

U.S. Amateur Championship

Sunday, August 17, 2025
San Francisco, California, USA
The Olympic Club

Robert Howell

Quick Quotes

Q. I guess my first question, when you hear Mason Howell, your son, 17-year-old son --

ROBERT HOWELL: He's 18.

Q. Still, high schooler, U.S. Amateur finalist, what goes through your head?

ROBERT HOWELL: Honestly, I have known how good he is for a long time. He's had a phenomenal breakout summer, a couple of near misses in junior golf, like literally not making a Junior Presidents Cup team by one stroke, not one position, but literally one putt that didn't go in. Not making the Junior Ryder Cup team.

I think he came in here with a little bit of something to prove. I see him play phenomenal golf all the time. It's just putting it together time after time after time, and after seeing what he did at the sectional U.S. Open qualifier, I know he's got what it takes to play out here.

Q. He's a high school senior. What is he kind of like around the house to you guys, to his friends? Kind of describe him as a kid.

ROBERT HOWELL: He's just a normal kid. Everybody likes him. He's friends with everybody. Our house kind of becomes a social hub where the high schoolers all hang out and play cards or just play Xbox or whatever.

It's rare that he's home that he doesn't have four or five buddies over there hanging out with him as well.

Q. When did he start playing?

ROBERT HOWELL: He started playing when he was like young. He was 3 or 4, just messing around honestly. He played a little tournament on a tour called the Red Hills Junior Tournament. Just a little tournament down where we are. He was 6. They play from 160 yards in the middle of the fairway so they can have a realistic chance of



making a par every now and then. He liked it.

He kept playing other sports. He played basketball. He played baseball for a little bit, and he played tennis was the last one he kind of gave up. He just got to where all he wanted to do is play golf. The more tournaments we'd put him in, the more he seemed to enjoy it. Even if he didn't win, he was like when's my next one? When are you going to sign me up again?

Q. Why do you think he liked it so much more than other sports? Is it because he was so good at it?

ROBERT HOWELL: He had phenomenal hand-eye coordination. He was a good tennis player, ridiculously good ping pong player. I played college tennis, and I can't beat him in ping pong. So he just kind of had that.

Yeah, I think he had some success with it and enjoyed it. He used to curl up in my lap when he was a little kid and watch it. He was always just fascinated by it.

I'm a very, very mediocre golfer, but I'd take him out there and we'd play. I could tell, got him lessons, and that progressed. One coach would say, yeah, he hits it a little bit better than other little kids. Why don't you go see this guy? Then we ended up progressing after that.

Q. I can only go back to him as a kid. He's still at a public high school?

ROBERT HOWELL: He's at a private high school.

Q. But still goes to school?

ROBERT HOWELL: Oh, yeah.

Q. How do you think he balances that, like still going to high school every day, interacting with friends, kids, and then basically a full-time junior golf season?

ROBERT HOWELL: It's not easy. He's constantly behind in school because he misses so many days. Thankfully, the school headmaster, school director are great. They work with us on it. They let him catch up. I also think he may be one of the only kids that he plays against out there that really goes to school full-time. Most kids don't these days.



We gave him the option starting for senior year because we knew this was going to be a busy year. Do you want to do something virtual, or do you want to go online? He's like, absolutely not. I'm not going to skip my senior year. He likes going to the high school football games and the basketball games.

Q. Prom, that kind of thing. So many big senior events too.

ROBERT HOWELL: He's a real social -- like it's rare that he's sitting at home by himself.

Q. When is the first moment, do you have a memory, a specific memory of when you realized, man, this kid is pretty good at golf? He's something special.

ROBERT HOWELL: This is a good story. He was 14 years old. We were living in Tallahassee at the time. He was playing his golf at Glen Arven already then, taking lessons from Bill Connelly. I take him up there to play for the day, which is on a Saturday. I tell him, your mom and I have dinner reservations with some friends tonight. I've got to pick you up, hard stop, at 5:30, whatever the time was.

