

# U.S. Junior Amateur Championship

Saturday, July 20, 2019

## Preston Summerhays

### Press Conference

**Q. Okay, we're here with the 2019 U.S. Junior Amateur champion, Preston Summerhays. Preston, what emotion do you have when I say you're the U.S. Junior Amateur champion?**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: Just excitement. I've had this goal for this year to win. I think just accomplishing that goal means everything to me.

**Q. And obviously by being the champion you're now exempt into next year's U.S. Open at Winged Foot Golf Club. What does that mean to you?**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: I've had a goal since freshman year to play in a tour event before I graduate high school. It's so cool this tournament gets an exemption. It's a huge opportunity, and I think to win this and get that opportunity is going to be awesome and amazing in my progression as a player.

**Q. Leading up to the final, does the thought of going to the U.S. Open enter your mind at all or are you focused on the task at hand?**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: Starting the day?

**Q. Yeah.**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: No. So I wasn't really thinking about the U.S. Open. I was just trying to just play my game and just -- yeah, just play my game and whatever happens, happens.

**Q. Got to ask you. To start off, there is lots of things that happened in the match today, but the choice on the 17th tee to play up the 16th fairway, how did that come about? Was that something that happened in practice that you saw that that was something you could do?**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: So earlier this week when I played Joe Pagdin I finished on hole 15. We were walking up and my dad noticed -- he's like, This 16th fairway is pretty wide, and 17th fairway is tight. If you want push it up, really makes it a ten-yard fairway, or if you have to lay back it's a 200-yard shot.

My dad was really observant and noticed that. I played great on the first 18; birdied it, won the hole to get some momentum back.

So I think, yeah, having that play was a huge deal in



the match.

**Q. The second time around you were in a different spot than the first time. So tell us what you had and what you were thinking about as you looked at that shot with the trees in play.**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: So my thought process was, Let's check the lie first to see if I'm even able to get it over the tree. It wasn't a terrible lie. I had 174 to the pin. Going downwind, downhill, it really didn't play 174. It played 145 to the very front edge. I was looking at the shot and I was like, I could be able to get a pitching wedge over that tree and land front edge of the green and roll it back. I hit it great and it ended up going to eight feet.

**Q. Uh-huh. And then obviously Bo had a few problems. When you looked at the eight-footer, what did you see? Was there much break in it?**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: At that point in the match I was just honed in on my speed. If I two-putt, I win. I was really thinking, How am I going to get this putt to roll over the edge on the very last roll?

I thought I did that great. If I missed that putt, would've gone by two inches.

**Q. The match was all square when you started the back nine in the afternoon. You started off 10 with a 14th-footer for birdie. Talk about that a little bit. Did that start, do you feel, like the momentum toward the victory?**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: I mean, it definitely started. I wasn't really up at all in the match. I was up after 1 in the first 18, and then I was up after 21.

But really it was mainly just we were all square or I was down. I think to just get that momentum going on the last nine, that was a huge part of the match.

**Q. And then the next hole, obviously hit your tee shot to the left. You caught a break where you ended up on a forward tee for the 13th hole.**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: Yep.

**Q. Tell us what happened there and what you hit into that hole to about three feet.**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: The tee ball was just a bad shot. I would say it was a little bit of a mental



error. I thought the wind was a little bit more into; it was more across.

But, I mean, to win you got to have some luck. That was a really lucky break. It was 124. I hit a three quarter 9-iron that landed about a foot from the pin and ended up three feet.

**Q. Uh-huh. And at that point you're 2-up, and you got to be saying, Hey, this is going to be my day.**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: I mean, definitely -- I didn't think it was -- I mean, it clearly wasn't over yet. I was thinking, Yeah, I have some momentum going. If I get one more hole, two more holes...

I was just trying to play it hole by hole and see where I ended up.

**Q. Let me take to you 15 and 16 where you made two critical putts to stay ahead. First on 15, the birdie putt.**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: 15, yeah, that was a par putt.

**Q. To halve the hole, sorry.**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: It felt great. Yeah, so I hit the worst -- I hit my worst putt of the week, which was strange. I didn't really think much about it. I didn't overanalyze it. I was just, it was a bad putt.

Second putt, it was like -- I felt like -- I mean, I could put it in with some speed. It was just outside of the edge right to left. I felt really good over the putt. It just went in right side.

**Q. And then the next hole you had some problems where you went over the green. Usually when you make a long bogey putt it doesn't mean anything, but today it did.**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: Yeah, so I hit a great drive. It was kind of just a brain fart from then. I went over the green. That's a huge no on that hole. Actually my first chip I hit it great. It was a shot where I had -- it was kind of -- I had to get lucky with it. I hit it how I wanted it. Just didn't get the right bounce.

Next chip I was kind of on the rough collar and just caught a little skinny. Bo actually gave me a really nice read for my bogey putt. His putt went by six, seven feet. I saw it going in. I visualized it going in. I hit a great putt and it just went in just how I wanted it to.

**Q. Speaking to your dad, we were talking about the ebb and flow of match point. Talking about you hit an awful putt on 16, yet you got up there and just drained the second one from eight or nine feet. How hard is that to just forget what you've done**

**either on the last hole, the last shot, just wipe that out of your mind? How much has that been a struggled today?**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: It actually hasn't been a struggle at all. My dad has raised me to get over bad shots quickly.

