

U.S. Amateur Championship

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San Francisco, California, USA
The Olympic Club

Mason Howell

Press Conference

MASON HOWELL: My name next to these other names on this trophy is unbelievable. To be next to somebody named Tiger, that's an unreal feeling. It's been such a great week here. Props to the Olympic Club as a world class venue.

Q. You've had quite the summer. You were in the U.S. Open. You were a medalist at the U.S. Junior. What did you do to find recently your game, or did you always have this and just waited to unleash?

MASON HOWELL: I felt like I always had it. It was self-belief. I knew it was in me. I just needed to walk with some confidence. I think that would translate to good golf and staying positive.

Overall, I've always known I've had it. It's just really unlocking it.

Q. You probably don't know this, but you're now the third youngest champion to ever win this, actually surpassing Tiger Woods. What does that say about your career arc and where you're headed as a player?

MASON HOWELL: To break something that -- to be ahead of Tiger in something, that's something that not a lot of people can say. It's awesome, and let's just take it one step at a time. We'll look at the next tournament as the same thing. Everybody starts at zero.

Q. The U.S. Am is nine rounds in seven days. How are you feeling right now?

MASON HOWELL: Oh, I'm tired. That 2 1/2 hour or however long break in between, I was fighting the urge to want a nap.

Q. Your family has said that your favorite golfer is Harris English. He's kind of been a mentor. He's been texting you. What are some of the words of encouragement or advice that he's been sending you



this week?

MASON HOWELL: He's really just said keep that foot on the gas. It's such a long week. If you let up for just one second and slip up, somebody will walk right through that door. Yeah, that's all my caddie Jimmy keeping me in the moment and not thinking about what comes with winning and thinking about winning.

But Harris has been such a great mentor. To see him succeed on TOUR has been great. I hope he has a Ryder Cup this year. He's been super nice, and he's a great role model.

Q. When's the first time you met him? He worked with Bill when he was your age.

MASON HOWELL: He pops in at Glen Arven down in Thomasville every now and then. I think the first time I met him was out there. I'd gone to watch him play at some tournaments, and I had a conversation with him. He's such a nice guy. He's as good as it gets.

Q. Can you talk about the culture of great golfers at Glen Arven and how that shaped your development as a golfer?

MASON HOWELL: Yeah, it's one of those things that makes you want to go play golf. When you wake up every morning to texts from five to six people who say let's get a group together, let's go play, it just makes all of us better.

We have so many Division I players and so many great golfers just in general. We have great matches out there. It's intense. We like to make it worth our while. It's all props to Bill Connelly, the director of golf out there. He's our coach for all of us. He's built what we've become today.

Q. Did you by chance think back to any of those matches when you were playing today or this week?

MASON HOWELL: It's just one of those things that I've learned -- I played a lot of match play between U.S. Junior and this, just with my coach, my caddie Jimmy. We'll go out and play. I throw him a couple shots but -- (laughter). It's one of those things where you never want to make mistake on top of mistake, and that's big out there.

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Q. On the front nine today, you got off to a pretty quick lead. How much confidence did that give you, especially the eagle on 7?

MASON HOWELL: That's huge. That's one thing we really wanted to start off with today was a good lead through nine. Really my goal was to win each nine holes today and just break it up into bits and pieces and just set little goals that you can stride toward.

We got off to such a good start I could kind of not -- I wanted to keep my foot on the gas, but I didn't want to do anything dumb. I knew if I hit it to a lot of the center of the greens and two-putted, that would be good enough.

Q. When does high school senior year start?

MASON HOWELL: I've already missed the first week, and I'm going to miss tomorrow.

Q. And you're going to miss in a couple weeks too.

MASON HOWELL: Yes, I will.

Q. It just happens, I assume?

MASON HOWELL: Yeah, sorry not sorry.

Q. How frustrated were you after Junior PGA? You missed the Junior Ryder Cup by a little bit after missing Junior Presidents Cup the year before. Who did you talk to, was it Jimmy or someone else, to make sure that you were in a good head space coming here?

MASON HOWELL: After Junior PGA, it was a tough two-week stretch. Getting medalist at the U.S. Junior and getting knocked out in the first round, that was a tough pill to swallow. Then I went into the Junior PGA and felt like I was hitting it great, just couldn't get anything out of it. So it was two frustrating weeks.

I went home, took a couple days off, and just regrouped and went back at it. Jimmy and I went out on the golf course, and we just kept a confident and positive mindset. We knew, if we made it into match play, we'd make a good run.

Q. We were talking to your dad a little bit in between matches. He said there's always four or five guys over at the house horse playing, having a good time. How are you guys going to celebrate when you get home?

MASON HOWELL: I think I convinced them to move our flights so we're not on the red eye tonight, which will be

awesome. A lot of those guys that came in, I'm sure we're going to go back to our Airbnb. We'll celebrate, have a lot of fun, have a lot of laughs, and really soak this one in.

Q. Your dad also mentioned your golf game is much tidier than your room. He was talking about your age. I was wondering how old do you feel? You're a teenager still, but do you feel this is a grown-up moment? Do you feel 18?

MASON HOWELL: At the end of the day, I still have to go sit in a classroom for eight hours these coming months. Just got to soak this up and really enjoy this one with friends and family.

Q. Fred and Nathan Smith met you on the finishing green there and invited you onto the Walker Cup team. How special is that going to be? Had you thought about that at all coming into today?

MASON HOWELL: Yeah, obviously runner-up comes with a lot of perks, but so does the champion. We thought about that and made that one of our big goals. We didn't want to sleep on today and get too comfortable with how yesterday went.

The Walker Cup is such a great venue this year, it's one I felt I didn't want to miss with this opportunity in my hands. Didn't want to let it slip through. I'm really pumped to be part of that team with so many great players.

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