



ALL-COUNTY BOYS TENNIS

Player of the Year

ELI KIM

URBANA SOPHOMORE SINGLES

- In his second season of high school tennis, advanced all the way to the Class 4A state final before falling to Winston Churchill's Thomas Gjoklaj in straight sets.
- Bounces back from a tough point or a bad game really well and does not get deflated. After finishing second in the county at No. 1 singles to an eventual state champion as a freshman last season, won his first 16 matches this season before losing in the 4A state final.
- Led a powerhouse Urbana squad to the county title in boys tennis.



FIRST TEAM

BRYCE FERGUSON JUNIOR SINGLES THOMAS JOHNSON

■ A consistent and patient player who advanced to the county final at No. 1 singles for the first time and suffered one of his two losses this season to eventual Class 4A state finalist Eli Kim of Urbana. Kim was the only player to beat him all season. Finished the season at 12-2.



RITVIK GONUGUNTA SENIOR DOUBLES URBANA

■ Won county and regional titles with partner Max Liu at No. 1 doubles before advancing to the Class 4A state final and falling in a pair of tiebreakers to a Montgomery Blair team in straight sets.



HARRY HERNANDEZ JUNIOR MIXED DOUBLES OAKDALE

■ Reached the Class 3A state quarterfinals in mixed doubles with partner Emma Dubnansky after playing in the 3A West regional final. Played No. 1 doubles for the Bears with a variety of partners.



MAXWELL LIU SENIOR DOUBLES URBANA

■ Won county and regional titles with partner Ritvik Gonugunta at No. 1 doubles before advancing to the Class 4A state final and falling in a pair of tiebreakers to a Montgomery Blair team in straight sets.



VISH MADDURI SENIOR MIXED DOUBLES URBANA

■ Won the Class 4A North regional title in mixed doubles with partner Arshia Malhotra and then advanced as far as the state semifinals. Also won the county title at No. 2 singles for the Hawks.



JACK PENG SENIOR DOUBLES TUSCARORA

■ Played singles for much of the season before reuniting with his doubles partner of the last four years, Gary Zheng, and finishing second in the county at No. 1 doubles and fourth in the Class 3A West regional tournament.



GARY ZHENG SENIOR DOUBLES TUSCARORA

■ After overcoming an injury, he reunited with his doubles partner of the last four years, Jack Peng, and finished second in the county at No. 1 doubles and fourth in the Class 3A West regional tournament.



HONORABLE MENTION

Brunswick—Wyatt Guyton, Aiden McDonald, Chris Price, Luke Prosnick

Catoctin—Zach Kerr, Blake Smith, Connor Smith, Jack Starlipier

Frederick—Grant Bugg, Theo Dimitriou, Gabe Salamanca, A.J. Welde

Linganore—Prateek Bhuvanesh, Kyle Nicholson, Yohith Yannam

Middletown—Hayden Geary, James Weise, Henry Zuretti

Oakdale—Ajay Arun, Ayman El-Sharif, Manav Patel, Joe Thomas, Adam Weed

St. John's Catholic Prep—Michael Gallagher

Thomas Johnson—Aritro Dey, Sean Mayers, Ahrin Pandya

Tuscarora—Kevin Chen, Jay Wilson

Urbana—Nithin Kota, Arush Kumar, Nikhil Neelagiri, Ryan Woody

Walkersville—Jacob Dellamura, Lucas Munro

Scheffler hits reset button for British Open after rare missed cut

By DOUG FERGUSON
AP Golf Writer

SOUTHPORT, England (AP) — Scottie Scheffler finally heard about the text his PGA Tour friend never sent, a reminder that even the No. 1 player in golf with four majors and more than 20 victories doesn't know everything.

It was a list of things to do on the weekend after missing the cut.

"He was like: 'Hey, you can practice at the facilities. You can still go to the gym. You can also go to the next tournament.' It was basically all my options," Scheffler said Tuesday ahead of the British Open. "He never sent it to me, but he told me about it."

