

Ohio State Graduate Golfer Neal Shipley Wins Silver Cup, Pairs With Tiger Woods At Masters



Ohio State graduate golfer Neal Shipley earned the opportunity to compete on the sport's grandest stage this weekend, when he participated in the 2024 Masters Tournament held at historic Augusta National Golf Club in Augusta, Ga.

Shipley, a Pittsburgh native who transferred to Ohio State from James Madison in 2023, qualified for the 88th Masters after finishing as a runner-up in the U.S. Amateur Championship held last August. And despite being just one of five amateurs to play at Augusta this year, Shipley certainly made the most of his opportunity.

The 23-year-old began his first ever major tournament on a strong note, shooting a 1-under 71 in the first round held on Thursday, a mark that was tied for 14th place. Shipley experienced a bit of a setback in the second round on Friday, shooting a 4-over 76, but his combined score of 3-over-par was enough for him to make the final cut and advance to the last two rounds of the tournament.

Shipley became just the fourth-ever Ohio State golfer to make the 36-hole cut at the Masters as a low amateur and the second ever Buckeye to earn the Silver Cup — awarded to the low amateur golfer who makes the final cut — joining only legendary PGA golfer and six-time Masters champion Jack Nickalus in 1960.

Entering the weekend tied for 30th on the leaderboard, Shipley had another setback in the third round held on Saturday, shooting 8-over 80. But while his second-and-third round performances essentially put him out of contention, Shipley had perhaps his most notable moment in the final round of the tournament held on Sunday.

Accompanied by his caddie and former high school teammate Carter Pitcairn, Shipley was paired in the final round with five-time Masters champion and 15-time major Tiger Woods. Shipley, who was seen numerous times chatting and walking with the 48-year-old Woods throughout the final 18 holes, said sharing the greens with a golfing legend like Woods at the Masters was an experience he will never forget.

"Obviously, shooting 80 is never fun, I wasn't too pleased after the (third) round," Shipley said after the tournament. "We went quickly to the practice facility to get some work in, and my caddie came up to me

and said, 'Guess who we're going to be paired with tomorrow?' And I was just like, 'No way, is it Tiger?' And he's like, 'Yeah.' I got pretty excited then, that's when the emotions kind of turned around."

"Being out there with Tiger, we were chatty, we talked a lot about golf, (Woods' son Charlie Woods), just normal things. He's such a normal guy, and really cool. He was great to me all day and couldn't be more appreciative of him for just being awesome today. It was really cool to be around him. Just the attention he gets and the roars, just the crowds were phenomenal."

Shipley shot an impressive 1-over 73 in the final round — besting Woods' final round total of 5-over 77 — giving him a final score 12-over 300, a mark that was tied 53rd on the final leaderboard. Shipley's score was lower than a number of experienced and well-known golfers, including Woods (16-over 304) along with Sergio Garcia, Jordan Spieth and Justin Thomas, who all missed the final cut.

Shipley's Masters experience did not end on the green, though. By winning the Silver Cup, the Ohio State graduate earned an invitation to Butler Cabin, where — alongside longtime CBS broadcaster Jim Nantz and Augusta National Chairman Fred Ridley — he watched 2023 Masters champion Jon Rahm present the green jacket to 2024 winner Scottie Scheffler.

"Playing with Tiger Sunday at the Masters and the whole week I've had, I think I'd have to win one of these to top this week," Shipley said after he left Butler Cabin. "So it's definitely been a dream week, but looking forward to being out here soon hopefully."

Following his eventful four days at Augusta National, Shipley — who is expected to turn pro in the next couple of months — will now return to Columbus and finish out his final collegiate season at Ohio State. He will gear up to compete in the Big Ten Championship held at Columbus' Scioto Country Club from April 26-28.