

Jim Ihm

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Country Club in Madison, he shot an even-par round of 72. Ihm finished second at the event, bouncing back from a double bogey on the 14th with an eagle on 15 and birdie on 17. His second-place finish earned him a spot in the coveted Senior Amateur Championship held in Detroit two weeks later. Amongst a field of 156 qualifying golfers playing at the Country Club of Detroit, Ihm shot a two-day score of 151, missing the cut by three strokes.

In May of 2022, Ihm also competed in a U.S. Senior Open qualifier in Cedarburg, WI, where he finished in a tie for 15th place among 55 golfers. With a three-over-par round of 75, Ihm wasn't among the top two finishers who advanced to play in the U.S. Senior Open that year.

A couple of months later, Ihm competed in Waukesha at a USGA Championship qualifier, where he finished third with an even-par round of 72, to become the first alternate for the U.S. Senior Amateur played in Marion, Massachusetts.

As an alternate, Ihm and his wife went out to Massachusetts, where he played two practice rounds, but never did make the final field.

"My wife was happy because we went to Martha's Vineyard and we did a lot of touristy stuff, but I was pretty grumpy because I wanted to play," Ihm said.

This past May, Ihm again played in a U.S. Senior Open qualifier in Stevens Point, where he nearly made the field for the 43rd U.S. Senior Open Championship, held at SentryWorld on June 27-July 2.

"I went up there thinking I've probably got to shoot a pretty good score obviously to get through, maybe one or two under, but they set the course up so difficult. It was crazy how hard they set the course up," Ihm said.

With his wife Laurie on his bag, Ihm was a little curious as to where he was sitting after just completing the 13th hole. A quick check of the leaderboard on her

phone, and Laurie revealed to Jim that he was actually in the lead.

"I was like, that's good. With five holes to go I'm right there, I'm in the hunt," Ihm said.

"I hit a really good second shot to a par-5 that

held at Martis Camp Club in Truckee, CA on Aug. 26-31.

If Ihm should qualify for the U.S. Senior Amateur Championship, and should he make the cut, he would then earn an exemption into the British Senior Amateur the following year, which

manage your ball so that you don't get in situations where your short sided or you're in rough that you just can't gauge how it's going to come out of," he added.

"Of course they make the greens so fast as well, that you just really have to be careful that you're managing your speed around the greens," he said. "The hardest part is the contouring of the greens. A lot of these greens that you play at a USGA event, they have a lot of slope. They really protect the greens too with the bunkering."

"It's super fun though and I really enjoy it. I enjoy the challenge of hard golf courses," Ihm added.

With that said, Ihm has made slight adjustments to his regular golf routine in preparation for the many challenges a USGA golf course presents.

"What I've changed the most is that I probably work more on my short game than what I ever used to. Basically the scoring shots around the green. I work a lot on my putting," Ihm said.

For the most part, Ihm has always been a self-taught golfer, watching others and making slight adjustments to his game over the years. He likes where his game is currently at, and doesn't feel the need to make any drastic changes though.

"I feel like it's in good shape. My swing feels good," Ihm said of his golf game.

"My swing is my swing at this point, I'm not really going to do much there. But what I work on more is my putting, and really trying to get that nailed down. That and the short game, the short chip shots and bunker shots - the scoring shots."

From those countless summer days spent as a youth at the Lancaster Country Club, to now pursuing his dream of playing in a British Senior Amateur, Jim Ihm has embraced all that the game of golf has to offer.

For as wonderfully frustrating as it can be, golf also possesses many remarkable attributes.

Not only does it possess the power to unite a family, but it can also spark a dream that got its beginnings as a young boy growing up next to a golf course in small town Wisconsin.

**"To play in a USGA event is just next level. It's an incredible experience. To play a golf course that's set up by the USGA is also quite the experience as well. Every blade of grass is perfect, the greens are perfect, the rough is thick. It's a difficult test."**

**- Jim Ihm  
1980 LHS Graduate**

just hit the front of the green and bled off to the right, going into the bunker," he explained. "If I would have gotten that up and down for birdie, I would have made it through. But, as it turned out, I hit a terrible shot. I scalded it across the green into the tall grass. I was literally one shot from possibly playing in the U.S. Senior Open."

