

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
BLAYNE BARBER
PATTON KIZZIRE
BEN SCHLOTTMAN



Wednesday, July 15, 2015

MODERATOR: I'd like to introduce our three players, all former and a current Auburn golfer. Let's start on our left over here, Blayne Barber, we have Patton Kizzire, and then Ben Schlottman, who is currently a sophomore here at Auburn. All three golfers, well decorated, kind of at different stages of their career. Blayne is a rookie on the PGA TOUR, has three top 10s so far this year. Patton currently is No. 1 on the Web.com Tour money list, which is basically guaranteeing him a PGA TOUR card for next year, and he's playing along with Ben this week on a sponsor invitation from Barbasol.

So we're going to go over here and start with our current PGA TOUR rookie, Blayne, if you will start off, talk about the importance of this week to you, what it means to be right here at home where you got your start in college.

BLAYNE BARBER: Yeah, absolutely. This is great and I think we're all just really grateful that Barbasol chose to pick Auburn as a spot to come and use the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail. They do a great job with promoting golf in Alabama and bringing a lot of tourism and people to the state to play the Trail. This is a great venue. We played out here a decent bit in college for qualifying and whatnot, and it's just cool that Barbasol decided to partner with the TOUR and bring this event here. It's just great to play at a place you're comfortable and somewhere you've been a lot. My wife and I live 10 minutes from here in Auburn so it's nice to stay in my own bed this week and play some golf. Yeah, it's cool. It will be fun to see this and hopefully this is something that continues for years to come.

MODERATOR: Also, why don't you go ahead and talk about your first year on tour so far, your thoughts on that and then your thoughts on this week and what your goal is coming into this week.

BLAYNE BARBER: Yeah, it's been a great experience. It's an adjustment. I had a great year on the Web.com Tour last year and then came out here. I've had a few good weeks, but I don't really feel like I've played that well based off what I would say my expectations are for myself and what I feel I'm capable of. So I've had a good stretch kind of just working on things from, I would say April I had a break with just some of the Masters players, WGC where I had a little bit of a break. This starts a four-week stretch for me and then the Wyndham. So I feel fresh and ready to make a push to the finish for the season and it's nice to start that being at home this week.

MODERATOR: Thank you. Move on to Patton. Let me just read this real quick. You lead the Web.com Tour in scoring average, in birdie average, in all-around ranking, you're fifth in

greens in regulation on the Web.com Tour, sixth in putting average. Just tearing it up, you're a top 5 machine right now and you lead that tour in money right now. Talk a little bit about your thoughts. You're making, I think it's your fourth event on the PGA TOUR, talk about making that switch over. Looks like you're pretty secure with your card for the tour next year. Just talk about how things have been going on the Web.com this year and then coming into this week.

PATTON KIZZIRE: Yeah, first of all I would like to thank Barbasol and the tournament directors and Dr. Bronner for putting all this together and giving me a shot this week. This has been a good year for me. I've got a lot of good buddies out on the Web.com Tour and we just have a lot of fun and try to keep it light. I'm still searching for a win but it's been a really good year so far.

MODERATOR: Also, what have you been doing well -- obviously, according to your stats, a lot of things -- on the Web.com that can carry out here this week?

PATTON KIZZIRE: Nothing in particular, just trying to have a well-rounded game. Something kind of pops up each round or each tournament that I do really well. You know, I would like for everything to work all week, but sometimes it doesn't happen. You've got to have something that kind of saves you, short game, driving, putting. You know, I've just been really consistent trying to handle everything that golf throws at you, that's one of the key things.

MODERATOR: Okay. Thank you. We'll move on to Ben, SEC Freshman of the Year last year, looks like you're on your way to good things. Talk about did you ever think that you would be able to drive a couple miles down the road for your first ever PGA TOUR event?

BEN SCHLOTTMAN: Yeah, definitely didn't think that would happen. Yeah, I mean, so blessed and privileged to be able to do that. I mean, I really never expected until I got the call two weeks ago that I was going to be in.

MODERATOR: Then talk a little bit about how much have you played this course in the last couple years, what you think you'll be able to bring out here to compete this week.

BEN SCHLOTTMAN: Well, I've only played it probably 10 times. We don't play it that much for qualifying. We play it a fair amount because our tournament's out here kind of towards the end of February. The course is so much different, though, from February to now. It's really nice to be able to know the greens pretty well and take advantage of that this week.

Q. You have home course advantage. You mentioned it's different from when you saw it in February. How much help is it going to be for you knowing that you know the course more than anybody else because nobody else has played this?

