**Strafaci, Gupta, Sharpstene, Osborne Into Semifinals at Bandon**

By David Shefter, USGA

**What Happened**

Tyler Strafaci got several up-close looks at the Havemeyer Trophy in the past year at Georgia Tech. His good friend and college teammate, Andy Ogletree, had the prize for winning last year’s U.S. Amateur prominently displayed in his off-campus apartment, and Strafaci couldn’t help but wonder what it would be like to have his name on that treasured piece of hardware.

On a windswept Friday at Bandon Dunes Golf Resort along the southwest Oregon coast, the 22-year-old from Davie, Fla., moved within two victories of taking possession of the most prestigious prize in amateur golf by defeating 2016 U.S. Mid-Amateur champion Stewart Hagestad, 29, of Newport Beach, Calif., 1 up. He will face Oklahoma State rising junior Aman Gupta, 20, of Concord, N.C., in the first of two semifinal matches on Saturday. Gupta also ousted a USGA champion, 2018 U.S. Junior Amateur winner and incoming Stanford University freshman Michael Thorbjornsen, 18, of Wellesley, Mass., by an identical 1-up margin.

The other semifinal pits Southern Methodist rising junior Charles “Ollie” Osborne, 20, of Reno, Nev., against Charlotte University rising senior Matthew Sharpstene, 22, of Asheville, N.C. Osborne frittered away a 4-up lead on the second nine before winning holes 15 and 16 to post a 2-and-1 victory over Arizona State standout Cameron Sisk, 20, of San Diego, Calif. Sharpstene, who is transferring to Charlotte after three years at West Virginia, eliminated 2015 U.S. Junior Amateur champion and Louisiana State University rising senior Philip Barbaree, 22, of Shreveport, La., 4 and 2.

The quarterfinalists once again dealt with challenging conditions on the David McLay Kidd design with sustained winds in the mid-teens and gusts as high as 25 miles per hour.

Strafaci, competing in his fourth U.S. Amateur, also had to overcome one of the most experienced competitors in this field. Hagestad, who has qualified for the last three U.S. Opens and represented the USA in two Walker Cups (2017 and 2019), was playing in his 21st USGA championship.

But the 2020 North & South Amateur champion, whose grandfather, Frank Strafaci, won the 1935 U.S. Amateur Public Links, showed he could deliver clutch shots when required, including a 5-iron from 250 yards to 8 feet to set up a winning eagle on the par-5 ninth for a 2-up lead.

“I just obliterated a 5-iron, just hit a high cut, and I'm usually not a cut player, and I trusted it,” said Strafaci, who competed in the 2018 U.S. Open at Shinnecock Hills.

Hagestad would claw back to tie the match with pars on 14 and 15, only to lose the par-4 17th when his 20-foot par attempt stopped inches short of the hole. When Strafaci converted a 3½-foot par putt on the par-5 18th, he was into the final four.

“It would have been nice to lag [my birdie putt] up close,” said Strafaci, “but I think making that … really gives me confidence because if I have that putt tomorrow to win the match, I know I can do it.”

Gupta, who got into the field last Friday when world No. 2 Ricky Castillo withdrew, continued to make the most of his opportunity, despite falling 2 down to Thorbjornsen after 10 holes. Gupta won four of the next seven holes, including a par on No. 17, to close out the No. 43 player in the World Amateur Golf Ranking®.

Osborne, who shot a 64 at stroke-play co-host Bandon Trails on Tuesday to qualify for match play after an opening-round 77 at Bandon Dunes, was in full control of his match with Sisk through nine holes, only to lose Nos. 11 and 12 with a double bogey and bogey, respectively. A birdie by No. 62 seed Sisk, who is the No. 39 player in the WAGR, on the par-5 13th cut the deficit to one hole, and when Osborne double-bogeyed No. 14, the match was tied. But Osborne regained his focus on the challenging par-3 15th, winning with a par. He birdied the 16th and closed out Sisk on 17 when both players made par.

