

U.S. Open Championship 2017

Friday, June 16, 2017

Cameron Champ

Flash Interview



Q. What does it feel like to have that "A" next to your name and minus 5, as well?

CAMERON CHAMP: It feels great. I came in this week with no expectations really at all. I just -- the only expectation I had was to be low Am. I played well.

The course sets up very well for me off the tee. If you hit it off the tee you can score. Obviously the conditions are a little more firm, but hitting fairways here is key. If you don't you can make bogey or double really quick.

Today started off not that good with the driver. But I was able to get it up and down. That helped my round.

I was more comfortable on the back side. I was hitting fairways, sticking some shots and hitting some putts. Just to get the momentum going.

All around it was a great round.

Q. I didn't see the numbers today, but yesterday you had the longest driver, is that typical for your game?

CAMERON CHAMP: Yeah, in college I normally am the longest. Yeah, I guess I've just kind of always been that way. I don't talk about it much. You've still got to make a score. Here if you can hit it long and straight, it's a great advantage. I took advantage of it the last few days.

Q. Do you have a theory why you hit it so far?

CAMERON CHAMP: No, I just naturally have done it since I was 15 or 16. As I've gotten older, I've gotten a little farther, but a lot more straighter. When I was younger it went everywhere. That didn't work out too well.

Q. Jason Day and Rory aren't around and here you are at the top of the leaderboard, how do you feel about that?

CAMERON CHAMP: It feels great. Top players in the world. Yeah, I mean, I've just got to keep playing my game. It's just great to be in this position for the first time.

Q. What does that say about the quality of your golf?

CAMERON CHAMP: Yeah, you know, this is kind of the first time I've been in kind of the spotlight. I've known

my game could be capable of, with my distance and my wedge game. So it's just nice to see it come along at the right time. So, yeah, it's just great to see.

Q. What was that moment like on 18?

CAMERON CHAMP: Yeah, it was great. We were kind of confused on that break. I thought it would break less, and I just took more, and it still almost didn't go in. I'm still in shock to begin with. It went in, so I'm really satisfied.

Q. How is the U.S. Open different from anything else you've ever experienced?

CAMERON CHAMP: I mean just -- I mean, just look at it. The hospitality, the way the players are treated, the course you play, obviously the fans and the quality of players. It's the best quality field on. This doesn't compare to anything I've ever played in at all.

Q. Do you allow yourself a minute to think about this, or do you put it out of your head and just play another round of golf tomorrow?

CAMERON CHAMP: No, it's obviously going to be in my head, to be honest. Like I said, this is all new for me, just trying to do it the best I can. Today I didn't really think too much about it, honestly, I was just kind of in a groove going on the back side. I was hitting it really well. A few missed swings I had, I kind of overthought things and just hit some errant tee shots. When I don't do that, it usually turned out well.

Q. Your goal coming in was to be low Am. Last time I looked only you and Scottie are among the Ams, Longhorn and an Aggie?

CAMERON CHAMP: Yeah, me and Scottie are really good friends, so it will be kind of fun. Yeah, it's still my expectation. I'll just keep playing, whatever my score is at the end of the day it is. I'm not going to try to put any extra pressure on me.

Q. During your practice this week, did you say to yourself this is a golf course I can really handle?

CAMERON CHAMP: Yeah, I played a practice round with Louis Oosthuizen and Rory on Monday. And just to see their games and how they play, I've grown up watching them. And I can hit those shots. Obviously they've been in this position many more times than I have. They've won major championships. So just kind of gave me a confidence boost, knowing that I can hit

those shots. With my distance out here, to me it's just the biggest advantage that it can be. When you hit it long and straight out here, you can really score and stay out of trouble.

Q. How do you keep things fun going into the weekend as the pressure builds?

CAMERON CHAMP: My best friend has caddied for me for six or seven years, roommate in college. It's fun having him on the bag. When I get down, he kind of tells me a joke or something dumb. He keeps me smiling. It just helps me not to think about things.

Q. (Inaudible.)

CAMERON CHAMP: Louis was kind of funny. I don't say anything. I'm a pretty humble person. I don't talk much when I play. I stick to myself. I hit my tee ball, and he was about 50 behind, and he was laughing to his caddie walking down the fairway.

Q. (Inaudible.)

CAMERON CHAMP: I knew I'd be around the top just from the numbers I've put up. It's great to have and take advantage of.

Q. Have you dealt with some injuries early on in your career?

CAMERON CHAMP: Yes.

Q. What were those injuries, and has it helped your golf game in the past?

CAMERON CHAMP: Yeah, that was a year and a half with a shoulder and back injury. Yeah, kind of had the injury, did rehab. I thought I was good. Reinjured it this spring. Sat out all spring, played in the summer and reinjured it. It was a cycle on cycle.

And then finally I was like, I need to do what I'm supposed to do. And that's when I started doing the proper things, working out and stretching and all that stuff. And it's been great since.

In the aspect of mental, yeah, I think it has, because for the short time I played with kind of an injury, just kind of -- just never worry about way too many things. Look at this hole and see water left, bunker right, tall fescue. I was just thinking about my back the whole time. Being healthy for the first time is something.

Q. Being from Sacramento, how did you end up at Texas A&M?

CAMERON CHAMP: Just through the recruiting process. I looked at the schools and saw what they had to offer, the facilities, I guess the campus, the people there were awesome. Just kind of a perfect fit for me. And just to get away from home a little bit, too, is nice.

Q. Talk about the way Sean Foley has impacted your career.

CAMERON CHAMP: More mentally. He's someone I look up to, just as far as he makes things simple. He doesn't make things hard. I'm a 22-year-old kid. You're going to make mistakes. You just have to learn from them and improve.

Like yesterday when I played, I played great, and he just says, just keep playing still, it's just one round so it doesn't mean anything. For me, that's how he's helped me the most.

Q. What did it mean to play with Xander today?

CAMERON CHAMP: Yeah, it was great, especially the first round. We were working off of each other. At one point he was five, I was four. So, yeah, it was just feeding.

And today it was the same thing, he had a battle on 12 or 13, but, yeah, I mean it's always nice to have someone in the group like that that's playing well. You feed off of each other.

Q. Are you going to finish at A&M or might this adjust what you were thinking?

CAMERON CHAMP: No, I'm finishing it up. Last year was my first full year of college golf out of the whole time I've been here. I still have about 14 hours left for my senior year, so it will be a stress-free senior year, just play some golf and afterwards decide.