

# Lovemark Earns Historic Victory in 103rd Western Amateur

By Gary Holaway

Benton Harbor, Mich. (Sunday, July 31) – Seventeen-year-old Jamie Lovemark made history Sunday in the 103rd Western Amateur, becoming the youngest player ever to win the championship and only the third player to win both the Western Junior and the Western Amateur.

Not since Bobby Clampett won both championships in 1978 had the feat been accomplished. Jim Wiechers was the first, and only other, golfer to win both, claiming the Western Junior in 1964 and the Western Amateur in 1966.

Lovemark, who won the Western Junior in July 2004 at Denver Country Club, cruised to the 2005 Western Amateur title at Point O' Woods Golf and Country Club in Benton Harbor, Mich., winning his



Photo: Clarence Sorimin

Jamie Lovemark won the 103rd Western Amateur

semifinal match, 5 and 4, over 20-year-old Luke List, a junior at Vanderbilt, and claiming the championship with a 3 and 2 win over another 20-year-old, Chris Wilson, a junior at Northwestern.

By winning the Western Amateur, Lovemark also earned an exemption to play in the 2006 Cialis Western Open, the PGA TOUR's annual stop at Cog Hill Golf Club in Lemont, Illinois. That makes him eligible to play in all three WGA championships next year. On Sunday, Lovemark still was at a loss for words to describe his thoughts on winning the Western Junior and Western Amateur in a 13-month span.

"Right now it's very hard to explain. It hasn't really sunk in," said Lovemark, of Rancho Santa Fe, Calif. "When I wake up, I think I'll realize I just won one of the best amateur tournaments in the country. It's beyond words ... it's pretty much beyond belief to me. That's quite an honor to win both."

Lovemark, a senior at Torrey Pines High School, recorded his historic Western Amateur win while playing in just his second amateur event. He played in the 2003 U.S. Amateur but failed to make match play.

“I’ve haven’t really played against these guys,” he said. “My first round (in stroke play on Wednesday), I shot 69. I looked at the other scores and realized I could play with them.”

Success at the junior level also helped prepare him mentally. “I’ve won some pretty big events, the Western Junior and the Rolex (Junior All-American),” he said. “You have to learn how to win first. Once you win, it becomes easier.”

Lovemark indicated he’s looking forward to testing his game against the world’s best golfers at the Cialis Western Open in July 2006. “That’s like a newer level. That’s as high as it gets,” he said. “I’m going to work really hard over the year, and, hopefully, I’ll be ready for it.”

For now, Lovemark expects to drop plans to play in next week’s Pacific Coast Amateur. “I’m pretty sure I’m going to cancel that and go back home and rest,” he said. “I knew a lot about this tournament. I knew you had to play a lot of golf ...” – 72 holes of stroke play and four 18-hole matches for the champion and runner-up.

Lovemark played fewer holes than his opponents in match play; none of his matches went past the 16th hole – his four victories were 3 and 2, 3 and 2, 5 and 4 and 3 and 2. Wilson, who fell in the final, went the full 18 holes in two of his matches and needed 22 holes to win his quarterfinal match.

For Wilson, of Dublin, Ohio, the finish was bittersweet. It was his best performance in a national amateur event, but he couldn’t help pondering what might have been.

“Jamie’s a great player, and he deserves it. When you’re playing a player of Jamie’s capacity, all facets of your game have to be at the top,” Wilson said. “I missed a couple of putts I should have made. I didn’t drive it as well

