

Travelers Championship

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TPC River Highlands

Cromwell, Connecticut, USA

Jordan Spieth

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good morning. We are joined by 2017 Travelers Championship Jordan Spieth. Jordan, welcome back here. You're making your seventh start. What's it like to be back here in Connecticut?

JORDAN SPIETH: First and foremost, every time I come here, I think about maybe the coolest moment I've had, like moment in golf, which is in 2017 in that playoff. So it's always fun to kind of relive that when I come here and get out on the course.

I have great memories here. I've had some mixed results, but coming in right now, I feel like it's a pretty important event for me. I feel like I've been moving the right direction after kind of essentially missing an off-season, trying to kind of get back into it. Every month's felt a little bit better. Structurally things are getting better. I'm seeing more consistent ball striking results. Just need to pour in some putts.

Q. Just got announced here a couple minutes ago, AT&T has renewed for a multi-year deal. As an ambassador, what's it like to see that's going to be a continued event here with the AT&T Pebble Beach?

JORDAN SPIETH: Well, I was going to play it every year anyway, so it's kind of nice they're going to renew for one of these elevated events.

We saw what's possible on the tough end two years ago with obviously a crazy storm that knocks out the final round, and then we saw kind of this last year how amazing this model can look on one of the greatest golf courses in the world with one of the greatest champions that we've had in Rory winning there.

All in all, I think it's amazing. Having been on kind of single-year partnerships with the TOUR the last couple years, to make a commitment there is really big for us players, for the PGA TOUR, and hopefully AT&T reaps the benefits that they're hoping for as well.

I know that in the last year it's been a really positive shift

around that tournament from their perspective, so it's nice to -- I think it's awesome. I was a huge proponent of trying to get that event to be elevated a few years back, just thinking how often can we get the best players in the world all together playing on the greatest golf courses in the world. That one obviously is -- between there and Riviera early in the season, it doesn't get any better.

Q. With the setup being so difficult last week, is it nice to get to a course like this where you know you're going to be able to shoot something under par?

JORDAN SPIETH: Definitely. I think we can do a pretty good job of separating scores. It's more strokes gained scores in our minds now, the way we operate when you look at stats. Although overall it kind of stinks to shoot 75 no matter where you are when you're not used to doing it, in general you think of it as shooting a few under. Everything is five to six shots higher at a U.S. Open round to round than maybe the average score out here.

I think the toughest part is the mentality of, okay, I can actually attack a little bit more, or I've got to pour this putt in. You want it -- pushing it from -- you get out at a U.S. Open, you're 2-under, you're kind of sitting there a little reserved, okay, I've got three really hard holes coming up, let's hit three greens, versus here it's like I've got to push this from two to five or seven, whatever it may be, to keep up.

It's just more of -- I don't think it's too challenging of a shift relative to the other players. It's more just kind of getting back into the swing of things of like, all right, actually I have a 7-iron in my hand, but I can -- I don't have to be quite as careful, I guess.

Having said that, the rough's up about as high as I've seen it here ever, and then it played obviously very long yesterday and today with these conditions, which will change. It's no gimme golf course, especially if we're going to see windy conditions.

Yeah, short answer to your question is, yeah, it's kind of nice. It would be hard to play something like that last week every single week, but at the same time, you get a lot of



risk/reward on the back nine here, which can yield 3-, 4-, 5-under rounds, but you can also get in big-time trouble, especially on the back nine.

Q. The last two winners on TOUR are late bloomers. Ryan Fox is 38; he's won two of his last four starts. J.J. is having the best year of his career deep into his 30s. Is that inspiring a little bit? We see a lot of success from the young guys, but you can have success in this sport at any age.

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I think maybe there's been a shift of -- I don't want to say less of late bloomers, people in their 30s and 40s winning, but it seems like there's less than there was 30 years ago. With the game switching so much to athleticism and power and speed, you're likely going to see it stay the way it is, where the young guys come out and they can make a splash.

That's the beauty about golf is you can -- Phil was 52 when he won the PGA. Is that right?

