



U.S. Amateur Four-Ball

May 16, 2026

Desert Mountain Club, Scottsdale, Ariz.

First Round (Cochise Course)

Sam Engel & Brian Blanchard

Q. 2024 Four-Ball champions, you've had this one circled for a while being Scottsdale residents. What was it like hitting the first two shots this morning to begin the championship?

Blanchard: "I'm glad there's a lot of grass out there to be honest. Being home, sleeping in my own bed last night, it's what we practice for, for moments like that and I'm glad it's finally here."

Engel: "It's an honor, the USGA, whoever made that decision to let us open it up, it's a real honor and was an awesome experience. We know a lot of people that are involved with running this championship, so very cool full-circle moment, especially with us playing junior golf here in Arizona to be able to tee off as champions."

Q. Sam, you birdied holes 2, 3 and 4 how important was that fast start in the early morning?

Engel: "Last year, early on my putter was ice cold. We've played a lot of golf together since then, but when I saw that one go in on No. 2, it was a decent-sized putt, I was just like, I owed Brian, it was a little exhale that we were off and running and it really helped us just settle in."

Q: Bogey free today, what was the best part of your individual games out there?

Blanchard: "I was steady today. There were some holes, he was a little more flashy than me today, but I just played steady. If he hit it in the desert, I'd have a birdie attempt and felt pretty good about that part of today."

Engel: "This might sound so cliché, when we're playing four-ball there is no individual game, every shot he hits is my shot too, we are always trying to figure out where is the strategy if one guy hits a low-percentage chance at an up and down, the other guy is playing the right percentages and from a strategy perspective, especially in stroke play, that's it. One guy might play a little more conservatively."

Q: You have played a lot of golf in the desert golf together, what was it like teeing it up at desert course in a USGA championship?

Engel: "It was surprisingly comfortable. We've just played so much desert golf together, we know what's out there, this course isn't super narrow, you just must commit to your shots and if you go out there and fully commit, you'll be rewarded with good looks."