

# U.S. Amateur Championship

Thursday, August 17, 2023  
Cherry Hills Village, Colorado, USA  
Cherry Hills Country Club

## Ben James

### Quick Quotes

**Q. That was a heavyweight battle out there this afternoon, nine birdies between the two of you. What was it like battling him and being in such a cool match like that?**

BEN JAMES: Yeah, it was unbelievable. David is an incredible player. Obviously No. 2, 3 on WAGR, whatever it is, it's unbelievable. We've played a lot growing up, junior golf, so I know his short game is phenomenal, better than mine. I knew I'd just have to use my weapon, ball strike it around, and I knew -- I started off hot with the putter, and I knew that was going to be a good day.

I chipped in on 2 and then made a bomb on 3 to tie the hole, so I knew my putter was warming up. I lipped out a couple of my two next putts and made some nice putts down the stretch, but it was just an incredible battle. I've never, ever had a match like that where I thought it could even happen.

**Q. You probably haven't been playing as well as you wanted to this year, but coming in here what kind of a statement is it to be headed to the quarterfinals here at the U.S. Amateur?**

BEN JAMES: It's unbelievable. My goal, again, was just to have fun. I had just a lot of trouble this summer just with not driving it well and the driver being my strength and just not having fun on the golf course, and I was like -- talked to a couple people, got some advice from Stew Hagestad, who's an unbelievable player, and just kind of took some time to relax.

Worked the first time with my coach Jeff Pierce, so I went down, stayed in a log cabin in the middle of nowhere --

**Q. Where?**

BEN JAMES: Linville, North Carolina, so just wanted to isolate myself and just kind of worked on my game in peace, no one to bother me. Again, just really happy just



to see the grit I have.

**Q. When you were down there in that log cabin, were you thinking of St Andrews at all and the Walker Cup?**

BEN JAMES: It's hard not to, but at the end of the day, I just wanted to play good golf, and I know I haven't, and I'm due to. I knew I was due to play some good golf at some point this summer.

So far, so good, and I'm just happy to play well and keep it going.

**Q. Would you rather play a match like this where two top 10 guys, a lot of the focus is on that, or a guy that's ranked 250 in the world?**

BEN JAMES: Well, as long as I win I'll be happy.

No, I would never even dream of myself doing that. It's a dream, like it doesn't even happen in a dream. It was unbelievable what happened, and all my hard work and planning and my caddie and I just sticking to a game plan and hitting our numbers and just being committed. That's what it was.

**Q. Have you talked with Captain McCoy this week? I know a couple other guys said they've been texting back and forth with him.**

BEN JAMES: Just very simple. When I made match play, it was good luck, keep going forward, you're playing well, and that's all it's been. Nothing serious. Just a little, keep pushing, you're doing really well, keep playing well, you shot 4-under in stroke play, which was great. That's all he said.

**Q. I know you said you were trying to find your game, but kind of fist pumped, a little exhale on the playoff hole there, the extra hole. Do you feel like that's a little weight lifted off your shoulders? Do you feel like you've made a statement?**

BEN JAMES: Yeah, I'm not worried about Walker Cup or whatever. I'm just happy to -- I've never been 1-down, two to play, having a four-footer to advance it to a playoff hole and then sticking a wedge from 130 to three feet and cashing that in. I never thought I could do that.



It's just self-belief. It just keeps giving me self-belief that I can hold my head up high and I can do some incredible things that I didn't even think I could do.

**Q. Can you talk about what work went in right after the Western Amateur leading into the U.S. Amateur?**

BEN JAMES: Yeah, so like I said, I went down to Linville, North Carolina, stayed in a log cabin, worked with Jeff Pierce, Brooks Koepka's coach, and just worked on some swing things. Just kind of got all what was going on, like just kind of talked it out what was going on mentally on the golf course, what was wrong on the tee box. That was the problem, and I'm a really good driver of the ball, so had to get that fixed for sure. A little bit of everything, just talking it out, working on some swing things and learning how to be a kid and have fun because there's no reason to take this more serious than it is. It's just a game, and I'm going to work as hard as I can all the time, but it's just a game and I should have fun and love it.

**Q. Who's been the most significant person the last seven to ten days that's gotten you to that part mentally to just embrace the U.S. Amateur instead of thinking about what will happen with each round and what the ramifications are?**

BEN JAMES: I have a team. I have a lot of people, my mom, my dad, Jeff, Zach Allen, my agent, Puma, all the Transcend guys, Vin, my caddie. It's a team effort, it's not individually. So just to have them around me to help me out, lift spirits up. My mom and I just talking, she's just telling me to be a kid and have fun and doing some breathing techniques and just telling me to go out, hit the ball around the field and have fun.

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