

# Travelers Championship

Tuesday, June 23, 2026

TPC River Highlands

Cromwell, Connecticut, USA

## Ben James

### Quick Quotes

THE MODERATOR: Ben, you're a Connecticut native and sponsor exemption playing at the Travelers Championship. What does it mean to be playing this week?

BEN JAMES: Yeah, it means a lot to be in my home state, being back here. It was nice to sleep in my own bed last night. Just really looking forward to the week, seeing family and friends, and it's nice to play some golf in front of them.

**Q. It's been a busy stretch. Just made your professional debut at Canada, prior to that wrapping up your college career and played in the U.S. Open last week. How is your game feeling, and how have the past few weeks been?**

BEN JAMES: Yeah, I'm learning. Not just on the golf course. A lot of logistics going on being a professional. But out here having fun.

Shinnecock was awesome. Canada was great. Nice being in the mix for a couple days. Yeah, just looking forward to the week and really excited to be teeing it up.

**Q. When you think about the idea of you playing Travelers as a pro, what does that mean to you, and is this something that you've been dreaming about for years that's finally led to this moment?**

BEN JAMES: Yeah, well, am or pro doesn't really matter to me. Playing out here four years ago was pretty special, my first PGA TOUR event being here, had just graduated high school. That was really special. So I can't thank Nathan and Andy enough. But pro, am, same thing to me; it's just golf.

Again, going to be a really cool experience. I'll have a lot of fun. Have a lot of friends and family coming, so it's going to be a great week.

**Q. What have the last couple of weeks been like for you? Has it all been a whirlwind, a blur? Was it something that you had some control of the planning**



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**of, or were you just kind of riding the wave?**

BEN JAMES: Yeah, I would say riding the wave is a good term for it. It was nice playing well in nationals, getting the card locked up. Came back and did Open qualifying; was nice to get in there. Played RBC; played pretty good there. Played nice last week.

We're just riding the wave. That's it. Hopefully keep it going.

**Q. You mentioned playing here as an am. Obviously might not necessarily think you can win the tournament, but you've been playing really well. Now as a professional can you sit here and say, hey, I can win my hometown tournament?**

BEN JAMES: Yeah, I've got asked that question a lot. Yeah, I don't focus any week on winning or losing or how I do. Just focus on just getting better, whether it's preparation, in the gym, how the weeks go, because they're all different and I'm still learning. Just looking forward to having fun and just learning as much as I can.

**Q. What have your experiences on this course taught you?**

BEN JAMES: Yeah, people go low. You've got to make birdies. Pretty simple. The score is going to be somewhere in the 20-unders, especially with all this rain, so it's probably just going to be a birdie-fest.

**Q. Is it like a shock coming from Shinnecock to here? You just played nine; from Sunday to now, how different were the conditions?**

BEN JAMES: Yeah, I was pretty stressed over every golf shot at Shinnecock because you can make an 8 really fast if you hit one off line. The rough here is not too bad right now. I'm sure they won't cut it. The greens are super good. It's nice, but just two different styles of golf.

**Q. What's the outreach from Milford been, and can you feel that? Are you excited seeing some familiar faces here in addition to family?**

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BEN JAMES: Yeah, it's going to be great. All my buddies are super excited to come from high school, and I don't get to see them too often, being at UVA. So just really excited to spend it with them, my close family. My grandmother doesn't come out to too many tournaments, so she'll be out here.

Just happy to be here. It's a bonus for sure.

**Q. Obviously you're still trying to make your way, but have you thought about some of the kids from your high school or from back at Milford that want to play on the TOUR someday? Have you thought about the impact that you could potentially have on some kids back home?**

BEN JAMES: Yeah, you never know who you're going to impact. Regardless if you have a bad round, you've always got to sign a ball, got to sign whatever. You never know who you're going to impact and never know what it could mean to another person.

I always try to do my best just to be nice to everyone because you never know what that could do to someone.

