the first two days and then this, nothing really different about how you tried to play?

DAVID TOMS: Not really. I guess it was getting off to a good start. Getting under par early. Other than that, not really. I think my speed on the greens today was a lot better. It wasn't -- it wasn't very evident on 18, but the rest of the holes really had great speed all day. That was the key. So when I missed the first putt I was all about just going and tapping in the next one. I think that was really the key.

Q. Do you remember the last time you went into a major at or near the lead?

DAVID TOMS: I have no idea. I'm sorry. I think it is my memory. I'm getting older. I would have to think about it for a minute. But right off the top of my head, not really. I had my chances over the years. And obviously I only got it done once, but I had a lot of opportunities to have great tournaments. And I'm sure it will be a shoot-out tomorrow. There are a lot of guys that are going to be close to the lead. And anybody that can put up around like I did today can get right back in the golf tournament. So the leaders will have

to continue to play well. And you expect that, especially with everybody out here who have won golf tournaments, it's not like you're playing a major championship where you have a lot on the leaderboard that might have not have won a tournament before. So these guys all know how to win, it's a matter of who plays the best.

Q. When you have a bogey-free round, everybody looks at the bogeys, but there must have been some good par saves there too?

DAVID TOMS: Oh, sure. The 10th hole comes to mind. I thought I hit a great second shot and it came up in the bunker short and had a bunker shot running away from me and not a great spot to be. I hit it out to about 10 feet and made a nice putt. And that really kept the round going, after not birdieing 9, which is a reachable par-5. I drove it in the rough. And at the time of the round I really needed something to keep it going and I think that putt did.

Q. Tons of guys grinding over 18-inch putts, two-foot putts, is it particularly difficult this week at this place?

DAVID TOMS: Well I just think in the back of your mind you stand over a two-foot putt and you're thinking, where's the mountain? Because they can break right away. And also just trying to get the ball to roll right off the bat. I mean, we are putting on poa annua greens and if you're one of the lead groups you're playing late in the day and guys have been on them all day long and so it's not the smoothest surface in the world. So you're really concentrating. You don't see many guys walking up and tapping putts in from two feet. Kirk Triplett did it a couple times today and it kind of surprised me. But he obviously feels good about what he's doing and went up there and tapped them in. So I think you'll see it again tomorrow, obviously. And it's just the nature of this place.

Q. To your point about all these guys have won, including you, so what, how does that alter, what does that do for your strategy or outlook tomorrow?

DAVID TOMS: Well, I think that you don't expect people to back up. So it's all about -- I mean, I'm sure everybody will look at the leaderboards while they're playing tomorrow and see how the golf course is playing and if somebody's making a run. But these, you just, the way you have to play this course, you got to get it in the fairway, first of all. You got very little chance to make a birdie if not and you'll struggle for par. And then you have to figure out that whole yardage thing and the altitude and where the mountain is and everything else. So I think it's just going out there and controlling what you're trying to do and do it the best of your ability. And then obviously see what's

going on during the day and see what guys are doing. So I'm sure I'll look at the leaderboard a little bit more tomorrow, just to see what's going on out there and see how people are playing.

Q. You mentioned Kirk and obviously he was a lot more up-and-down than you were, but he put together a pretty decent round. You're obviously into your own game, but what did you think of his play today?

DAVID TOMS: I thought he drove the ball really, really well. He hit it long and in the fairway. So he was set up for a lot of opportunities to try to make birdie. He putted well, he just misclubbed a couple of times. But I think everybody's doing that with altitude and wind and everything else -- and some tough pins. So other than that I thought he played really solid, so he'll definitely be a factor tomorrow.

Q. When you're near the lead would you prefer to be somebody who chases or would you prefer to be somebody who has it and has to maintain it?

DAVID TOMS: I don't think it matters. Like I said, there's so many -- it would be one thing if you had a four- or five-shot lead, but I think there's so many people that will have a chance tomorrow that I don't think it matters what group you're in, you just have to go out and play well. And certainly being near the end is a lot better than teeing off early in the morning. So I look forward to it, getting to sleep in a little bit and get ready for a final round.

Q. Having golfed three rounds now, is there any aspect of this course that's gotten easier or that you at least are getting a little more comfortable with?

DAVID TOMS: I can't say that I've got anymore comfortable just because the wind has been all over the place. So once you get a line off a tee you're thinking, oh, I got this. But they moved the tees around a little bit on some holes to bring the bunkers in play and then we had different wind direction it seems like almost every day and some gusty wind. So I think that you really have to be into every shot. I think you get some experience around here, I mean, I've never been here before until this week and so I mean that obviously helps. Maybe a little more comfortable with speed on the greens. But as far as hole to hole, I think you really just have to pay attention to what's going on.

Q. Sorry if this is a little bit of a repeat. I don't know how much you were watching the leaderboard, but out on the course or even now are you surprised to see yourself going up and up and up?

DAVID TOMS: To be honest I didn't look at it at all today. I think it was more about -- I knew Kirk was

playing well and I was playing well, I was trying it shoot a good score. And I knew teeing off as late as I did, knowing how the golf course was playing, that I couldn't be too far back the way I was playing. So I was just trying to get it in the house and get in before the rain hit. We had lightning out there and some thunder, not knowing what's going on. We had the evacuation vans came up late in the round, so we're like, are they about to blow it, what's going only. So I just wanted to get to the house with a good round.

THE MODERATOR: Okay, thank you.

DAVID TOMS: Thank you.