

U.S. Amateur Championship

Sunday, August 16, 2026

Ardmore, Pennsylvania, USA

Merion Golf Club

Jack Whaley

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Let's welcome the 126th U.S. Amateur champion Jack Whaley. What is going through your mind right now?

JACK WHALEY: Honestly, not a lot. I'm just so shocked at the amount of people that want pictures with me. It's never really been a big thing. Never really had it happen to me before, and then all of a sudden I've got 100 people wanting a picture with me. Even just outside there, some of the workers of Merion Golf Club have wanted pictures with me. All they're doing is working this week, but obviously they know it's a big event, and I'm very blessed to be out there, to win this.

Q. Coming into this week could you honestly envision yourself sitting up here about to have your name in described in the Havemeyer Trophy?

JACK WHALEY: Not at all. This has just blown me away. It's not completely sunk in yet. But yeah, this is a massive achievement, and I didn't think this would ever happen. So I'm very, very happy with myself for this week.

Q. What do you think about the fact that your name is going to be sitting alongside some of the game's greatest players?

JACK WHALEY: Yeah, as we were driving back, I was looking with my dad at some of the names that are on this, and it's incredible some of the names. I never thought that my name would be amongst such impressive people. So yeah, I'm really happy that I'm going to be on that level.

Q. Jack, what were you feeling at the lunch break 2-down to a really scorching hot player in Jay?

JACK WHALEY: To be honest, I wasn't -- I was kind of a little bit shocked that I managed to lose that many holes coming in. I got off to a good start, and I was up, and then I was just like, what just happened, and Jay just made a 20-foot putt, a 30-foot putt and then another 20-foot putt,



and I'm like, well, that was out of nowhere and I'm kind of scraping my pars and he's just making birdies out of nowhere. He played unbelievable this morning coming down the stretch.

During the break, it was kind of just reset, recoup and get ready for the afternoon. I knew 2-down wasn't too much for me to handle, so I think going into it, it was just be confident and let things happen.

Q. After all you talked about this week about your dad, what was it like to finally share that moment with him right when you sunk that putt and went right into that big hug?

JACK WHALEY: Yeah. I think it was amazing. I think from the hours that my dad has taken me to practice and all the different golf lessons he's taken me to, it feels like it was all worth it.

Now he can actually see me happy and I can see him happy coming off the golf course, which is really good. I'm very proud of myself for this week.

Q. Looks like you were very comfortable playing in the rain, got the two gloves, two umbrellas, you and your dad both. What's your experience playing in the rain? We think of the English playing in the rain all the time; I don't know if it's true.

JACK WHALEY: It's not always true. We've had a pretty hot summer there. We were talking about it the other week with me and Sarah and she was saying how it wasn't raining at all during the summer she was there with me.

But yeah, a lot of time spent in the rain in tournaments, and I think I've always been told by Nick Hubby, my coach, that you're better than everyone in the rain.

It was down to the fact that I wanted to be there. I played so many tournaments where it's been raining and it felt like 50 percent of the field has already given up because it's raining and they don't want to be there. I've always tried to be that one positive one within that 50 percent and then you've got more of a chance when your attitude is in the right place.

But yeah, going back to the original question, my dad was



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-- he was kind of stressing me out on the golf course today, to be honest. He left my putter when I was on the green. He was trying to carry umbrellas up and down, and I was like, just calm down, just calm down; we don't need this. We got into a good routine of just whenever I was about to hit, put my umbrella down, and he would just come and stand with me next to the ball as I'm about to tee off just to keep my hands a little drier. We got into a good routine by the end of it, and I think he learned a lot of things, and I definitely learned a lot of things this week too.

Q. The two gloves, is that something you do --

JACK WHALEY: I actually normally don't do that. But as soon as it started raining on 6 and I slipped and I sliced one out of bounds, I was like, I can't use these anymore, can't use a regular glove, so I got the two gloves out and I started swinging it a little bit smoother and tried to time it up a little bit better, and it seemed to work, so I kept going.

