



Ogletree Stuns Augenstein To Claim U.S. Amateur Crown

By Mike Trostel, USGA

What Happened

After trailing for a majority of the 36-hole championship match, Andy Ogletree surged past John Augenstein, winning four of the last seven holes to claim the 119th U.S. Amateur Championship title, 2 and 1, at Pinehurst Resort & Country Club.

Ogletree, 21, of Little Rock, Miss., was 4 down through five holes, but chipped away at Augenstein's lead throughout the afternoon, completing one of the largest comebacks in a U.S. Amateur final. The senior at Georgia Tech made just two bogeys over 35 holes in the final, equaling the mark set by 2008 champion Danny Lee and 2017 runner-up Doug Ghim.

Ogletree took his first lead of the match when Augenstein, 21, of Owensboro, Ky., failed to get up-and-down from the right greenside bunker at the 32nd hole.

After both players parred the par-3 33rd, it appeared as though Augenstein might square the match at the 34th when Ogletree hit his approach into the left greenside bunker. But the No. 120 player in the World Amateur Golf Ranking (WAGR) recovered and calmly rolled in a 10-foot par putt to maintain his 1-up advantage.

"I felt pretty confident over that bunker shot," said Ogletree. "I don't think I would have nine months ago. I knew once I made that putt, I had a pretty good chance because I'm sure John was thinking he's going to tie it up there, and mentally that's hard to recover from."

Both players hit their tee shots within 20 feet of the front-left hole location on the 181-yard, par-3 35th. The match seemed likely to extend to the 36th hole, but in a rare lapse of concentration, Augenstein rammed his birdie effort from the fringe 12 feet past the hole.

After Ogletree lagged his putt to within 3 feet, Augenstein missed the comebacker for par. Still away, he burned the left edge on his bogey putt and immediately conceded Ogletree's par. It was a stunning turn of events in a championship match that featured 16 combined birdies.

"I showed a lot of resilience out there and never gave up," said Ogletree, who was playing in his fifth USGA championship. "I kept telling myself I'm going to win this championship, and just always believed that."

Early on, it looked as though Augenstein might run away with the match. After halving the first hole on Course No. 4 with pars, the No. 38 player in the WAGR drew first blood when Ogletree bogeyed the second.

Augenstein hit a 60-degree wedge to within 18 inches for a conceded birdie at the third hole, then followed with a beautiful tee shot at the 145-yard fourth, setting up another birdie from 3 feet. The senior at Vanderbilt University continued to pour it on, sinking an 18-foot birdie putt on the fifth to win his fourth straight hole.

After 34 consecutive holes without a bogey, Augenstein made back-to-back bogeys on Nos. 11 and 12, reducing his lead to 2 up. He got one back when he made an up-and-down for birdie from just left of the drivable par-4 16th, but Ogletree converted a 20-foot birdie putt from just off the green at the 18th to cut his deficit to 2 down going into the break.

“I played really well on No. 4 this morning,” said Augenstein, who shot a 5-under 65 with match-play concessions. “He snagged that putt on No. 18, which kind of flipped the momentum a little bit.”

Ogletree continued his strong play on Course No. 2, birdieing the opening hole of the afternoon round to pull within 1 down.

“I hit it in that right junk on No. 1 for the fourth match in a row,” said Ogletree. “I think I had four divots about 5 feet apart. My 9-iron was pretty good and left me a good look straight up the hill and I made that one.”

The margin remained unchanged as the players completed 27 holes, until Augenstein birdied the par-5 28th to reclaim his 2-up lead.

The turning point in the match came on the 319-yard par-4 31st. Ogletree played conservatively on the drivable par-4, laying back with an iron, while Augenstein hit driver into the left greenside bunker. Playing first, Ogletree spun a sand wedge back to within 3 feet. Augenstein blasted his bunker shot to 8 feet, but his putt lipped out. When Ogletree converted his birdie effort, the match was square for the first time since the opening hole of the match.

