

# Travelers Championship

Tuesday, June 21, 2022

TPC River Highlands

Cromwell, Connecticut, USA

## Cole Hammer

### Press Conference



**TRAVELERS**  
CHAMPIONSHIP

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Cole Hammer to the interview room here at the 2022 Travelers Championship. Cole, you're playing on a sponsor exemption this week, the tournament has a great tradition of offering sponsor exemptions to young up and coming players like yourself. Just give us some comments on how you found out about that sponsor exemption and what you're looking forward to this week?

COLE HAMMER: Well I remember -- I've been watching the PGA TOUR on TV for a long time. I mean it's been my dream to one day compete out here and this is one of the earliest tournaments that I remember watching. I remember thinking, man, that golf course looks absolutely perfect. And the atmosphere, I mean somehow there's always dramatic finish here.

This tournament's been known to give exemptions to younger players starting out on their careers and I'm very fortunate to be given one as I'm embarking on mine. So it's a really special opportunity.

THE MODERATOR: You made your professional debut last week on the Korn Ferry TOUR at the Wichita Open. Just some thoughts on how -- I know you missed the cut, sadly, but just some thoughts on how that went as your first start as a professional.

COLE HAMMER: It was a fun week down in Wichita. I mean I learned a lot about myself and how I need to prepare for tournaments. I've been in college for four years and basically been told how to prepare every week. And now that I'm on my own I need to, well last week was a good way for me to figure out what works for me and what doesn't.

It was great to finally compete as a pro. It's what I dreamed about for a long time. And at the end of the day it's just golf and I'm going to have fun with it.

THE MODERATOR: I did notice that you started with a double bogey but bounced back with two birdies the first three holes that you played. How was that opening tee

shot? Did you have any nerves, was it a different feeling at all?

COLE HAMMER: I was definitely nervous. I always get a little nervous. Yeah, it was an unfortunate double bogey start. But I think it made me just mad enough to go ahead and birdie the next two. Then I settled down after that.

So I'm glad I got that start under my belt before coming here. I feel like I've gotten myself into pressure situation now so I'm excited to use that experience.

THE MODERATOR: You finished up at University of Texas with the NAAs and a really good performance recently before turning pro. Just what was it like leaving college with your friends going different ways and starting basically a new career?

COLE HAMMER: Well, it was an incredible way to go out with that win and really put a bow on the four years. Man, I couldn't have had anymore fun than I did in Austin. What a great place and a great team and a great school.

It's weird now that all my friends are, some are working and some of my teammates are playing professionally and it's just a whole new world now. But I think I'll stay close with everybody.

And I'm just so proud to have gotten a degree from the University of Texas, that's something I always wanted to do. Growing up in Houston it was a pretty easy decision for me to go to Texas. Now that I'm on the other side of it, it's cool to be a Texas Ex.

**Q. There's a cliché in sports that you don't want to change things that have given you success in the past, that got you to where you are. But what would you anticipate in the next couple of years you're going to need to do or to improve your game as it stands today so that you can contend on a regular basis at this level?**

COLE HAMMER: Yeah, I really believe in myself and my game as it is right now. I feel like I developed a lot in college. Physically I've got a lot bigger since when I was in



high school. Obviously still not a big person by any means.

But I don't feel like I'm lacking per se in any part of the game. Could always find a few more fairways and I think that is going to be crucial. You look at stats and driving the ball long and straight is one of the most important ones. So that's always something that I'm looking to improve on. I feel like can I use my other strengths as well, even if I do miss a few fairways.

So there's always things to improve on, that's the great thing about golf and we'll just take it as it comes, I guess.

THE MODERATOR: I think you've got a number of starts on the Korn Ferry TOUR through the PGA TOUR University Velocity Global ranking. I think you finished fifth on that. So you got the summer to play on the Korn Ferry TOUR. Can you talk to the importance of that program and paying attention to the rankings while it was happening and how important it was for you to perform towards the end.

COLE HAMMER: I wish I could put into words how important it that program is for us. Obviously it wasn't a thing until two years ago, but to be a part of like the second graduating class, if you will, is really cool.

