

KORN FERRY TOUR CHAMPIONSHIP
presented by Virginia's Richmond Region

ROUND 1 QUOTES
October 8, 2026



JAMES NICHOLAS (-5)

Q. James, 5 under today. What was working well with your game, and just overall thoughts of the course first time playing it in competition?

JAMES NICHOLAS: Honestly, first things first, this feels like -- this is the Northeast, this is where I grew up. Grew up in New York playing courses like this all the time. Bentgrass greens, bluegrass rough, so this felt like home. Finally felt nice to actually be in a, not atmosphere but the conditions that reminded me of what it was like to play golf growing up.

Putted really, really nicely, which was a change. I think I put I don't know how many hours of work on the game the last couple weeks, missing the cut last week, doing a junior clinic. I think this is what you dream as a kid, to have this opportunity and to be able to come out here and play well in the first round, it just means it's a good start. We're far from Sunday afternoon, but got to take one step in that direction and it was nice to do that today.

Q. Knowing where you are on the points list down this stretch of the Finals, do you feel like you've put more pressure on yourself or on your game maybe?

JAMES NICHOLAS: I think maybe in the middle part of the year, knowing with a win you're kind of in the driver's seat. Towards the end, seeing myself kind of slip down the points list, I sort of -- I talked to my wife a lot about taking that pressure off because in the beginning of the year you have this expectation obviously after the win of OK, you're going to get your Tour card, you're sitting fifth on the points list after four weeks, just kind of keep that up and you'll be there. Then you fast forward 13 weeks and wow, 30th on the points list.

But now needing a win essentially coming into this week takes that pressure off. Allows me to play more free, allows my game to shine more than hinder and play with that sort of tension that I think I did in the middle of the season.

Q. Has it changed your strategy much? I know we talked earlier in the year when you said you need big finishes and wins anyway, so it's not just enough to make the cut. So does it really change your game plan that much compared to normally?

JAMES NICHOLAS: Actually, our pro-am partner asked me that in the pro-am and the answer's no. My caddie, Jeremiah, and I play practice rounds for a reason and we try to make the best game plan, shoot the best score.



So when you're looking at each hole, it's like how do I defeat this hole. That doesn't necessarily mean pushing it all the way up or taking on a risky line regardless of what you're trying to do. That's sort of the game plan and it sticks the same no matter where you are on the leaderboard.

Q. A lot of guys at 5 under right now. What's it like playing with a bunched up leaderboard?

JAMES NICHOLAS: Yeah, I'm not looking at the leaderboard. I honestly just don't even watch because all I can control is the way I play, I can't control what everybody else shoots. If someone goes and shoots 59 four days in a row, it's going to be tough to catch.

But I know if I go and play my best golf, I should be near the top of the leaderboard and give myself a chance. Talk about it a lot with my mental coach, Dr. Joe Parent. Just being in the mix is fun, get those nerves, get that pressure and that's why we play this game. Everybody's out here for the same reasons and to be in the mix.

Q. Is there a number that you have in mind to win this week?

JAMES NICHOLAS: Oh, gosh. I mean, with the weather coming on Sunday, you never really know. I think it's going to get firmer and firmer day by day, which will make it a little tougher and tougher. But like I said, hole by hole, just try to do the best I can.

Q. Thinking ahead through the rest of the week, is that something you guys are thinking about when you know weather's coming on Sunday? Is that something you can prep for, plan for?

JAMES NICHOLAS: I think thinking ahead is something that we're always going to do as players whether it's the weather, the score, imagining yourself coming down 18 with the lead. That is like being an athlete and wanting to be in those situations.

But you've got to try to catch that and bring it back to the moment because if your mind drifts out here, it's going to bite you. So that's something that I work on a lot, try to just bring it back to the moment and be here now.

