



## "INSIDE THE ROPES"... AT THE U.S. AMATEUR

Editor's note: LGA Executive Director Carr McCalla served as a rules official at the recent U.S. Amateur Championship at Pinehurst. This is his account of the week in the North Carolina sandhills.

### WEDNESDAY (8/20/07)

Today I'm the observer for the Derek Fathauer/Jhonattan Vegas match. Fathauer advanced to the quarterfinals and Vegas to the semifinals last year at Olympic. As an observer, I'll walk ahead of the match and help the referee with questions of fact as they relate to the match. Not a whole lot of excitement other than a great match. It went all the way to the last hole, Vegas making birdie on the 510-yard par-4 16th hole to get the match back to all square, then Fathauer draining a 20 footer on No.17 to regain the lead. A halved 18th hole gave Fathauer the match 1-up.

### THURSDAY (8/21/08)

Today is a long day for the players that advance. Yesterday the field was reduced from 64 to 32. Today this morning's matches will take it from 32 to 16 and this afternoon's matches will reduce it to eight. I'm referee for the first match this afternoon. It will get underway at 1:15 p.m. Kevin Tway, Bob Tway's son who is starting school at Oklahoma State this fall, won his match this morning and he'll take on Derek Fathauer, the winner of my match yesterday. Tway beat the medalist, Robbie Fillmore of Provo, Utah, 3 & 2, while Fathauer had to go 20 holes to defeat Peter Uihlein, another Oklahoma State signee.

Fathauer got off to a quick start, eventually going 3-up through 14 holes. Tway won the next three holes with two pars and a winning bogey on the 16th hole, to get back to all square after No.17. Fathauer was leaking oil...he had to be

tired, by the time we finished No. 18 with two pars he had played 38 holes since this morning. Heading to the first tee all square, I asked Tway's dad, Bob, if his legs were a bit weary...he smiled and said, "I can go all day." It was great fun watching him and his son...I'm sure he's feeling a bit different type of anxiety than he feels when he plays the Tour. Kevin depends greatly on him when reading putts. It has to be quite an advantage when you have a PGA Tour player on your bag.

Both players parred the first playoff hole, then hit great second shots into the second, both holing birdie putts inside 10 feet to continue to match. On the short par-4 third hole, Fathauer hit his approach to five feet, then Tway hit his second over the green into a very difficult position. I told the walking scorer that there was no way he'd be able to get up-and-down...and then he did! He hit an unbelievable shot to about four feet, Fathauer missed his five-footer for birdie, and Tway sank his par putt to send us to the fourth tee for our 22nd hole of the match (and Fathauer's 42nd hole of the day). Fathauer hit his third to 20 feet on the par-5 fourth hole, while Tway hit his third five feet behind the hole. The greens have gotten quicker as the week's worn on and Fathauer's putt seemed to take forever to get to the hole, then dropped; putting the pressure squarely back on Tway to make his to again extend the match. After looking at his putt from every angle, he finally pulled the trigger and it slid by on the low side, finally bringing an end to a great match.

Both players were gracious after what had been a grueling day. The momentum of the match had see-sawed back and forth and I know they were just as emotionally drained as they were physically exhausted.

### FRIDAY (8/22/08)

I have the second quarterfinal match today. As we get closer to the end of the week, the excitement certainly heightens. Tomorrow the winners of today's matches will play for a spot in next year's Masters and U.S. Open (both finalists receive invitations to those prestigious events). My match today pits Adam Mitchell from Chattanooga (a senior at Georgia) and Sammie Holland from Dallas (a University of Texas player). I met both players and their caddies on the practice range. Both players and

caddies paused to visit a few minutes before continuing their warm-up. Mitchell's Dad, Jim, is caddying for his son and I think he's more excited about being here than Adam is. Holland got off to a quick start, going two up through six holes. The par-4 seventh is a hard dog-leg right. Some of the players have been cutting the dog-leg and hitting directly toward the green. In my match yesterday Tway had actually hit it to within 10 feet of the green by taking it over the trees on the dog-leg. Mitchell decided to take that route today and hit a tree, dropping down into the rough with no shot to the green, then hit a great lay-up to around 70 yards. After Holland hit the green in two, Mitchell proceeded to hole out his 70-yarder to completely shift the momentum, cutting Holland's lead in half. The eighth is a 470-yard par-4. Mitchell hit his second to five feet and drained the putt to get the match back to all-square. A three-putt bogey by Holland on the par-3 ninth and, all of a sudden, Mitchell is one-up and in control of the match. It's amazing how once the momentum changes, a match can turn so quickly. The shot of the championship occurred two holes later. Both players hit great drives on the long par-4 11th. Mitchell was just a tad closer to the green, so Holland hit first, hitting a superb shot to about 15 feet below the hole. We had a bit of a breeze behind us and Mitchell had 162 to the hole. I found out later from his dad that they were trying to hit it to the ridge about 10 yards short of the hole and let it feed down to the hole. The shot never left the flag, landing on the ridge and then slowly rolling toward the flag, dropping in with its last revolution. I was walking with Holland and commented to him that I guessed that made his three good. He smiled and said, "Yeah, it's hard to beat a two on this hole."

Both players continued to play well, but Holland simply could not make up the ground he had lost on holes 7-11. A Mitchell par on the 17th, ended the match 2 & 1 in his favor.

### SATURDAY (8/23/08)

I'm back to being an observer today. Once the championship reaches the semifinals, USGA Executive Committee members that are also Rules of Golf Committee members serve as referees for the matches. Jack Nance, Executive Director of the Carolinas GA, and I will

observe for the second of the two semifinal matches. Our match pits Danny Lee, the No. 1 ranked amateur player in the world, against Patrick Reed, a freshman-to-be at Georgia. Reed lived in Baton Rouge until earlier this year, and had actually been the first round leader in our LGA Amateur Championship at Money Hill Golf and Country Club in 2005. He was 14 years old at the time and fired a smooth 67 that day. He eventually finished in the top 10, a precursor to what will most certainly be a strong amateur and collegiate career. Being an observer for the second match gives Jack and I the opportunity to see both matches. We'll walk ahead of our match and, as a result, be able to see much of the first match as well. The matches today were both relatively uneventful, Drew Kittleson, a Florida State player from Scottsdale, Arizona, and Lee getting off to small leads by the turn. Both matches ended on the 16th hole, Kittleson defeating Mitchell 4 & 2, and Lee getting by Reed 3 & 2.

It's been a wonderful week at Pinehurst. I was here in 2005 for the Open, but I had a much more intimate opportunity to get to know Pinehurst No. 2 this trip. There are some greens that, because of their inverted construction, appear to literally have so small an area to hit to that you feel there's no way you can keep your approach shot on the green. The players are hitting it so far now...but as long as these Ross greens exist at Pinehurst, the challenge of these courses will continue to survive. I'll look forward to hopefully returning for the U.S. Open in 2014...it will again be a wonderful venue for that championship.

Postscript: As you no doubt know by now, Danny Lee captured the Championship over Kittleson on Sunday in the 36-hole final match, becoming the youngest ever U.S. Amateur Champion. Five down after the morning 18, Kittleson actually trimmed Lee's lead to two holes before Lee birdied Nos. 9 and 10 on the afternoon 18 to extend his lead once again. The match ended on No. 14, with Lee shooting 11-under par (with the usual match-play concessions) for the 32 holes played. Kittleson was five-under himself but I'm not sure anyone could have beaten Lee on this day.

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