Playing the final five holes at one over par, Ihm finished tied for 10th at the qualifier with a five-over-par round of 77.

"The funny part was, like three or four days before I went up to qualify for the Senior Open, I actually had a dream that I played a practice round with Steve Stricker at the Senior Open. So when I was playing well, I was like, 'Ya, this is going to happen.' Then one shot just kind of blew my day, but what a fun experience," Ihm said.

Ihm has actually played a round of golf with Stricker, back when his son Steven was playing professionally. Jim and Steven were invited to Madison by Stricker, where they golfed 18 holes at Bishops Bay. He remembers shooting a respectable 73 that day, while Stricker shot a 65, and Steven a 68.

The next big event for Ihm is the USGA Championship Qualifying held at the Oaks Golf Course in Cottage Grove on Aug. 10. If he can finish among the top two in a field of 84 golfers, he could earn a spot at the 68th U.S. Senior Amateur Championship

he also said is a goal of his within the next couple of years.

"There's not a day that goes by that I'm not working at it," Ihm said. "I work out pretty much every morning and I do a lot of different stretching because I'm 61 years old, so things don't work as they used to."

"I work out a couple times a day in really keeping myself physically fit," he added. "I know I've got a short window here and I kind of set that as the bar and as a goal to play some year in the British Senior Amateur. That's what I'm shooting for right now."

As much as he practices at his local courses in and around Dubuque, Ihm said it's very difficult to mimic the course conditions that are set up for a USGA event.

"To play in a USGA event is just next level," Ihm said. "It's an incredible experience. To play a golf course that's set up by the USGA is also quite the experience as well. Every blade of grass is perfect, the greens are perfect, the rough is thick. It's a difficult test."

"They really put a premium on accuracy, you have to hit fairways," Ihm explained. "If you're going to score on a USGA golf course, you have to hit the fairway. If you don't, you're usually just scrambling to try and get the ball up by the green and then you have to get up and down from a greenside bunker or from a green that might slope away."

"You really have to



Winning the 2023 Senior Club Championship at the Lancaster Country Club was Tim Farrey (right), who shot a two-day score of 144. Finishing second was brother David Farrey (left) who finished five strokes behind with a 149. The handicap winner was Tony Bausch, who with a handicap of 16 finished at 144, edging out Terry Kane, who finished with a 145 with an 18 handicap. The tournament was held last Saturday and Sunday.

Rodeo

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48th of 160 competitors at the time. In the second go-round she ran a time of :08.24 on the following Thursday, giving her a combined time of :16.95.

In barrel racing, Burks had a combined time of :36.052, after running an :18.08 in her first performance and a :17.972 in her second.

Kielley competed in steer wrestling at the National Finals, where he finished 106th of 131 competitors. After posting a time of :12.13 in his first go-round on Monday, he failed to record a time in his second go-round.

Vesperman also competed in steer wrestling, where he finished 47th of 131 competitors. With a run of :21.1 in his first go-round, he recorded a blistering :06.06 in his second run, giving him a combined time of :27.16.

Also competing in tie-down roping, Vesperman finished 48th of 140 competitors with a combined time of :32.54.

He ran a :13.99 on Tuesday which was 52nd of 103 in the first go-round and an :18.55 on Thursday which was 85th of 102 in the second go-round.

Vesperman also competed in trap shooting, where he tied for 35th of 133 participants by hitting 91-of-100 targets.

Heer competed in boys' cutting and tie-down roping, finishing 44th of 93 competitors in boys' cutting and 136th of 140 competitors in tie-down roping.

In the boys' cutting competition, Heer scored a total of 269 points, 132 on Monday during his first go-round, and 137 on the following Friday during his second.

In tie-down roping, he ran a :25.01 in his first go-round and did not have a time in his second.

This year marked the 75th year of the National High School Finals Rodeo, which featured more than 1,700 competitors from 44 states, five Canadian Provinces, Australia, Mexico and New Zealand.

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