The reason the text was created — without being sent, to Scheffler's disappointment — was missing the cut at the Scottish Open, his first missed cut in nearly four years, a streak of 78 consecutive cuts that was the longest since Tiger Woods set the record (142) from 1998 to 2005.

Frustrating, yes. Despair? Hardly.

"You never want to have a weekend off, but going into a tournament when you're defending, there's always a bit more stuff to do," Scheffler said. "So it wasn't the worst thing in the world."

Among his duties was officially returning the claret jug he won last year at Royal Portrush, a ritual the Royal & Ancient has turned into a



Associated Press

Scottie Scheffler speaks during a press conference ahead of the British Open Golf at Royal Birkdale golf club, in Southport, England, Tuesday.

ceremony. Then, it was playing an exhibition with Jordan Spieth, Tommy Fleetwood, Justin Rose and others.

But key to Scheffler's early arrival was Royal Birkdale, which has hosted the British Open more than any other links course in England since it first joined the rotation in 1954.

He had never seen it. Scheffler had not seen conditions like this — a combination of yellow and brown, which translates to firm and fiery in a links vocabulary. St. Andrews came close in 2022, but Jon Rahm

recalls the greens still being soft enough to allow for low scoring.

Scheffler ticked off two items on his friend's list — he went to the gym in Scotland and then headed to the next tournament. That allowed him time to play 18 holes on Sunday, and to limit his energy in sunbaked Blighty to nine holes on Monday and Tuesday.

His general assessment: "The ball is just going to run forever."

Is it driver to take it over the bunkers and possibly reach the green on the 393-yard, downwind 16th hole,

or hit iron off the tee? Is the redesigned fifth hole at 321 yards worth trying to reach with a pond to the right, a series of bunkers short and a wee part of a wee burn to the left?

"On each hole there's a good bit of strategy. There's a decent amount of thinking," Scheffler said. "If it wasn't as firm as it is now, there would be as much decision-making. But I think with the firmness, it creates a whole lot more challenges."

Rose is among four players — and at 45, the youngest — to have played Royal Birkdale three times in the Open dating to 1998. He was a 17-year-old amateur that year, full of joy and optimism when he holed out a wedge for birdie on the 18th to tie for fourth. He didn't finish in the top 50 his two times as a professional.

Rose certainly has more experience than Scheffler, but only to a point.

"A links course is interesting because you never really get to know them that well," Rose said. "Like 2008 I think it was, weather was dreadful. It was wet. You might have been hitting 2-irons and 3-woods into par 4s, and now you could be flicking 52-degree wedges."

"A golf course can play so differently decade to decade when we come back that you never really get to know the course that well."

Scheffler said he felt at peace about his game, and he certainly looked the part. His game didn't

look deplorable in the Scottish Open, just a matter of not hitting it terribly close and not making many putts and then moving on.

It was no less frustrating — Scheffler is a killer when it comes to competing, which is one reason he has been No. 1 longer than anyone since Woods — but it was filled with perspective.

"I don't think it hurts as much as coming close to winning and finishing second," Scheffler said. "I felt like coming in second at Travelers hurt more than missing the cut, but missing the cut is significantly more frustrating is how I would describe it."

He's had plenty of experience finishing second. Scheffler's lone victory this year was his first tournament in January at The American Express. Since then, he has had four runner-up finishes, including the Masters. The most recent was a playoff loss to Viktor Hovland at the Travelers Championship two weeks ago when Scheffler missed a 4-foot slider.

"I think just towards the end of the season, you get a little tired," Scheffler said. "I got a couple days off, reset the mind, reset the body, and just kind of get back to feeling even and at peace. I've had a very solid year, but like I said, frustrating at times because I've been close and I haven't been able to get it done like I have been in years past."

"I'm excited to try and defend my title this week."