

DEAN & DELUCA

Invitational

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Kelly Kraft

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Okay, Kelly Kraft joins us today after a 5-under par 65, one of three players tied for the lead. Kelly, excellent start. If we can get some comments on your round.

KELLY KRAFT: Yeah, thanks. When I kind of got here this morning it was nice and calm out. The day turned into being pretty windy and kind of blustery out there.

I was a happy to get started off well in the wind, and got it to a couple under through however many, five holes, and kind of set the tone for the rest of the round.

THE MODERATOR: Talk about your season up to this point before we open it up to questions.

KELLY KRAFT: Yeah, it's been kind of a little slower start. I had the second place finish in Pebble, and then I kind of fell back a little bit again. Went a little backwards and just fell into a little ball-striking slump there, which I feel like I'm starting to come out of now.

Then my partner and I, Kevin Tway, at Zurich, we had a good week there and finished third.

It's been a little bit of everywhere. Some really good, some not so good. But I felt like whenever I've played well I've been up there and kind of in the hunt.

THE MODERATOR: Great. We'll open it up to questions.

Q. Being from Texas, wind an issue at all?

KELLY KRAFT: Oh, yeah. I mean, it's gusting to 25, 30 out there. Even living in Texas we don't play in that all the time. I've definitely played in it before and played some good rounds of golf in some wind.

When I finished second at Pebble we had a lot of wind the first day. I got through that okay. So today just tried to keep my ball flighted down a little bit and compress it a little better and it worked out.

Q. I was wondering, are you working with Josh, and what's been the biggest thing that's turned your game around?

KELLY KRAFT: Yeah, Josh Gregory is my coach, and



we've really worked on a practice and preparation kind of model, where when I go practice I have a plan now. It's all set up to the parts of my game that I need to work on.

When I go out for three hours, you know, and I'm not chipping that well, he sets up a program for me to go work on the certain types of shots that I'm struggling on. That's been a big help, and one of the reasons why I've had some good tournaments this year for sure.

Q. Kelly, your only other start here was in 2012. Just wondering how much you remember about that week? I think that was your first main cut after you turned pro?

KELLY KRAFT: Yeah, I think you're right.

Q. You kind of had a wild weekend, at least according to the scores.

KELLY KRAFT: I did. I think I made the cut by like one or two, and then I started Saturday off and kind of was towards the back, I don't know, maybe 55th or 60th place, and I opened the front nine with like a 28 or 29. I made everything. It was a lot of fun.

And then I shoot 64 on Saturday and I am in the second or third to the last group. I've never been there before, and it was definitely a big learning experience. I made a bunch of bogeys on Sunday and finished about 50th or so.

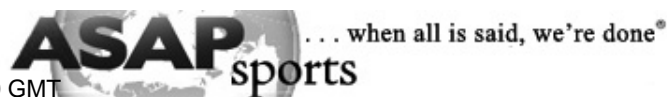
Definitely learned a lot since then and had some good tournaments this year. Whenever I'm up there, I know I can hang.

Q. Obviously having lived here, how many times have you actually played Colonial other than 2012?

KELLY KRAFT: You know, maybe just once or twice a year probably. In college we would come over here once or so a year with the team and play. I've got some buddies that live in Forth Worth, too, so I've been out here. They've been kind enough that when we call they let us come out and play.

I would probably say just about once a year since I was a freshman in college.

Q. I was going to hit you with what Mike just did. Today what worked for you? How comfortable are



you here? Like you said, this is only your fifth competitive round here. How comfortable do you feel in this venue?

KELLY KRAFT: I like golf courses like this. You can't really overpower this golf course. It's a premium on the fairway. When you're in weird spots -- and you're in a lot of weird spots today with the wind, right? Crosswinds and shots over water, it's just not that comfortable of a round in 25-mile-an-hour winds.

But I like the way when you step up on these holes it tells you where to hit it. You can pick a target, and with the winds you can play a little bit of the wind. For the most part these golf holes kind of tell you where to hit it. It's not just all super right in front of you.

You don't have to hit driver everywhere. I hit a lot of 2-irons, 3-woods today and got a lot out of it.

Q. When you shoot a 65 in the afternoon which there is such a higher difference in the stroke average than the morning, how do you put that in perspective? Do you feel like even though you're tied for the lead that your round was maybe a couple strokes better than the morning wave?

KELLY KRAFT: There is no telling. I was in the bad end of the wave last week, too. Couple shots different the first day; went off in the afternoon, same thing about as this week.

Shot 1-over and hit it everywhere. I scrambled pretty well so I thought 1-over was pretty good, but I was in about 50th place.

You know, it's hard to say if I would have played it any better or not. I mean, if you would told me at the start of the day I would shoot a 65 I would have taken it. With no wind.

65 is a good score out of here. Couple more of those and it would be all right.

Q. Kelly, given your relationship with the U.S. Open venue this year, is there any extra motivation for you to qualify for that, and what are your plans to qualify?

KELLY KRAFT: Oh, yeah, 100%. I mean, I'm playing in my sectional qualifier right after the Memorial Tournament up there in Ohio next week. I've never played in a U.S. Open before, but it would be a heck of a way for me to start my first one by qualifying for that one.

Obviously I have a lot of good memories. Actually haven't been back to Erin Hills since I won the Amateur. There is definitely a little added pressure there trying to get back. Hopefully I can overcome that

and play a good couple rounds and get there.

Q. Have there been people picking your brain about Erin Hills?

KELLY KRAFT: Not too much. Couple guys have asked me about the course. For the most part, I mean, some of the guys that are my age, they played that one. It was in 2011, so it was like Jordan Spieth, he played that one. Patrick Rogers and some of those guys, they've already played that event or that venue.

Couple of the older guys maybe have asked me about what type of course it is and I've told them.

Q. What kind of course is it?

KELLY KRAFT: It's hard and fast and it's long. During the U.S. Amateur it played long and hard and very fast. These balls you're hitting drivers and 3-woods, they can potentially run for 60, 80 yards.

I tell people that on paper it looks a lot harder than it really is. You can look at it on paper and say, Man, this thing is 7,900, 8,000 yards. When do you ever play a golf course that is that long?

Not every day you play one that is so firm like that and the ball can roll forever. You can catch some of these hills, and -- I mean, I was I hitting some massive drives out there that week I remember. I hit the ball 300 yards, and when you're getting them out there a little downwind and you land on a sideslope and they're going 380, it's a different game.

So, you know, it's firm and fast and you got to work your ball around the golf course. Not going to fly many balls to the hole. Just like a U.S. Open should be: firm and landing balls on the front of the greens and chasing the pins. Stuff like that.