**Q. How nice is it or how different is it that golf is your job now, you don't have to worry about school, you don't have to worry about too many other things? This is your job now; how different is that for you?**

BEN JAMES: Yeah, it's nice. I don't call it a job, but I'm very lucky that I get to go play golf every day. But it's nice. I'll still think about having an assignment do, and I don't. It's been 20 years of thinking about homework, so it's nice not having to do that, I'll tell you that. But I do miss the college team camaraderie that we had for sure. Actually I text and call my UVA coach more than I did probably in four years now, so it's funny how that works. Yeah, two different things.

But I loved my time at UVA.

**Q. Did you get a chance to talk to Tiger Woods today or this week? I didn't know if you had ever met him before, but he was here this morning.**

BEN JAMES: I was sleeping in my bed in Milford. I wasn't here.

**Q. You played with Denny; he's a UVA guy. Did he give you any tips today on how to be a professional?**

BEN JAMES: Yeah, I'll text him from time to time. Today we were just messing around, having a good time. It was

great to see him. I haven't seen him in a while, so it was great to see him just hanging out. We're competitors now, too. He's been great. Any question I have, he'll give me a pretty fast response. He's been great, and coals has been great, Jimmy Stanger, Denny have all been great to me.

**Q. Obviously you're focusing on being out here and doing your thing this week, but the breaking news this morning about some of the changes coming to the TOUR, have you had a chance to see any of them or learn about them, and what do you think as a guy who's trying to make it out there?**

BEN JAMES: Yeah, it's not up to me. I don't know. Like I said, I wasn't here. I guess Tiger was here that I heard. But I don't know. I'm just here to play golf.

**Q. You said that the U.S. Open, I think it was on the telecast, you said after having a 36-hole lead, you learned something on that Saturday that you took away from your third round. What was that?**

BEN JAMES: Yeah, I mean, I called it that I played soft. That's my terminology of it. But it was really cool. I tried to take everything in because I didn't really expect to be in the final group, I would say, honestly. So that was really cool. But I think I played a little soft. Definitely tried to figure out for the weekend at Shinnecock how to stay more focused and just worry about the shot ahead of me.

It's a cool learning experience. It was amazing to be in that position, but I definitely learned a lot.

**Q. Is soft less focused or is soft defensive, less aggressive?**

BEN JAMES: Sure, I guess. It makes sense, the word in my own head. I would call it soft.

**Q. Do you feel like when you were in college if you had a 36-hole lead it was easier to protect a lead and maybe you came in with a similar mindset and it's just different on the PGA TOUR because guys have more firepower to go low? Is that an accurate assumption?**

BEN JAMES: I mean, I've played soft in college, I would say, too, at some points. I didn't play that bad, I just hit a lot of good putts that didn't go in and just was missing fairways, and you couldn't do that there.

**Q. You mentioned Andy earlier; you're playing on a sponsor exemption this week. When you look at the list of Travelers' sponsor exemptions, they've had a pretty good eye for talent, Rickie Fowler, Justin Thomas, Patrick Cantlay, Wyndham Clark, et cetera.**



**What does it mean to add your name to that list?**

BEN JAMES: Yeah, it means a lot, especially to get my third. It's really cool, and I can't thank them and Travelers as an organization for giving me that exemption. It really means a lot.

I know my family is probably doing our best to bring as many people out here as possible.

**Q. I think I saw one thing, obviously a great career at UVA, but growing up were you a UConn fan? Were you ever verbally committed there?**

BEN JAMES: I was, yeah, and I'm still a big UConn basketball fan. I like UConn over UVA. Still a Huskies fan.

**Q. What's your thought on Hurley saying he wanted to play a basketball game at the White House?**

BEN JAMES: I mean, I don't know. I would like that. That would be pretty cool to watch.

**Q. What would Hurley say when you told him that you played soft at the Canadian Open?**

BEN JAMES: He'd probably tell me to wake up at 3:00 a.m. and go run stairs. Probably. And to not do it again or you'll be benched.

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