

# U.S. Amateur Championship

Friday, August 18, 2023

Cherry Hills Village, Colorado, USA

Cherry Hills Country Club

## Neal Shipley

### Quick Quotes

**Q. What's the feeling like to be in the semifinals now? Your summer has been so hot.**

NEAL SHIPLEY: I mean, it's pretty surreal, honestly. You've got to beat so many good players, and I've had a lot of really tough matches. This one is pretty special because I started out kind of slow and had to claw back. Got up, and then he got me, and then just kind of won those two near the end.

It's tough. You've just got to stay mentally in it the whole time. I'm just so happy to be here, honestly. Just getting here is fun, but getting to the semifinals is just awesome, and having a chance to win tomorrow for a lot of really good opportunities is great.

**Q. What's flipped the switch for you this summer that you're able to do so well in all these big amateur championships?**

NEAL SHIPLEY: I've always had a lot of self-confidence in myself and my game, but I think my game finally started to catch up to that confidence. Fake-it-till-you-make-it type of deal. My ball-striking this spring was phenomenal, but I really putted terribly.

Finally turned that around, got my speed putting in check, and I think that's been actually a strength of my game this week. I'm not leaving myself a lot of work after my first putt on most holes. I think it's taken a lot of stress off my game to know I can hit it to 45 feet and two-putt and make a lot of easy pars that way.

**Q. Do you think having been a caddie for some summers has helped you as a player?**

NEAL SHIPLEY: No. I mean, it's just a good opportunity to get out there, be able to play Oakmont on Mondays.

It's given me some opportunities outside the golf course, like at Oakmont there's just a lot of good businesspeople. I



know so many people with Titleist that helped me get set up for balls, glove, shoes, things like that, when my world amateur ranking wasn't even remotely close to doing those type of things. Just helps me build a network really.

**Q. Considering your assistant coach is on the bag, what's that relationship like?**

NEAL SHIPLEY: Jimmy is awesome. Unfortunately he has to go to his baby shower tomorrow, so just so happens one of my really good friends who caddied for Austin Greaser at the Oakmont Am, he happens to be at Beaver Creek, and I'm going to make him drive down for that.

**Q. What's his name?**

NEAL SHIPLEY: Carter Pitcairn. He plays at Wisconsin, good player, and he's a member at my club at Oakmont, and I have a lot of trust in him. At the end of the day, I'm swinging the club, so it's not a big deal.

**Q. Let's go back to this match a little bit. He was up early, and then you won three holes in a row there. What got you going there?**

NEAL SHIPLEY: On 7, he just hit one left. I knew it was kind of dead there. I didn't hit my best shot but hit a pitch shot pretty close where I forced him to try to hit a good shot. I hit it really tight, and he made a mistake there.

Then on 9, I hit a phenomenal little shot out of the rough to gimme range essentially.

Then on 10, he just hit it in the left trees and gave it a little too much gas and went over. I think with those ones, he put himself out of position, and I was just trying to keep myself in position during that. When you do that in match play, you force guys to try to go for the hero shot and make something happen, and a lot of times that doesn't work out.

**Q. Then you were tied going into the last couple holes. What got you over the hump?**

NEAL SHIPLEY: Well, on 15, we saw that he hit it into the left creek, and to that pin it's a really difficult shot if you got hung up there in the rough. We ended up taking one less with the idea if we pure it we might land it on the front edge, but if we don't hit it great or just hit it average, it's



going to be short in the fairway, and just tried to chip it up there and force him to hit a really good shot. So I chipped it up there to maybe five, six feet and forced him to try to take it up in the air, and he kind of left it down there, and that gave us that hole.

Then on 17, our strategy there has been to hit driver as hard as possible because if we cover the bunkers, great; if not, we'd be laying up short of them anyways. Hit a great drive there and had a 9-iron in and was able to just force him to try to hit a great wedge shot for his third, and I think that resulted in him -- he had such a small landing area to try to get it tight and try to land it on the front edge with the water up front, and I think he didn't catch it quite good, hit it in the water.

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