

Travelers Championship

Thursday, June 23, 2022

TPC River Highlands

Cromwell, Connecticut, USA

Benjamin James

Quick Quotes



TRAVELERS CHAMPIONSHIP

Q. How do you feel? I know you probably would have liked to have a better score, but to get it out of the way, first round, how are you feeling?

BENJAMIN JAMES: Oh, it's so cool. That was the coolest thing I've ever done by far. Just to be out here was so special. It exceeded my expectations. I was more nervous than I thought and kind of got off to a rocky start, but I was really happy with my back nine. Played a really good back nine. Got a lot of momentum for that going into tomorrow.

Q. I noticed on the first tee you took a couple of deep breaths, closed your eyes a moment. So it was a little bit more nerve-racking than you anticipated?

BENJAMIN JAMES: Oh, a hundred percent. It was awesome having all those crowds out there. It was so cool having everyone supporting me. So lucky to have all those people with me and rooting for me. Just so cool. Coolest thing I've ever done by far and so blessed to have the opportunity to be here.

Q. Everybody talks about how it's different being in the arena. How was it different being in the arena and how difficult was it to adjust?

BENJAMIN JAMES: It was hard. It was very hard. I mean, honestly I did better than I thought. I really did. I'll take 72 for my first TOUR round. Again, I played a great back nine. I was more nervous than I thought for sure, and that kind of showed early in the round.

After about hole 5 I settled down, just kind of knew what was going on and knew what to expect and went even par after my first four holes. Not bad at all.

Q. What was the hardest part?

BENJAMIN JAMES: Just everything going on. There's just a lot going on. Crowd was awesome. It was great at times. Pretty tough on the first tee shot. Never hit a ball in

front of that many people.

But again, it was so cool. Like that was the coolest thing I've ever done by far, and I'm just so happy to do it. It's awesome.

Q. To birdie 13, one of the hardest holes out here, did that calm your nerves even more?

BENJAMIN JAMES: That was a great drive. A great second actually. I kind of one-handed it, and I didn't know if I got over the water, but got over the water and had a nice two-putt, and again, played very, very solidly on the back. 13 was a very good hole and had a lot of chances, too. Didn't really make anything. The greens were a little slower than I thought, as well, but again, great two-putt on 18 for sure. It was a tough one. It was about 60 feet, so I'll take that.

Q. How cool does it feel to have a better score than Jordan Spieth, a better score than Jason Day, a better score than Joaquin Niemann? I know it's only one day, but something you'll look back on and say, hey --

BENJAMIN JAMES: Well, it was a good start for my first round on TOUR. Not a bad start. I'm sure there was a lot worse. But it was awesome. Again, can't thank Nathan and Andy enough for having me out here. This was, again, once in a lifetime opportunity. I'm so thankful to be here because that was so cool. That was awesome.

Q. What's the plan now?

BENJAMIN JAMES: I might go hit some drivers. Actually I was more worried about my putting, and I putted fine. My driver kind of let me down, and it's my best club in my bag, so I might go hit a few more and go eat and see everyone.

Q. How cool was it to see so many familiar faces in that gallery that was following you? Does that help or does that increase the nerve-racking part of the game?

BENJAMIN JAMES: Once I got settled in, it helped a ton. It was awesome seeing teachers, friends, family. It was so cool. Again, I can't even express how happy I was just to



be out there playing and learning for sure.

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