Q. Aaron Rai who won the PGA Championship wears two gloves. Do you know him at all?

JACK WHALEY: I actually don't know him, but I did honestly feel like I was all right out there.

Q. Going back to your dad, you talked a little bit last night about how you felt like you were disappointing him a little bit early on. How would you describe what he's meant to your golf journey as a whole?

JACK WHALEY: Yeah, I mean, to have a dad that's that supportive of someone who's almost -- almost looks as if I was failing, was just amazing. A lot of parents would have just given up, and I know a lot of parents that have given up. He's not one of them, and he's the guy that will back me for everything.

I wouldn't be here without him. Everything is for him.

Q. Did you get stung by a bee or a wasp out there?

JACK WHALEY: Yeah, I actually did. I got stung on the ankle.

Q. Can you tell me what happened with that?

JACK WHALEY: I was just walking down the 4th after my second shot, and I was walking down the left side and I felt something on my leg, and then it just stuck in me. I was like, what's going on. Looked down and there was a wasp on my ankle, and I flicked it off and then I had to pull the stinger out, and it was throbbing for a good two holes and then someone brought something out to me and it's kind of calmed down now.

Q. At that moment, do you think, what terrible luck; I got stung and it's raining and I got stung by a bee?

JACK WHALEY: It couldn't get any worse, could it. I was on the comeback for that point, but I was down, and I was just like, what's going on, I've been stung. It couldn't get any worse. It was just a kick up the rear end, come on, let's play good golf.

Q. To win here at Merion, what do you make of this entire week, the opportunity to play here? Just to tee it up here is magical, but now you are a Merion champion; what does that mean?

JACK WHALEY: Yeah, going back a couple of months, we didn't know if I was even going to be in the event, and we obviously looked where the U.S. Amateur was and knew where I was on the world ranking system and didn't know if I was going to be able to get a spot into the event. Fortunately enough, everyone who was a senior this year decided to go pro, so I just scraped in like 98th or something like that a couple of months ago.

It was always on the radar to try and play U.S. Amateur, and then to find out that it was at Merion and know the history behind it and how legendary this golf course is, it was pretty -- I was really glad to be able to be in the field, let alone to win here is even more impressive.

Yeah, I'm really, really pleased, and I'm glad it was around here.

Q. I asked you this question a couple days ago, but 21 years ago a guy named Edoardo Molinari, a European, survived a playoff and ended up winning it, and now you do the same thing. Any karma? Did you feel any of that karma?

JACK WHALEY: I had a weird feeling that putt was going in on 15. I don't know if it was anything to do with the golfing gods telling me we're going to do the same thing as what he did. But yeah, it's quite spectacular to almost do the exact same thing that he did, and to finish on the last hole on the same hole as he did as well is pretty cool.

Q. You've got Tiger Woods on your chest now. Of course his son is coming to FSU in a couple years. Wondering if you've met him and what it was like in the Woods home today since Tiger went to Stanford?

JACK WHALEY: I've not actually thought about that, to be honest. I'm sure Charlie was cheering me on and then his dad was cheering Jay on. Yeah, I've met Charlie, and he's a great kid. He's very, very talented. I just think that a lot



of the media kind of -- it makes it hard for him to be able to just progress. I think they need to just leave him alone a little bit and just let him play golf. I think at Florida State he'll have the opportunity to do that, and I think it's going to be better for him.

If I take my extra year, I'm going to do everything I can to bring the best out of him.

Q. How about having Tiger on your chest?

JACK WHALEY: Oh, yeah, absolutely. I didn't even know this was a thing until an hour ago. This is by far the coolest thing that I've got so far. So yeah, it's awesome. Really cool.

Q. Your favorite non-golf activity?

JACK WHALEY: Everything is just so golf-related nowadays that you're always doing something. Just go and hang around with my friends either from Florida State, the teammates, or play a little bit of Xbox with my old teammates, Steve Kibare, play a lot with him. I don't know, just kind of -- it's always around golf nowadays. I feel like I'm at the level where I need to be constantly doing it, and if I'm not doing it, I get left behind.