I pull up at 5:30, and he's not at the clubhouse. So I text him. He said, Dad, I'm playing with Megan Schofill, Brycen Jones, who's now playing at Alabama, Jay Sanders, who's playing at Berry College, and a couple of other kids that were really good. They're letting me play with them, and they're letting us play as a fivesome, and I shot 28 on the front. Can I finish? I'm thinking, no, we have dinner reservations.

So I literally -- he comes to the clubhouse, and I say to Bill Connelly, who was in there, his coach, I said, Bill, Mason just shot 28 on the front. He said, what the hell are you doing? Get out there and play golf right now. I said, we have dinner reservations. He's like I'll take him home, but he's playing the back. I quickly cancelled the reservations, and I got to see him shoot the back, and he shoots a 15, which is our club record, and he was 14.

I knew then he had the ability to go ridiculously low, and he did it in front of Megan, who was one of his idols, won the U.S. Women's Am, was about to be a pro, about to get her LPGA card. It was awesome.

It's just all a matter of coming together at the right time. It's just the game of golf. You can have tournaments where you feel like you hit it great and you're not putting well and vice versa.

Q. You mentioned that chip. Did he say anything specifically coming into this week like Walker Cup related, like I'm sick of getting snubbed, or was it more of a vibe?

ROBERT HOWELL: It's just more of a vibe. He's been so close. We just talked about it last night. After getting into this match, I said, what would you rather have happened for you, junior Presidents Cup or where you are right now? He's like, are you kidding me?

Q. This is kind of like looking ahead --

ROBERT HOWELL: It was a 9-iron.

Q. Being from Georgia, after yesterday he qualified for the Masters, U.S. Open, but mostly the Masters. It's kind of every dad's dream to have a kid playing in the Masters, and as a high schooler.

ROBERT HOWELL: I don't know what to say about that. The Masters gets to invite who they invite, so if they invite my son, we'll be grateful and humbled, and obviously we'll accept (laughter). It's something I try not to get too ahead of myself. I honestly get emotional just thinking about it.

Q. Have you guys ever been?

ROBERT HOWELL: We've been, a long time ago. Mason and I went, and Lauren and I went a long time before that, before we even had children. The last time I went, I took Mason on a Wednesday, and we got to see the par-3. He was probably 12 or 13. So it's been a long time.

Q. Speaking of the par-3, do you think you're going to be on the bag for that if he's playing in it?

ROBERT HOWELL: Me? That's a good question. If he asks -- I'll give you the same answer. If he asks, I'll be humbled and grateful.

Q. How long have you lived in Georgia?

ROBERT HOWELL: My wife and I both are from Moultrie, Georgia, which is a small town in Georgia. We started our careers in Atlanta and moved home after we had children, which is Moultrie. Then I think it was 2017 we moved to Tallahassee. My daughter Meg is -- was a big competitive swimmer, and we were commuting from Moultrie to Tallahassee, which is an hour one way, for swim practice every day, and that got to be too much. So we moved north of Tallahassee, and I drove up to -- I don't have a license to practice law in Florida, but I drove up to Georgia every day just to get the family closer to where they needed to be.



Once my daughter, her swimming career was over, she chose UGA for college, we found ourselves living out of state, and it didn't make sense. I work in Georgia. Mason plays golf in Thomasville, I live in Thomasville, so we moved just for convenience.

Q. How long has he worked with Bill?

ROBERT HOWELL: Just since he was about 12.

Q. Is he here?

ROBERT HOWELL: That's Bill Connelly in the pink there. Bill was Harris English's swing coach, Hudson Swafford.

Q. Kind of a familiarity. I think his caddie is his high school coach.

ROBERT HOWELL: High school coach, assistant pro at the club, and also his short game, wedge and putting.

Q. How did you decide on that, just familiarity?

ROBERT HOWELL: He knows Jimmy, likes Jimmy. They play a lot of golf together, just pickup games. The good golfers at the club always want to play against each other and have matches and bets. Jimmy's always in that group. Jimmy is a good golfer himself. He played a lot of mini tour pro golf. He knows Mason's game, knows his tendencies, so it's easy.

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