

U.S. Amateur Championship

Friday, August 13, 2021
Oakmont, Pennsylvania, USA
Oakmont Country Club

James Piot

Quick Quotes

Q. So let's just talk first about the end of that match, winning the last three holes.

JAMES PIOT: Yeah, I mean, at that point Matt hit a couple errant tee balls and I put it in great places off the tee where I knew if I hit a good lag putt in there I would have a shot at winning the hole.

So just stayed steady and stuck to the process.

Q. And tell us about winning the last couple holes, how you did it.

JAMES PIOT: Yeah, actually started on 14. He hit one in there to about 10 feet and had a birdie look, and I had about a 25-, 30-footer that was a slider and one of those you don't expect to make and it, and just dropped in for me.

That was a big momentum thing when you're thinking you might be going 1-down and you're rolling even.

And 15 he just pulled the drive off the tee. I hit the fairway, and once you get in those church pew bunkers, I mean, it's almost an auto bogey unless someone makes an up and down from 60 yards.

I got a nice 7-iron in there to about 35 feet and just lagged it up there a foot, and that was good enough to get the hole done.

16, I put a 4-iron on the green, front left corner, and he hit it in that front right bunker. He hit a great shot. Just ended up a few yards short and rolled back into the bunker and it took him two to get out to where by the time he hit his putts he already said yours is good. It was pretty stress-free there.

17 just hit a great drive on the front corner of the green. He put in in that right bunker and hit a good bunker shot to feet eight and just rolled his putt barely by when I had a three-footer.



So it was a stress-free ending, but obviously when you're thinking an U.S. Am there is no such thing as stress-free, so it was a cool experience.

Q. What's your excitement level making the semifinals?

JAMES PIOT: I'm pretty stoked right now. I know you guys don't see it, but more work to be done tomorrow and just keep thinking about the future.

Q. How tough was kind of the -- after the 11th hole when he went in for about 20 minutes?

JAMES PIOT: Yeah, it was about 15 minutes. At that point he wasn't feeling too well from the heat and stuff like that. Had to step off. You realize some things are bigger than golf, and just make sure he's feeling all right.

It was good to see he's up and back at it. Obviously it killed some momentum as far as when you're waiting on someone. He had an opportunity to win that hole with a really good birdie look from six feet; just missed it.

So he got one back the hole after and there was some momentum rolling his way. Happened to hit some good shots and get it done.

Q. What did you do during that 15 minutes?

JAMES PIOT: Yeah, I was kind of hanging around by him just under the tree there, just seeing what's going on, the situation. Just staying patient. Obviously, like I said, things are more important in life than just golf sometimes.

Just making sure he was all right.

Q. You mentioned your assistant coach is on the bag and he made a run to the Mid Am. Has he given you any advice about making a deep run, how to handle the mental aspect and also the physical energy aspect of it?

JAMES PIOT: He's been good. The only thing he's really said is just keep rotating, which is kind of my thing. You get tired. The legs go.



Other than that, he's just been there shot by shot. Really kind of kept it light, joking around on the course and stuff like that.

So it's been fun. Just staying in the moment.

Q. How has been the stamina of today in general, the week? A lot of stop, start.

JAMES PIOT: Yeah, today I definitely felt it the most that last match. Matt obviously felt it as well just as far as getting out of the gate he hit some drives really far off the grid.

So it was both of us weren't having our best stuff that whole 18. It was a battle the whole ride. You're just running on adrenaline, so it was -- you don't think too much until you're done.

Q. With the weather, how much does the course play differently from what you expected or maybe earlier in the week in the practice rounds?

JAMES PIOT: So I actually played it in qualifying when it was still firm and fast. I got done with the first 18 holes and I told my buddy on the putting green who was about to go, This is the hardest place I've ever played, and conditions being perfect.

As the week has gone on you get the greens wet, obviously makes it a lot easier. You can access the pins more. It feel like if you got a shot hole-high beginning of the week it was a miracle just because you judged the distance and the bounce correctly.

Now you can just land it right on the flag. The winds obviously make it a lot harder out here. You got a lot of elevation, so it's definitely a bigger judgment call than just playing a flat golf course with some wind.

Definitely a lot of mental thinking out there.

Q. This week, how much of a confidence booster has it been, and did you struggle at all maybe as a junior golfer or earlier in college with confidence thinking that you're elite just like all those other guys?

JAMES PIOT: This week has definitely proven a lot to me. I think the biggest thing for me was the Western Am a few weeks ago. I made it into the round of 16, which not too many guys have done, especially from the state of Michigan.

There has not been a lot of guys who have made it big in national ranks, so it's definitely -- playing an event like this

just kind of convinces myself that you're good enough to play here and you belong here.

So that's been a mental battle I had as a junior golfer, but as time got on over college I definitely started to improve myself, and I feel like confidence comes with better scores and I shot a lot of good round this summer.

So it's definitely a momentum track right now. Just won a tournament last week in Michigan, so was definitely feeling really good coming in it here. Just take it one shot at a time?

Q. Which tournament did you win?

JAMES PIOT: It's called the GAM Championship.

Q. Okay. Yep. Kind of like the state --

JAMES PIOT: Yep, yep. Yeah, kind of.

Q. And adding onto that, you got to the round of 32 last year in this championship. Does that help you relax into this one knowing what it's going to be like already?

JAMES PIOT: A little bit, yeah. I think it helped just getting settled into match play this year and just knowing I'm capable of winning at match play and just telling yourself you can beat anyone on any given day. It's 18 holes. No matter how good they are, you got to show up and bring it.

Q. How much were you recruited by other schools? Michigan State the biggest offer you had?

JAMES PIOT: So when Michigan State offered me I committed right away. I was looking at a lot of SEC, ACC schools as well, but I was just a little late to the recruiting process. I kind of started looking when I was a junior.

So I was a top 100 ranked junior golfer my -- I want to say my junior and senior year, maybe sophomore, too. I was always that guy that was good but a little on the bubble for those schools, so going to Michigan State just seemed like a school I could play right away. It was close to home.

I knew a lot of guys on the team so felt like family, and I just loved it and developed as a player since I've been there.

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