When I get the opportunities, I'll play Xbox, I guess.

Q. I hear you're a big scooter guy around campus. How did that come to be?

JACK WHALEY: Oh, that was a long time ago. I was probably between the ages of 10 to 15 maybe. I wasn't bad, but I just couldn't do anything else to keep getting any better because I just was going to get injured. Golf meant too much to me to be able to be getting injured all the time just riding the scooter. Yeah, I enjoyed that when I was younger, when I was probably 12, 15. We used to go out all the time after school with my friends, so that was pretty awesome. Good times.

Q. They were talking on the broadcast about when you were missing cuts, when you were young and struggling that you were close to walking away from golf. How close do you think you really were to that?

JACK WHALEY: I wasn't that close, but it was getting to the point where if it carried on -- I just couldn't keep taking money out of my dad's pocket for me not succeeding. He was trying to keep pushing me and pushing me, but if it was never going to get better, I was just wasting money at that point.

I think when I took my gap year before I went to college,

that was the last year I had really. I said to myself, I'm giving myself a year, and if I'm not any better by that time, I'm not going to college and I'm not going to play golf. I ended up playing really well that year, and I kind of felt like I played a little bit more free.

One thing led to another, and I was at Dalton State playing under Ben Rickett and then I'm winning tournaments again, and it's like, okay, well, maybe I do have the game. Then you go to a Division I school and you can still keep up with them guys and then you come here and you win this. I don't think I'm going to stop playing golf now, though.

Q. What do you think gave you that freedom to play better?

JACK WHALEY: I don't know really. I played a lot of golf with a good friend of mine called Tom Osborne. He was in the England squad during that summer, and we traveled everywhere together to all the tournaments. I think the relationship that we had when we was playing in them tournaments, it kind of made it a little more free, more fun. It made it a little bit more fun. I'm traveling on my own. I'm not going with my dad. It's kind of taken that element away from it, and I'm playing with my friends, and it makes it a lot more fun for me, so yeah, I would say that.

Q. Your coaches have described you as tough as nails. One, would you agree with that assessment? And two, what do you feel like is the toughest you've ever been in your life, whether on the golf course or off of it?

JACK WHALEY: I felt pretty tough when I was going out there on the first tee this afternoon and I'm 2-down and managed to win 4-up. That's probably one of the toughest I've felt in terms of golf.

My mom and dad's friends and all my friends back home keep saying balls of steel for holing the putt, even in the semifinal for holing that putt. They were saying how were you not shaking, how were you not shaking. You just go back to what you've done for 15 years. You've been on the putting green and said this is a putt to win the Masters or this is a putt to win the U.S. Open. You've been in them situations on -- not exactly like it, but you've kind of tried to recreate it.

Yeah, that's probably one of the toughest I've felt on the golf course and the most confident I've felt was this afternoon.

Q. If you were to get that call and it's probably likely to come, how do you overcome past links experience to bring your very best for that team in a couple weeks?

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JACK WHALEY: I think the big thing is that I actually don't think I've played much match play on links golf courses, and the ones that I have played match play in county golf, I've actually played really well. Me and one of my teammates a couple years ago, we played in the foursomes for Yorkshire, I believe six years ago, seven years ago, and we went out there and we were 6-under through six in the first six holes. It's not like it's a mental block or anything like that. It's just, I guess, match play is just different. I feel like I'm better in match play.

Q. I know that you got a special Merion book and a letter from Justin Rose yesterday. To join him as a USGA champion here at Merion, what does that mean to you as someone from England?

JACK WHALEY: Awesome. I think Justin Rose is definitely one person that I look up to in terms of his success and the demeanor he has about himself. He's an incredible person, incredible athlete. To be sat alongside him in that category is very, very honorable. I'm really very honored to be there.

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