“I was really proud of that shot,” said Ogletree, of his 58-degree wedge from 104 yards. “It landed on the back slope and came back perfectly. That put a lot of pressure on [Augenstein] and definitely flipped the match.”

Ogletree led for just four holes, compared to 29 for Augenstein, but his ability to stay close in the morning round when Augenstein threatened to build an insurmountable lead set up his comeback on Pinehurst No. 2’s inward nine.

“I fought my hardest,” said Augenstein. “But in the end, I didn't make enough putts or hit enough great shots out there to beat him. He was super solid and really made no mistakes.”

What the Champion Receives

For winning the U.S. Amateur, Ogletree receives a gold medal and custody of the Havemeyer Trophy for one year. His name will be on a plaque in the Hall of Champions at the USGA Golf Museum in Liberty Corner, N.J. He receives an exemption into the 2020 U.S. Open at Winged Foot Golf Club in Mamaroneck, N.Y. He also earns a 10-year exemption into the U.S. Amateur, a likely invitation to the 2020 Masters Tournament and an exemption into the 149th Open Championship conducted by The R&A, provided he remains an amateur.

What's Next

The 120th U.S. Amateur Championship will be conducted at Bandon Dunes Golf Resort, in Bandon, Ore., Aug. 10-16, 2020. It will be the sixth USGA championship played at Bandon Dunes and the first U.S. Amateur.

Notable

Andy Ogletree trailed during 29 of the 35 holes played in the championship match, equaling the number of holes Steven Fox trailed during his 37-hole victory over Michael Weaver in the 2012 U.S. Amateur at Cherry Hills Country Club.

Ogletree's comeback is believed to have tied for the fourth largest in a U.S. Amateur final. Tiger Woods was 6 down through 13 holes against Trip Kuehne in 1994, while Woods (1996) and Labron Harris (1962) were both 5 down after the morning round.

Ogletree is the first U.S. Amateur champion from Mississippi. The last player from Mississippi to win a USGA championship was Steve Wilson (2008 U.S. Mid-Amateur).

Ogletree is the third U.S. Amateur champion who attended Georgia Tech, joining Matt Kuchar (1997 U.S. Amateur) and Bob Jones (five-time champion).

John Augenstein receives a silver medal, an exemption into the 2020 U.S. Open and a likely invitation to the 2020 Masters, if he remains an amateur. He also is exempt into the next three U.S. Amateurs.

Both Ogletree and Augenstein were named to the 2019 USA Walker Cup Team on Sunday afternoon. The 47th Walker Cup Match will be played Sept. 7-8 at Royal Liverpool Golf Club in Hoylake, England.

Quotable

“I can play at the highest level and perform. I felt like the more nervous I got, the better I hit it. You just kind of have to learn on the fly, and it just went my way today, and I learned that I can handle the pressure, I can handle the heat, and I can still perform.”

- **Andy Ogletree**, on what he learned this week

“There's no telling. I'm sure there's a lot of adult beverages going down right now. (Laughter)”

- **Ogletree**, on how his friends in Little Rock, Miss., are celebrating his victory

“When I got there, I weighed 145 pounds. I've gained about 33 pounds. So I look like a different human. But my swing is not really changed that much to be honest. I think it's helped me a lot just mentally more than physically, getting up at 5:45 a.m. and going to work and just being more disciplined with what you eat, what time you go to bed, and pushing through workouts.”

- **Ogletree**, on how he has changed since his freshman year at Georgia Tech

“If I knew he was going to miss, I would lag it up there to make a par and go to 18. But I can live with myself hitting an aggressive putt, trying to make it. But I can't live with myself if I leave that short and he makes. I don't regret that. That's not where the match was lost.”

- **John Augenstein**, on his birdie putt on the 35th hole

“That was a major goal, obviously, as I've voiced all this week. You know, that's going to be a dream come true. It's going to be awesome. I can't wait. I was always kind of trending in the right direction, but there's a difference in trending and then actually doing it, and this week I was able to actually kind of put it together.”

- **Augenstein**, on being selected to the USA Walker Cup Team