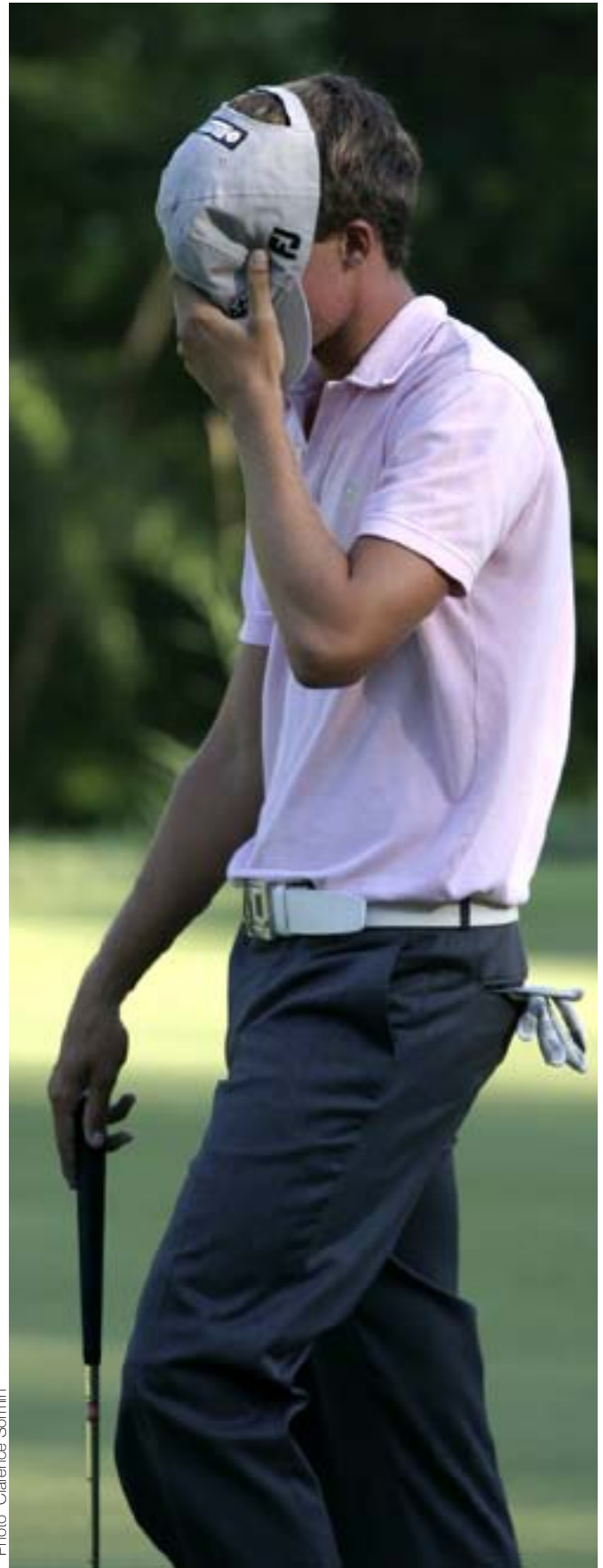


Photo: Clarence Sorimin

**Jamie Lovemark reacts after sinking a 37 yard eagle putt on Hole Number 2 during the playoff.**

as I did yesterday. It just comes down to who makes the putts. Today, he made a couple and I missed a couple.”

Although most junior events are stroke play, Lovemark proved match play fits his game. “I consider myself a good match play player,” he said. “I try to make people make birdies and not let them win holes with par. I’m very aware of the strategies involved in match play.”

Making your own birdies helps, too. In his morning semi-final match against List, Lovemark made four birdies on the front nine to take a 3-up lead at the turn, and birdied the par 4, 422-yard, 16th to notch the 3 and 2 victory. Against Wilson, he birdied the first hole to take a lead he never lost.

Wilson advanced to the championship match by edging New Zealander Brad Iles, 1 up, in his morning semifinal. Wilson took a 1-up lead on the second hole against Iles and built the lead to 3-up through 13 holes. Iles scratched back, winning the next two holes to cut Wilson’s lead to 1-up, but Wilson managed to halve the last three holes, sinking an 8-foot, uphill par putt on the par 4, 421-yard, 18th to seal the win.

*Gary Holaway is  
Communications Director,  
Western Golf Association MG*

## **30 Year Return at 103rd Western Amateur**

**By Scott Sullivan**

**I** admitted I was powerless over golf 30 years ago.

There were relapses. Now and then I would whack a bucketful with my old steel-shafted clubs, tune in telecasts to inflame the sense of transport the sport gave me, even play rounds of mini-golf to see if my only gift — for bouncing balls off the spinning windmill blade — had deserted me.

But play real golf? View a tournament firsthand? The thought triggered memories of 12-step programs and 12-stroke holes. There are only recovering golfaholics.

“If you start me up, I’ll never stop,” the Rolling Stones sang ... and keep singing. Same with me and golf. Visions of myself clinging to a mashie, like Mick to a microphone or Keith to his sunburst Gibson till we are all older than Methuselah were, ewww ... Don’t make a grown man cry.

Still, 30 years? Surely I had licked this. So when the chance came to view the 103rd Western Amateur at Point O’ Woods Golf and Country Club July 30, I decided to prove golf had no more grip on me. It was only a

Tiger Woods drive from home, the sun was shining, the weather perfect. This would be a watershed, not my Waterloo, I felt sure.

My confidence began withering upon entering what designer Robert Trent Jones called “perhaps my best American golf course.” One minute you’re cruising the Red Arrow Highway near Benton Harbor, the next you’re in Wonderland, where fairways are like greens, greens like magic carpets. Bunkers, shaped like amoebas or Rorschach ink blots, hold sand so white it has to be manufactured.

Sentinel trees dwarfed two-man armies — golfers and caddies, advancing on pins — framed by mirror ponds and hallucinatory blooms that seemed to radiate their own light.

God grant me the serenity ... Cathedral silences were broken by twittering birds as lean-jawed athletes under ballcaps addressed balls aggressively, swung and, CLINK!, sent them shooting rocket-like toward feathery, soft-plunk landings.

I was one with the gallery, whispering/murmuring speculations and second-guessing golfers whose toenails held more talent than I could hope for or even