It's nerve wracking coming down the stretch. It had a -- I haven't been in Q-School before but it felt like it a little bit, considering I was jockeying with a few other guys at NAAs. Luckily I snuck into the top 5 and have those Korn Ferry starts.

I mean, as we all know, it's just so hard to get out on TOUR and to have a place to play directly coming out of college is so nice. The TOUR's, I think this program is going to keep flourishing over the next few years and giving the top college players a place to play right away is incredible.

THE MODERATOR: I'm going to say that this is not your first PGA TOUR start, I think this is your eighth. You've had some experience playing as an amateur, we all know that. I think you're the third youngest at 15 to play in the U.S. Open at Chambers Bay. I think you played in, what, three or?

COLE HAMMER: Three U.S. Opens.

THE MODERATOR: What have you learned from playing in those major championships from 15 to recently?

COLE HAMMER: Each one's been totally different. When I was 15 I mean I was a kid, I didn't know what I was doing. It was like a circus. Walking out on the range with guys like Tiger played, Rory and I was in complete awe. There was a few fairways I couldn't reach. So it was just all about

the experience.

When I was 15 I was like, you know, I could win this thing. But I think I quickly realized or now I do realize that I didn't have a fighting chance.

But anyways, moving on from Chambers Bay, going to Winged Foot, that was another good experience. It was COVID at that time so there were no spectators out there, so it felt a little different. Didn't quite feel as if like a normal major. But I learned a lot playing with Alex Noren and Matthias Schwab and they were great.

I just feel like I learned that it's impossible to play perfect golf. Sometimes a bogey's a good score. Letting myself really make a couple mistakes and still bounce back from that was something that I learned, because I didn't let myself do that that week.

And Torrey Pines this past year I realized that I can be aggressive at certain times versus always being conservative.

**Q. Viktor Hovland was also a sponsor's exemption into this tournament a few years ago and he played a number of practice round and really leaned on, he told me, several of the guys at Oklahoma State before he came out. How much have you spoken to or talked with, practiced with some of the guys from the University of Texas before coming out here?**

COLE HAMMER: I mean, I played practice round with Scottie at Torrey Pines last year and Royal St. George's and he was a senior when I was a senior in high school. So I got to come and he was like our host for my official visit.

So I spent quite a bit of time around Scottie and he's been a great guy to talk to, very involved in College Golf Fellowship and his relationship with Christ and that's something that is really important to me. So I've able to talk to him about that and just what it's like to be on the PGA TOUR and on the day-to-day basis.

And then you got guys like Jordan Spieth, who obviously is a legend from Texas and, I mean, he was really the first Longhorn alumni that I talked to at Chambers Bay, took me under his wing when I was 15 and I still talk to him to this day. So he's been awesome.

Dylan Frittelli, Beau Hossler, and then there's other guys that I'm forgetting, but they're always out at UT Golf Club practicing with us. So it's great to have Longhorns around and it's like family.

THE MODERATOR: Just finally before we let you go, you mentioned that you watched this tournament on TV growing up and now you're finally here. I think this is your first trip to the site. What was your first impression when you saw the setup and the range, which looks pretty impressive.

COLE HAMMER: The range is unbelievable. Might be the best range I've ever seen in my life.

The golf course is different than I thought it was or thought it would be on TV. I don't think TV does the undulations justice. I got on the first tee box and I couldn't believe how downhill it was. Then the second hole is straight back up the hill. Sometimes, unfortunately, TV doesn't show that just because of where the cameras are. But the golf course is in perfect shape.

And that back nine is such a fun finish. 15 through 18 or really 13 through 18, there's just so much that can happen. No wonder there's so many fireworks every year.

THE MODERATOR: Pretty happy with your form? What should we look for when we watch you play this week.

COLE HAMMER: Hopefully we can look for a lot of birdies. But, yeah, I'm looking forward to it. It should be a good time.

THE MODERATOR: We appreciate your time and good luck this week.

COLE HAMMER: Thank you very much.

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