

U.S. Amateur Championship

Friday, August 19, 2022
Paramus, New Jersey, USA
The Ridgewood Country Club

Derek Hitchner

Quick Quotes

Q. You're heading on to the semis. How does that feel? How does that sound?

DEREK HITCHNER: It feels pretty incredible. Yeah, I'm just ecstatic to be in this position. There have just been so many moments throughout the last obviously few days, but also in the qualifier where I feel like I was teetering on the edge of not making it. Just to kind of work my way through that and to get to this point is pretty surreal.

Q. First time you played it into match play and now you're in the semifinals. What did you find this week?

DEREK HITCHNER: Yeah, I've been somewhat close to match play and I've always felt that if I just got into the tournament, I guess, then everything kind of resets. I always felt like I could make a run.

Yeah, it's just awesome to actually be able to do that.

Yeah, my game has just felt good kind of starting a couple weeks ago at the Western Am, so I just really try to keep working on the same things and stay focused and in the present.

Q. You said you feel like you could make a run. Is that because of the format? Are you a good match play player?

DEREK HITCHNER: Yeah, just the idea that it's kind of a new tournament. I've always been really comfortable in match play, not necessarily that I've had a great record or anything, but it feels comfortable to me. I feel like I can manage myself better than I did in stroke play just in the sense that I'm comfortable and usually feel somewhat confident. Yeah, it's just a feeling I have.

Q. How are you going to manage some of the pressure of tomorrow knowing what's on the line if you make it to the championship match?



DEREK HITCHNER: Yeah, it's almost unimaginable to the point where -- I don't know, I'm so unbelievably fortunate to be in this position. I feel like I just have to look at it in the most exciting way possible. Obviously I'll be extremely nervous, but it's what I've tried to work for my whole life. It's literally the opportunity of a lifetime. But I'm excited about it.

Q. Do you internalize a little bit because it's hard to tell you're any type of nervous.

DEREK HITCHNER: I've worked on that quite a bit. I've never liked to, I guess, show or demonstrate or exhibit too much emotion. Also I felt very nervous at different times today, and I've just worked on a variety of things to help manage that and to feel relaxed and comfortable once I'm actually hitting a shot.

I'm not going to avoid nerves, but it's just kind of working on how to control that the best I can, I guess.

Q. You trailed, I think, for the first time this week today. When you had your back against the wall, how did you recover?

DEREK HITCHNER: Yeah, it was funny, my coach and I mentioned that walking off of 4. It still just felt super early, and I knew that I was playing pretty well. So it was really just kind of a matter of staying as patient as I could and knowing that if I play the right way, I'll have chances to kind of claw back. Shea played incredibly well. I just had honestly one of the best rounds probably this year that I've ever had. That was helpful, I guess, obviously.

Q. How was dealing with the heat today?

DEREK HITCHNER: It was tough. I hardly ate anything this morning just because I was -- I'm more nervous before the round. I guess I should have mentioned that. So to not eat much, I was maybe a little worried about that because I knew how hot it would be, but I just tried to gradually consume something during the round, and yeah, just kind of I guess really be intentional with my intake and just making sure I was drinking enough. It was tough, but it wasn't unbearable by any means.

Q. What was your favorite shot?



DEREK HITCHNER: Ooh. I have no idea. I'd have to think about that. Starting on 6, I was really happy with how I was hitting my irons, and I think probably that tee shot on 6 honestly was the first one of the day that started on line and worked towards the hole. I think that demonstrated to me that I felt like my swing was in a good place, my head was in a good place. I think that was a really helpful moment for me, so that might be my favorite.

Q. At this point seeding is kind of irrelevant, but do you feel like an underdog whatsoever?

DEREK HITCHNER: I have no idea. I mean, I do think seeding is pretty irrelevant, just with how bunched the scoring was. Everyone was playing well to get to this position. Obviously there are many players that are extremely, extremely good. So from that standpoint maybe a little bit. But it's just a matter of whoever is on their game at this point is good enough to win, and I feel like I'm hopefully part of that, as well. I feel like if I play like I did today, then I should have a fighting chance regardless. I don't really look at it as underdog versus a favorite. Just kind of we're starting from zero on hole 1 and going from there.

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