

Marshall Kim

73rd U.S. Junior Amateur Championship Hawaii qualifier

This was my first time playing in a USGA event. When I arrived at the clubhouse of the Country Club of North Carolina, I was immediately greeted by a volunteer, who asked for my name and guided me to the registration room. Along with a parking pass, player guest badges, and yardage books, all players were asked to sign a piece to thank the Country Club of North Carolina.

One of the members guided me to the locker room and my own locker. I opened the locker and found tee gifts given to all participants by the USGA and the Country Club of North Carolina. My favorite tee gift was the custom yardage book that was made by a local shop in North Carolina that was started by a veteran. The yardage book was made of genuine leather and had a piece of a veteran's uniform stitched to the cover. Also, I hadn't noticed until the completion of my first practice round that my locker happened to be next to U.S. Open Champion Webb Simpson's locker, who is a member of the Country Club. Inside the locker room, there was a ping-pong table, a smoothie bar, and a counter where you could leave your shoes to be cleaned. To be frank, I was in awe.

Prior to the tournament, I was already in contact with my caddy, Nick Carney. I met him at the driving range prior to my first practice round. I found out that he is an active soldier and usually gets deployed for the last four months of every year. It was nice to know that the Country Club of North Carolina has a special membership program for people who serve our country. He knew how and where to leave the ball in order to approach the sloppy, firm, and grainy greens of the course.

This was the first time the U.S. Junior Amateur expanded its field to 264 players, so two courses were used for the qualifying rounds. On the first day, I played the Cardinal Course. I shot a +3 74 and was one stroke off the cut heading into the second day of qualifying at the statistically easier Dogwood course. Unfortunately, I shot a round of +7 79 at the Dogwood Course and ended up missing the cut by six strokes.

Although it was great to play in the 73rd U.S. Junior Amateur, I need to make sure I treat this as a learning opportunity.

