

U.S. Mid-Amateur

Monday, Sept. 23, 2024
Kinloch Golf Club
Manakin-Sabot, Va.

**Stewart Hagestad,
Newport Beach, Calif.**
Round of 64
def. M. Tyler McKeever, 5 and 4



Q. Had you 8 under (with concessions) through the 14 holes of the match?

Stewart Hagestad: "There was a few concessions in there. I played really nice. What a good guy he is. He played solid, but I played well."

Q. Your title defense is off to a good start. Are you thinking about possibly making history this week?

Stewart Hagestad: "I'm not. Everyone is really good at every level. Look at what the cut was [for match play]. These are two hard golf courses and 1 over went to a playoff. It's crazy. We'll take it one match at a time and we've got a tee time [on Tuesday] morning. I'm excited about that."

Q. How do you feel about your game after two stroke-play rounds and now one match?

Stewart Hagestad: "I wasn't hitting it very well ... for about four months. It's not where I would like it to be. There's a couple of things that I would like to work on. What's nice about this week [so far] is just getting a little bit better every day. Hopefully, we can keep adding arrows to the quiver as far as shots that you have. If you can get to match play and then singularly focus on one person and doing what you need to do, then it makes it a little more simple. I played OK the first day [of stroke play at Kinloch Golf Club]. I made two really poor swings and that was about it." (Shot even-par 72)

Q. Have you dialed back your summer competition schedule?

Stewart Hagestad: "It's not that much different than I have in the past. I played the Azalea, the Master and the Coleman [in the spring]. I played the U.S. Open and played the Northeast [Amateur in June]. I played the [U.S.] Am[ateur], the Crump [Cup at Pine Valley] and then this [championship]...I played like seven or eight times. It's not too dissimilar than what I have done in the past...When I play, I try to make sure I am real excited to be there."

Q. You missed the cut at the U.S. Amateur but came back and reached the semis of the Crump Cup in mid-September. Did you figure something out?

Stewart Hagestad: "Jimmy Ellis played really well [in the semis]. He finished really strong. Honestly, the same thing there as this week. You didn't have your best stuff in stroke play, so just fight to get to match play and fight to focus on one match at a time. The Am, you look at the field, and you just have to get longer. All the trouble is between 280 and 310 [yards off the tee]. You look at a guy like [quarterfinalist] Bobby Massa, who [has a ball speed] of 188-190 [mph], that's just fast. You just have to get longer [to succeed]. If you look at the field this week, more than half the field played professionally at one point. Everyone's good. Everyone's long. Everyone has a bunch of speed. There were some takeaways on my end from the [U.S.] Am as well."

Q. Does your experience kick in once match play begins?

Stewart Hagestad: "In match play, you can focus on one thing at a time. You're playing one guy, and you are going to have to respond to what he does. With the stroke-play part, it gets a little busier. I wouldn't say more fear or more

thoughts by any stretch, but when you shoot even the first day, you've got to go play a great round the second day just to get in. So it's a little more stressful...It blows my mind that 1 over went to a playoff. It's pretty remarkable."

Note – Hagestad is the highest-ranked player in the field at No. 20 in the World Amateur Golf Ranking®/WAGR®...Now owns a 29-4 record in match play...One of three players to have won the U.S. Mid-Amateur three or more times...Could join Nathan Smith as the only four-time champion with a win this week...Would be the third player to successfully defend (Jim Stuart and Nathan Smith).