

U.S. Mid-Amateur Championship

Saturday, September 17, 2022

Erin, Wisconsin, USA

Erin Hills

Matthew McClean

Quick Quotes

Q. Matthew McClean, U.S. Mid-Amateur champion; how does that sound to you?

MATTHEW McCLEAN: Yeah, fantastic. Sort of probably hasn't sunk in just yet. It's been a very long week, but I'm sure once we sort of sit down this evening, it'll sort of sink in a wee bit more, but yeah, it's unbelievable really.

Q. A really thrilling conclusion to this match. It got really tight down the stretch. Obviously you're familiar with Hugh. You've had a couple battles before. How did you maintain your composure and lock this championship down?

MATTHEW McCLEAN: Yeah, it was tough. I think the birdie on 12 that I made felt like it was sort of a big hole with 5 to 6, and then the shot he hit into 13 was unbelievable. 14, he played perfect; 15, he played perfect. Then he hit one straight down the pin on 16, as well, and I thought, it's going to be another one.

So it was hard to sort of hang in there, but I didn't really do a huge amount wrong, so I just sort of felt if I kept on doing what I was doing, hopefully he wouldn't birdie the last six holes against me. That was the plan, and thankfully it sort of just worked out in the end there.

Q. 14th hole was a really crucial one in this championship for you. You played the slope of the green perfectly both yesterday and today. Did that hole suit your eye in particular? What do you feel when you're on that hole and particularly approaching the green?

MATTHEW McCLEAN: It probably doesn't suit me a huge amount, no, because today I couldn't reach it in two; Hugh could get up in two just with the wind. So I had to lay back and then I had to sort of feed it in, so it was pretty hard to stop it on the green. But the 4 I made yesterday afternoon was probably one-in-a-thousand shot to work out. Yeah, I played it okay this week, but it probably wasn't my favorite on the eye this week so far.



Q. You and Hugh obviously came to the U.S. together for this championship; you stayed together. Obviously you guys end up in the final. How did you two feed off of each other this week to make it this far?

MATTHEW McCLEAN: Yeah, me and Hugh have played a lot of golf this year. He's beaten me twice. I haven't beaten -- this is the first time I've beaten him. It was hard not to think that it was going to be three in a row that I was going to get beat. We know each other pretty well; as I said, we're staying with each other for the past two weeks that we've been here.

Yeah, it's been fun. It's probably in a way who I wanted to play in the final, but at the same time it's not the person you want to lose in the final, as well.

Hugh has played unbelievable golf this year. For the past three months he's probably been the best player in Ireland comfortably. So it's a final; this is still obviously a very, very good week.

Q. You're an optometrist by trade, paying for amateur golf. During the winter, what will moments like this mean to you when you're back in Ireland doing your craft during the winter and just getting ready for the summer?

MATTHEW McCLEAN: Yeah, it will probably make the winter a bit easier knowing that I have a sort of a couple more weeks next year to go play. Yeah, me and my girlfriend are staying for a week in Chicago now so we can sort of enjoy that with this, and then yeah, sort of back to work for the next sort of three months. But yeah, it will make it a bit easier to sort of swallow three months of work with this week to finish off.

Q. Can you also just talk about now you're going to be in the U.S. Open next year at LA Country Club, and your countryman, Padraig Harrington, is also in that field. What's that mean to you?

MATTHEW McCLEAN: Yeah, I think it probably hasn't quite sunk in yet. It's going to take a wee bit of time. I think there's going to be a good few Irish players in it next year, so can't wait to sort of get an invite to join it. It will be a tough week, but hopefully if I can play well, we'll just sort



of enjoy it and see how it goes.

We actually got a message from Shane Lowry last night, as well, who just won Wentworth. So he sort of -- at least there's one more Irish guy in the Masters next year guaranteed. Just thankfully it's me going there.

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