

# U.S. Junior Amateur Championship

Friday, July 20, 2018

## Akshay Bhatia

### Quick Quotes

#### Q. What is about New Jersey you like?

AKSHAY BHATIA: Man, I love bent golf courses. I mean, the greens are just so nice in New Jersey or anywhere here.

So I just, I don't know. I love this golf course. I mean, you have to shape shots; you have to put in the correct spots; you have to make a lot of putts out here.

Definitely my putting is one of my strengths in my game, so putting is not like a big issue out here.

#### Q. And about your putter, you just told Fox about how you bent your putter this week and how the Baltusrol folks helped put it back together or bend it back together.

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah, that was very interesting. I mean, I stepped on it on the putting green after I think it was my first round of 64. It set way open and set way upright. I wasn't freaking out because I knew my exact specs.

But having them here and the time and effort they put into my putter is something I can't ask for. So really happy that it was as close as I got it and still making putts.

#### Q. The way you were rolling the ball today, doesn't seem to have had any affect on you.

AKSHAY BHATIA: No. I mean, I talked to my coaches, and, I mean, I kind of told myself if I just think about the moment and what every putt means, I'm not going to think about the putter. It's a putter. I can make anything with anything.

#### Q. Yardage and club you hit on 16?

AKSHAY BHATIA: 136, and me and my caddie agreed on a pitching wedge. Just kind of like a stock 132 shot, and ended up being a foot.

#### Q. It went back and forth early, but you kind of pulled away on 8 and 9. Tell us about hitting out of that bunker to about eight feet on 8.

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah, so I've hit driver the first couple rounds and I haven't successfully hit the fairway. So I told my caddie, Let's just hit 3-wood, and hopefully I'll have 3-wood or 3-iron in or something. I ended up



being way down there. Course firmed up.

So I had to hit 4-iron into that greenside bunker. It wasn't a hard shot. I mean, as long as I landed it where I wanted to it should be good. Landed it a little short. I knew the line. I get that a lot, where I just kind of feel where this ball is going to roll over, and just made it, which was really nice.

Then 9 I hit a perfect drive. I mean, landed three feet from the hole, rolled to the back edge, and Cole had an amazing shot. It was unfortunate that he missed that putt, but for me, being able to execute the second one was good.

#### Q. What does this mean to you to play for a national championship tomorrow?

AKSHAY BHATIA: It means a lot. I haven't really thought about it. It's just another tournament to me. Hopefully I'll have a better answer for you tomorrow. Just excited. I mean, match play, we don't get to play this enough. 100%. Just looking forward to tomorrow.

#### Q. You told me between matches that you saw Cole Hammer as a great opponent. What does that mean to you, to advance past him into the final?

AKSHAY BHATIA: I mean, it's really big. Every time you beat someone it boosts your confidence, especially for someone who has done such great things this year and over the past couple years.

So definitely a boost of confidence.

#### Q. Your most memorable putt here in the afternoon?

AKSHAY BHATIA: I think the putt on 12. I think that was a very big putt.

I barely missed a putt on 9, and then 10 we had -- or, no. I barely missed a putt on 10, and then we halved 11; then 12 I made a putt, which was huge.

I think I went 3-up at the time. We were walking to tee and Cole goes, Man, you're rolling the rock. Any time you hear that from such a great player it's nice.

#### Q. How many feet was that?

AKSHAY BHATIA: I think it was about nine feet.



**Q. Then you came back the next hole and halved that hole with about a six-foot putt, too.**

AKSHAY BHATIA: Yeah, the wind definitely was changing every hole. One hole we would hit downwind and second shot would be into the wind. I hit a really good shot and flew the green and then the lie wasn't great, so I just tried to hack it out.

Gave myself an uphill putt, left edge putt, and drained it.