BLAYNE BARBER: There's an advantage maybe just from a comfort level because you've hit it in all different spots, you've missed it in different places, you've shot good scores, but

really for me I think it's more just being at home, being around my family. At this level everyone's so good that some guy gets hot, comes to a course he's never seen, plays one practice round and shoots 20-under. It's not like it's a distinct advantage above everyone else, but it certainly helps and it just brings a comfort level. In golf, when you're comfortable you're going to play well.

PATTON KIZZIRE: There are places out here that you can miss the green and actually be better off than hitting the green, but the key is going to be getting in the fairway. That way you can control your iron shots, the distance. I've been telling a couple people, the ball's either going to be getting closer as you watch it or getting further, one or the other, because the greens do have some nice slope. Knowing how to use those slopes is going to be a big advantage, and like Blayne says, being at home per se and having a lot of family and friends and support will be huge.

BEN SCHLOTTMAN: Yeah, I mean, anytime you play a golf course you know well, it's an advantage but you still have to hit the shots. It's a slight advantage. I mean, I think it's more of an advantage for me just because being my first tour event, I'm going to be feeling a lot of different things, so to be able to be comfortable with the course will help me a lot.

Q. How much has the other golfers been kind of asking you guys for tips or tricks and have you actually been telling them the truth?

BLAYNE BARBER: Well, I don't want to steer anybody wrong, but most of the tips are on what restaurants to go to. I've been giving away a few of my favorite local spots. But golf course wise, everybody's out there trying to learn it. You know, I'm still learning it. I actually haven't played the course since they switched from bent to bermuda, which has been probably four or five years. The greens are great, the golf course is in great shape, they added some tees, so I'm still learning it. I might give a little insight, but hold most of it to myself.

Q. There's no question this is a football town. Do you think an event like this here in the Auburn, Opelika area will spur more interest in golf?

BLAYNE BARBER: Yeah, I think you have a lot -- you even have a lot of football fans coming to game weekends and go play golf. That's what they do, especially if you have a night game. If you try to get a tee time in the morning, you can't do it. I think it just brings more interest into the city at a different time of year as we're kind of leading up to football season and leading up to that. I think you have a lot of people that are football fans that play golf, but it just brings some more interest at an earlier time of year, which is good.

PATTON KIZZIRE: He's right, it is almost football season but it's nice to bring golf to Alabama. We've never really had a PGA TOUR event here and I know everybody's excited. It's new, it's fresh. Barbasol, you know, stepped up and Dr. Bronner, the RTJ, I think having such a traveling fan base of Auburn and Alabama, there's a lot of good courses all around the state, Robert Trent Jones Trail. So I think getting a little bit of exposure with the RTJ I

think will help put -- getting a lot of play and a little bit of exposure for the Trail itself.

Q. (Question about the heat.)

BEN SCHLOTTMAN: Well, I'm from North Carolina so I'm not really used to this type of heat, but when we got down here last fall, it was pretty hot. You've got to drink a lot of water. I think everyone out here's going to know that pretty well. If you're not used to sweating this much and like holding onto your club, I guess that can get a little tricky.

PATTON KIZZIRE: It's even hot in here.

Q. For Blayne and Patton, both of you guys have been (inaudible,) he's the first Auburn freshman ever to be named All-American. What can a tournament and event like this be for him to help him get where you guys are?

BLAYNE BARBER: Yeah, to have -- I didn't play my first event at the tour level, I played a Web.com event after I graduated, that's when I turned pro. So to have that experience at a place you're comfortable, we were talking, Ben and I played on Monday and I was telling his dad that it's just great to come somewhere where he knows where everything is. He knows where the driving range is, where the putting green is, so it gives him a level of comfort and then you can go out and play and see how your game stacks up against some of the best players in the world. So it's going to be just a great learning experience and hopefully that's what he takes from it. Whether it's good or bad, if you come out here and you see ways that you can compete or you see ways that you need to improve, it just gives him that opportunity to have a litmus test as to where he is and where he's going to go. He's just a freshman and he had a great season last year for Auburn, so he's got a lot of good things ahead of him.

Q. This is for Ben. What have you taken away from the two Auburn players that you got a chance to kind of, I guess, (inaudible) a bit more than usual?

BEN SCHLOTTMAN: Yeah, I've been around Blayne a fair amount this year. This is my first time meeting Patton actually. It's been nice to just kind of watch how they practice. Even out at the facility sometimes, it's nice to kind of see how they practice, how they do things and how they're getting better so I can kind of apply that to my game.

MODERATOR: Thanks for your time, guys, best of luck this week.