

# U.S. Open Championship 2022

Monday, June 13, 2022

Brookline, Massachusetts, USA

The Country Club

## Michael Thorbjornsen

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome back to the interview area. We are joined by Michael Thorbjornsen. Michael, obviously a lot of attention this week given you're a local kid. Talk about what it meant to qualify for this U.S. Open.

MICHAEL THORBJORNSEN: Oh, it definitely meant a lot. I think it was five years ago or so when I found out that U.S. Open was going to be played here, and at that moment I made it my goal to qualify for this event, and then college season didn't end on such a high note, but having that qualifier a couple of days after NAAs definitely motivated me to come out and play some good golf, and fortunately made it through in an 8-for-3 playoff.

THE MODERATOR: Coming out of a college season, how do you prepare for a major championship like this?

MICHAEL THORBJORNSEN: I'm not sure. I think the best way is to just take it as just another event. I'm not trying to change too much with my game plan, how I practice, so just trying to take it as just another Am event, another college event.

**Q. What's your history with this golf course? How many times have you played it, et cetera, et cetera?**

MICHAEL THORBJORNSEN: I've played here one time around six years ago, the Championship Course. Definitely different than how they're setting up the course this week, but I've heard amazing things about this place. Played nine holes yesterday, 18 today.

It's a very difficult course, but it's manageable. I don't think there's going to be any extremely low scores, but you can definitely make par on every one.

**Q. What was it like to come out here with the whole entourage? You had probably the biggest group following you on the course. On your bag is your best friend and high school friend here, Drew. What was it like having everyone from Wellesley come and support you?**

MICHAEL THORBJORNSEN: It felt great. It feels like a

home event. That's why it feels really good just having all the support. It's kind of nerve-wracking out there, just playing in the U.S. Open, especially 50 minutes away from my house. All the help, all the support definitely helps a lot, yeah.

**Q. I guess, first off, growing up 15 minutes from here, what took you so long to get out here and play, and then secondly, how did you view this course as a kid? Especially considering that you had never played it up until a few years ago or whatever?**

MICHAEL THORBJORNSEN: For that first part, why it took so long is have you heard of The Country Club? I mean, Tom Brady tried to become a member here. I think it took him a long time. I'm not even sure if he actually did become a member. But I would have loved to have played here as many times as I can, but here I am now able to play a couple of times before the tournament starts.

I feel like it's definitely helped a little bit.

What was the second part?

**Q. Just the mystique of this course as growing up as a kid and basically being outside the gates for so long.**

MICHAEL THORBJORNSEN: Yeah. It feels really cool to be on property. Again, I've only been here one time before. I got to see the course one time.

I've had a couple of dinners here. One of my good old friends from middle school is a member here, so we've had a couple of nice dinners, gone to the pool a couple of times.

Now I know when people are talking about how cool it is -- I think it was the 1999 Ryder Cup, that whole experience. I was definitely too young -- or I wasn't even born yet (laughter), but, yeah, it feels really cool to be here.

**Q. Obviously, the focus this week is the U.S. Open, but you have the Monday qualifier, you have this. Next week you're in the field at the Northeast Amateur at Wannamoisett. Just talk about how you balance such**

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**a busy golf schedule. Obviously, take one event at a time, but tell me how you balance all the golf.**

MICHAEL THORBJORSEN: I think college definitely helps with that. We have tournaments every, I think, two, three weeks or so, especially during the spring season.

Just really learning -- I guess now being in the summer I don't really have to worry about school so much, but really making sure I take care of my body. I'm kind of struggling with some wrist injuries right now. Going to the physio lab there helps a lot. I've been in there every single day. Maybe been in there longer than I have been on the course practicing.

Yeah, just taking it day by day and just making sure everything is looking good for the next one.

**Q. After you qualified for the U.S. Open, Golf Champ put up a side-by-side with you and Francis Ouimet. You are both 20-year-old amateurs, defending Mass Amateur champions, and now you are playing at the U.S. Open at The Country Club. How much are you familiar with Ouimet's story, and do you feel like you may channel some of that energy this week?**

MICHAEL THORBJORSEN: Definitely. My caddie and I, we went to the merchandise tent on Thursday or so, and we bought matching T-shirts. I think it was 1913 Francis -- it was a silhouette of Francis and his caddie, Eddie. Definitely trying to channel that energy this week.

I've watched "The Greatest Game Ever Played" maybe eight times. One of my favorite movies.

I think it's really cool the position that I'm in and how it emulates Francis a little bit, but I mean, I'm a different person than him. I'm going to try to do the same thing that he did and just hope for the best.

**Q. Having played in the U.S. Open back in 2019, what changes do you hope to make this year? Do you think that helps you knowing what to expect at all?**

MICHAEL THORBJORSEN: Yeah, it definitely helps. The crowds are crazy. Being in Boston right now with the Finals and the Celtics playing, the crowds are definitely going to be rowdy as well.

Yeah, in 2019 I was 17. I guess I didn't really know what was going on then. I'm looking back at it now thinking, how did I get through that week?

Yeah, I've definitely learned a lot. My game has definitely gotten a lot better. I'm just excited to go out and play on

Thursday.

**Q. With this week and next week, how did it change your summer schedule?**

MICHAEL THORBJORSEN: It changed a pretty good amount. I was going to play in the Sunnehanna. I think it will start in a couple of days, and then just recently got into the Travelers, which was great news.

So we'll no longer be playing in the Northeast Am.

Yeah, I'm just extremely grateful for these two opportunities to play against the best players in the world, and just really looking forward to start on Thursday.

**Q. Where does the summer take you after that?**

MICHAEL THORBJORSEN: Directly from the Travelers, I think I fly out to London for the British Open qualifier, and then that night I fly to Geneva for Arnold Palmer Cup, and then after that I basically have all of July off. Again, dealing with some wrist injuries, so hopefully that time will allow to recover a little bit.

Then, if I do qualify for the Open, have that in July, but other than that, that's about it until the Western Am and the U.S. Am in August.

**Q. So I got to walk with your family a little bit today. Really nice to see that your dad is here. It's been three years since you've seen him. Can you talk a little bit about that?**

MICHAEL THORBJORSEN: Yeah. It's been really good. He is right there. It's been three years since we've been together. He is my coach. We do the best that we can being a couple thousand miles apart.

I think it was at the U.S. Am in 2019 at Pinehurst was the last time I saw him, so it's really good to have you out here, Dad. Thanks for coming.

**Q. Quickly, which wrist is it?**

MICHAEL THORBJORSEN: It's my left one. My scaphoid right here, yeah.

**Q. Then, secondly, just kind of maybe give us a little bit of background between you and your caddie's relationship. Kind of when you guys met, what makes you guys friends, and what made you decide to ultimately pick him to loop for you?**

MICHAEL THORBJORSEN: We started becoming



friends I think in seventh grade or so. It's actually kind of funny. I think it was his mom that almost set up a "play date" for us to play at TPC Boston, and I guess from there kind of just kicked it off.

We've been extremely close ever since. We went to IMG Academy together freshman year of high school, and I decided to stay two more years after that. He came up back to Wellesley, Massachusetts, for high school there. We still stayed very close, hanging out in the summer during breaks.

Then last year was the first time that he has caddied for me. Had some pretty good success. Caddied for me at the Western Am. Won that together, which is great. Made a pretty good run at the U.S. Am as well. Yeah, we're just trying to keep the momentum going.

THE MODERATOR: Michael, thanks for your time. Good luck this week.

MICHAEL THORBJORNSEN: Thank you for having me.

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