Q. 50 maybe.

JORDAN SPIETH: Was he 50? You can win in our sport at the highest level. You have 30 years where it's been done, where it's possible. Seeing J.J. grind it out, seeing his story of essentially saying, if this is the end, middle of last year, then so be it, and turn it around in his season and almost winning two of the biggest four events this year is certainly inspiring.

Then Foxy obviously knocked on the door a number of years, and then to come through a couple times this year was amazing. I just thought that final round -- I don't watch a lot of golf, and it was incredibly entertaining.

Q. The Canadian Open?

JORDAN SPIETH: Sorry, I meant the U.S. Open. The Canadian finish was as well. It's kind of a couple straight Sundays of can't take your eyes off it, you don't know what's going to happen. It was cool.

Q. Jordan, you mentioned your coolest moment and coming back and reliving it. I'm just wondering, how often do you run across the video of that? Do you go out of your way to see it at certain times, to watch it, or do you maybe just run across it randomly? How often do you kind of see that shot and the call and all of that?

JORDAN SPIETH: Less and less as time has passed. I felt like it was on every promo thing that would come on past the TV. It's on the Golf Channel, on a promo with

other winning moments with other guys from a number of years, but now it's been so long, it's kind of -- I don't think I've ever searched it out. I haven't searched it out since that day maybe seeing it.

You come back here, you walk down by the locker room, there's a big screen, and it will show different moments from this tournament, so I see it there. It was just one of those I just don't know how or if I would ever have something that's kind of that epic in the sport. Just the way this -- I mean, there was, I don't know, 20,000 people around the hole, amphitheater setting, and everyone just going crazy. Well, there it is right there. It pops up here and there.

I'd love to have another opportunity, but stuff like that, you just have to relish and recognize that they're few and far between.

Q. Going back about 10 years, what were some of the things that after you won your first major championship, that maybe happened to you or that changed that maybe you didn't anticipate? No one had told you that, hey, after you win a major, this is stuff that you might expect or that you might not have thought of that's going to change the way either you operate, your family stuff, anything that you might tell or share with J.J. that things are going to change for you now that you've won a major championship?

JORDAN SPIETH: I think it was maybe a lack of more than anything else. I just came back, and I remember within a couple weeks later, it was like -- I played the next week, but I came back, I had kind of a crazy run of heightened attention for a few weeks as I went to the Texas events and stuff. Then all of a sudden, somebody else had won an event, and it's just golf.

It was crazy because, to me, I'm like what's this -- you go to New York City, and everyone is kind of recognizing you, and you go to dinner there, and people stand up and clap around the whole restaurant. I'm just like, oh, boy, I don't love this.

It's very cool. Everyone's very nice, but you just don't feel like you can kind of -- you just feel like your peripheral vision is always activated when you're out.

But then I think the biggest thing is after a few weeks, it was just golf, and somebody else won another event. It sticks with you in history, and you accomplish your goals, not to diminish it whatsoever. It's just that it wasn't like -- I guess maybe it was bigger to me, and everything kind of just went back to the world going around again quicker than you just kind of realize, I guess.



Q. After you win another one, which for you obviously happened relatively quickly, does it sort of reset and it starts again, or after the first one it's not quite --

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, obviously that year played out kind of like that and for a few years. I think, if I get the opportunity to win another one again -- maybe this helps, maybe this is an answer you're looking for, but I think relishing in, okay, you win a couple in a row and you think, okay, maybe I can win a bunch. Obviously that's the goal, but not many people have done it a bunch.

I think recognizing how special those are, appreciating the work and the support and the team around you that's gotten you there and just enjoying accomplishing those kind of goals maybe more than I took them for granted in a way just because you kind of hope or seem that they keep happening.

Q. Jordan, you mentioned Sunday being must-see TV at Oakmont. I just wanted to get your thoughts on having a Signature Event the week after a major championship. Obviously you guys are putting so much into trying to win a major championship, but the TOUR gets to pick up on that momentum from a major as well. What are your thoughts on it?