**Q. How hard is it to get over a bad shot and let it go and think about what you got in front of you?**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: For me, it's not that difficult. My dad has raised me to let go of bad shots quickly. Yeah, he's taught me that from a very young age, and he's helped me throughout my entire career.

**Q. And probably never more than today.**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: Yeah, absolutely.

**Q. And the ebb and flow of the match was another thing. You and Bo, you can talk a little bit about Bo and how you played on the first 18. Great back and forth, and he also held the lead for most of the morning.**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: Yeah, Bo played great. He hit a lot of great shots. He made some great putts. I mean, I just stayed patient. So kind of the ebbs and flows of match play. Kind of when you're in the finals the two players are obviously pretty good. I think just on a course like this, it's like -- it's kind of just golf. It's like golf has highs and lows, too. One player can be playing good and one player can be playing bad and it can switch.

So I just stayed patient. I knew that eventually I was going to start playing some better golf.

**Q. So patience is the key?**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: Yeah, absolutely.

**Q. In that morning back nine he was 3-up, and it looked from my angle the eagle putt you made at 13 really got you started. Your opinion on that?**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: Absolutely. So I won the 1st hole and didn't win another hole until 13. Was I 3-down at that point?

**Q. 3-down at that point.**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: So, I mean, just needed to get something going. If you're 3- or 4-down with 18 holes -- with another 18 holes, it's just tough to come back to a great player like him.

I think that putt on that hole was huge for me in just gaining some momentum.

**Q. You were like six or seven feet off the front of the green. Was there something you saw in that putt? Looked like there was some good break to it.**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: Yeah, there was some really good break. The greens at Inverness are pretty sloped. They take a lot of visualization. I saw it going in very left edge. I hit a great putt with some good speed and it went in.

**Q. And then we talked about 17. Even though you went down to 16th fairway, you still had to make like a 36-footer for birdie. Talk about what that putt looked like.**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: I mean, first of all, that pin is great. I mean, the greens are firm, but the pin is so tucked and so sloped in front of it to where if you land it short you can spin it back with a wedge.

I hit a great shot. I just landed it barely short and spun back. But that putt, it broke a ton. I hit a great putt. I think that was a huge putt in the match to get 2-down.

**Q. And then you got on the 18th tee, which in the morning was drivable.**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: Uh-huh.

**Q. Was that your decision to go up the left side of the green with your driver?**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: Yeah, uh-huh, yeah. So I knew that it was going to be a super long and downhill bunker shot if I went dead at the green and went in the front bunker.

I was like, If I can get it on the left side I could get in the fairway, I could be able to hit it high, hit it spin, hit it controlled, and I had a little backstop to stop it.

I hit a great drive, hit a great chip, and got a birdie.

**Q. That was the 68-degree wedge?**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: Yeah, uh-huh.

**Q. We talked yesterday about how you've grown four or five inches, put on 30 odd pounds in the last year. You've had trouble controlling your distances because you suddenly are hitting it much farther than you used to. How has that evolution been for you? Has it been a struggle? Has it been, Okay, wow, I'm hitting it farther? This is awesome. Has it also been frustrating at times?**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: I mean, it definitely has its pros and cons. The best thing about it is that I just hit it further. I'm going to be closer to the hole. I'll be able to hit more wedges into greens. Most importantly, on this course get out of thick rough.

It's kind of tricky with the yardages because they tend to change a little bit. But my dad has always told me -- he's taught me to chart my yardages, and I have that on my pin sheet. I can go back to holes and see how

far they flew with certain winds, elevations, and certain clubs.

**Q. Could you have hit that shot on 17 last year?**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: Not a chance, nope. I would be chipping out sideways.

**Q. So how did you feel when you got that flag at the ceremony just now?**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: It was great. I mean, I don't even know how to explain it. It's just one of my goals being accomplished.

**Q. Got the flag on a hole that you birdied twice.**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: Yep, uh-huh.

**Q. Including the clincher.**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: Uh-huh.

**Q. Must have felt pretty special.**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: Yeah, it was great.

**Q. What's it like being from a family of golfers? Most of the players in this field, they may be the only golfer in their family. What's it like having so many voices or people you can play within your family?**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: Oh, it's a huge advantage. My dad is my coach and I feel like it's helped me a ton. My uncle, Daniel, plays on the Korn Ferry Tour. My uncle Tony plays on the PGA Tour. He's always been great to me. I've played hundreds of rounds with him and been able to kind of feed off what he's doing, what I need to do better in my game to get to his level.

So that is a huge advantage.

**Q. And then also you know some guys on the PGA Tour. Your father works with Tony Finau, and obviously just congratulated you after your win. That doesn't happen for everyone that wins the Junior Amateur or any junior golf event. What's that feeling like?**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: It's great. Tony is our family. Tony is a part of our family and we're a part of his. I mean, he's always been one of my biggest supporters. He's always want to know how I'm doing, how my golf is going. He just wants to know, like any family member.

So just having him in my corner is great.

**Q. How much will you be watching the Open Championship tomorrow with Tony in the hunt?**

PRESTON SUMMERHAYS: I'm going to be watching it like a hawk.