Sharpstene, who made his presence known on Wednesday by taking out 2019 runner-up John Augenstein, jumped on Barbaree early with wins on Nos. 1, 4 and 5. Despite losing the par-3 sixth, Sharpstene’s winning par on the ninth gave him a 3-up lead at the turn. Barbaree, who rallied from a 5-down deficit with eight to play in winning his 2015 U.S. Junior Amateur title, couldn’t muster the same magic on Friday. Sharpstene’s 15-foot eagle on the par-5 13th was the crushing blow, and another birdie on 16 ended it.

**What’s Next**

The first of Saturday’s two semifinal matches will begin at 3 p.m. PDT. Golf Channel will broadcast live from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. EDT. The 36-hole championship match is scheduled for Sunday, with the morning 18 scheduled to start at 9:30 PDT. The second 18 will begin at approximately 3 p.m. PDT.

**Notable**

* The semifinal winners are not only exempt into the 2021 U.S. Amateur at Oakmont (Pa.) Country Club, but also the 2022 championship at Ridgewood Country Club in Paramus, N.J.
* Bandon Dunes architect **David McLay Kidd** was on the property to take in the quarterfinal matches.
* How difficult was the 455-yard, par-4 11th hole during the quarterfinals? The eight competitors played the hole, which played into the wind, in a combined 9 over par, with the usual match-play concessions. **Matthew Sharpstene** was the only player to make a 4.
* **Aman Gupta** is seeking to become the sixth Oklahoma State player to win the U.S. Amateur, joining **Labron Harris Jr.** (1962), **Bob Dickson** (1967), **Scott Verplank** (1984), **Peter Uihlein** (2010) and **Viktor Hovland** (2018). His coach, **Alan Bratton**, caddied for Uihlein and Hovland, and is currently on Gupta’s bag.
* **Charles “Ollie” Osborne** could become the fifth player from Southern Methodist University to win the championship. **Bryson DeChambeau** was the last to accomplish the feat in 2015.
* Besides **Andy Ogletree** (2019), two other Georgia Tech players have hoisted the Havemeyer Trophy: **Bob Jones** (five times) and **Matt Kuchar** (1997).
* Three of the four semifinalists have their fathers on the bag: **Frank Strafaci**, **Steve Osborne** and **Jeff Sharpstene**.

**Quotable**

“Today I told myself I had to play one of the best rounds of golf I've ever played, and I thought I did. I had really good composure. I gave up a 2-up lead and really had a good mindset. My dad kept me calm.” – **Tyler Strafaci** on keeping his composure against the No. 15 player in the WAGR

“Honestly, I told my dad the first match I had against [2019 runner-up] John [Augenstein], he's one of the best players in the world, and I knew I was on TV. I'd never been in front of a camera before, and that helped me a lot for these final couple matches, just calming me down and knowing I could do it. It's been an unreal experience so far.” – **Matthew Sharpstene** on his mindset

“At the beginning of the week if you said I was going to the semis I probably wouldn't believe you. I'm really happy to be here and really excited, too. I've got a lot of support from family back home, so it's a lot of fun to be in this position.” – **Charles “Ollie” Osborne** on surpassing his expectations

“I feel great about my game. I’m still hitting it good. Chipping was a little bit of a struggle but I kind of found my rhythm last night after the round, and I've been putting good all week. I'm just going to go hit my game plan tomorrow and hopefully pull out a win and get to the final.” – **Aman Gupta** on his confidence

“I played great. It's been an awesome week. Made it further than I've ever made it before [in the U.S. Amateur]. My goal besides to obviously win was to try to make it to the quarters. That was what I thought I had to do to potentially earn a spot for the U.S. Open. I don't know how the math is going to shake out [in the World Amateur Golf Ranking]. I'll be super bummed if it's not the case, but life goes on.” – 2016 U.S. Mid-Amateur champion **Stewart Hagestad** after his defeat

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