

Jin, Summerhays Advance to Junior Am Final

By Ron Driscoll, USGA

What Happened

Bo Jin, 17, of the People's Republic of China, and Preston Summerhays, 16, of Scottsdale, Ariz., won a pair of matches on Friday to advance to the 36-hole final match of the 72nd U.S. Junior Amateur Championship at Inverness Club.

Jin, the No. 8 seed, rolled in a 25-foot birdie putt on the 18th hole to edge No. 21 Kelly Chinn, of Great Falls, Va., 1 up, after Chinn had rallied to tie their semifinal match with wins on the 16th and 17th holes. Jin never trailed in the match and responded both times that Chinn tied him, with an eagle on the par-5 13th hole and the birdie on No. 18.

"Before the putt I was thinking I had exactly the same putt in the morning," said Jin of the winning putt on the final green. "I left it a little bit short then, so I just gave it a little bit more speed. Yeah, definitely excited to see it go in."

Summerhays, the No. 11 seed, wore down Thomas Pagdin, of England, 17, the highest remaining player in the quarterfinals at No. 41 in the World Amateur Golf Ranking (WAGR), in the other semifinal match. Summerhays overcame a 2-hole deficit by winning six of the last seven holes to advance, 4 and 3.

"My mindset was just to keep on playing," said Summerhays, who won his second consecutive Utah Amateur title last week. "He had a good first seven holes, and I knew that he's human. He was going to make some mistakes. I just tried to stay patient."

Jin (No. 777 in the WAGR) and Summerhays (No. 208 in the WAGR) both rallied in their earlier quarterfinal victories on a very hot day at Inverness, with the heat index climbing above 100. In fact, three of the four semifinalists were forced to rally from back-nine deficits in their morning matches.

Summerhays faced the largest deficit, 3 down to No. 19 seed Austin Greaser, of Vandalia, Ohio, through 11 holes before winning four of the next five holes. A par on the closing hole to Greaser's bogey completed a 2-up win.

Pagdin was 1 down to No. 15 George Duangmanee, of Fairfax, Va., after 10 holes, but made three birdies, including a 20-footer on No. 17, to earn a 2-and-1 victory. Jin was 2 down to Deven Ramachandran, of San Rafael, Calif., but rallied to win holes 14, 16 and 17 for a 1-up win. Chinn squandered a 2-up lead against Garrett Martin of San Antonio, Texas, but won four out of five holes to earn a 4-and-2 victory.

The winner of the 72nd U.S. Junior Amateur will earn a berth in the 2020 U.S. Open Championship next June at Winged Foot Golf Club in Mamaroneck, N.Y. The winner and runner-up both earn spots in next month's 119th U.S. Amateur at Pinehurst Resort & Country Club.

What's Next

The 36-hole final begins at 6:40 a.m. The match will be broadcast on FS1 from 2-4 p.m. EDT.

Notable

Bo Jin is the No. 8 seed and **Preston Summerhays** is the No. 11 seed, Here are the seedings of the six most recent U.S. Junior champions: 2018 – Michael Thorbjornsen (No. 7); 2017 – Noah Goodwin (No. 27); 2016 – Min Woo Lee (No. 3); 2015 – Philip Barbaree (No. 28); 2014 – Will Zalatoris (No. 8); 2013 – Scottie Scheffler (No. 3).

Jin's caddie, **Brandon Jackson**, has been a caddie at Inverness Club for 11 years and is a Chick Evans Scholar and an Ohio State graduate. He caddied for **Alexis Valenzuela** of Switzerland in stroke play and has caddied for Jin in all five rounds of match play.

Each of the finalists' younger sisters – **Grace Summerhays** (15) and **Jiarui (Joyce) Jin** (16) – will be playing in next week's U.S. Girls' Junior Championship at SentryWorld in Stevens Point, Wis.

Five of the par 4s for the quarterfinal and semifinal rounds of match play at Inverness measured 476 yards or longer – No. 2 was 499, No. 4 was 502, No. 7 was 482, No. 15 was 476 and No. 17 was 484. The par-71 layout measured 7,383 yards.

Quotable

"Let's see, I think I've gained about 14 miles an hour clubhead speed and I've grown about 4 to 5 inches. I might have been like 170 pounds; right now I'm 205. One week I'll be hitting my 60-degree wedge 90 yards; the next week I'll be hitting it 93; couple weeks from then I'll be hitting it 96. It was actually really tough to gauge." – **Preston Summerhays**, on his growth in the past year

"I've played with him so much, around 100 times or more. He's an amazing guy. He's been one of my mentors and he's really cared about my golf game. Just playing with him really shows me what I need to work on to get to the highest level." – **Summerhays**, on PGA Tour player Tony Finau, who is coached by Summerhays' father Boyd

"I thought I played well yesterday, coming back to win in 19 holes. This morning I played solid. I was happy with my performance, but today I just ran out of gas. I got up early, but I started losing energy and concentration. Preston played really well and he was the better player this afternoon." – **Thomas Pagdin**, on his semifinal finish

"Definitely being a first alternate coming into this tournament, not knowing if I'm going to even come to this place, making the Round of 64, 32, 16, and quarterfinals and semifinals, definitely excited to be in the finals." – **Bo Jin**, on reaching the championship match after getting in the field as an alternate from the Fresno, Calif., sectional

"Actually, I had a feeling he was going to make that. I'm really happy for him. We're great friends. It was definitely a very successful week. Just being able to just grind down in matches really gave me confidence going into upcoming tournaments." – **Kelly Chinn**, on his semifinal match that went to the final hole

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