JORDAN SPIETH: I think this one is -- this is a unique one because it's tougher if the U.S. Open is on the West Coast, then you're going cross country right off a major. It's an event that I played post-U.S. Open a couple times, a few times before it was elevated anyways because it's such a great event.

We have two elevated events right after majors, and two of them we don't -- or two of the majors we don't. I'm not sure. I've played a lot this year, and I've been playing a lot the last few years, and I don't mind it right now. So I may not be the best person to ask versus somebody who's picking a tighter schedule and maybe would like it the week before where we don't have one this year, we did last year the week before.

Not everybody in these events are in the majors or not everybody makes the cut from the major and would like to get a chance at a big event the next week. I haven't had a hard time getting up for the events after. I adjusted my schedule this week versus Hilton Head, because Hilton Head on Monday I took off fully, and I thought, okay, I need to kind of get ready, and I came out and did a couple hours on Monday just to kind of -- I was striking it well, so just keep the pattern going and go work a little bit on some stuff that I needed to work on. I was very happy coming out and doing that even though it was a Monday post-major.

Q. Based on that, where would you assess your game right now? What are you happy with? What do you think you need to work on a little bit?

JORDAN SPIETH: I'm pleased with most everything. I'm just kind of -- I feel like I'm getting done with the round and my scoring is -- a couple times during the week, there's just kind of two shots that I'm like, man, if I just played two strokes better today. Normally that comes down to capitalizing on the short game stuff, taking advantage of easy holes, making putts.

Last week I had a lot of momentum, and then I made a triple with just making a mistake on a couple putts, hitting them a little bit too hard where I wanted to make the par, didn't want to make the bogey. I held patient all week and made the one U.S. Open mistake you can't make, which is to try to do something a little special.

Other weeks it's, man, I felt like I hit a good tee shot, and I missed it by five yards, I missed it by three, something like that, where there was a stroke or two difference.

It feels like I just need to stay the course and good things are coming. I think the biggest thing for me right now is not trying -- it's going to be harder and harder as we get to the end of the season to try to force results given I only have however many events left now. I don't have the runway that you had in February.

So if it all comes together by the end of the season, great. If not, it's already been pretty much a better season, you know, on the better end of what I could have asked for coming off surgery and starting late into the season.

I'm looking forward to this week. This is a big week. The Open is a big week. Then look to the playoffs, and there's a chance I'd add an event somewhere. I'm not sure. It will just kind of depend on the standings because the idea is to make it to East Lake.

Q. In terms of your recovery between events Sunday night, Monday, either physical or mental, what would you say is the importance of that overall, and does it kind of change week to week, or do you put more focus on it a week after the U.S. Open that can be kind of grueling?

JORDAN SPIETH: I had a few beers Sunday. I went to -- we were waiting on the Schefflers to come over here, and he was after the delay. So I went to Buffalo Wild Wings with Michael. I didn't exactly eat or drink the way I normally do there.

Most of the time, it's very, very good, but sometimes post-U.S. Open I just needed to throw a few back. Then by yesterday I was good. Still young enough that that doesn't really bother me the next day.

I think it's not so different week to week. It's changed a lot for me over the last few years, especially traveling with my family and stuff like that. Also having the accessibility we have now out here with the recovery trailer and physios being super accessible and stuff. So my recovery post-event into the beginning of next week is I'm getting on top of it quite a bit more than I used to, which is great.

I feel like, off of last week, it was a pretty tough walk -- this is my 10th out of 12 weeks as well, so my legs were a little clumsy the last two days. I woke up this morning and feel ready and fresh, and that's kind of what you're looking for. If you can get there by Wednesday morning or sooner after hitting a couple training sessions and kind of getting everything on the recovery side going, then we're good to go.

Yeah, I eat very clean and think a lot about recovery now. That's going to have to continue as I get older.

Q. Specifically this week, the 4th hole has been the toughest hole here over the last five years. I was wondering if you can speak to the nature of that hole and how you kind of game plan and think about that hole and its challenge.

JORDAN SPIETH: It's a really tough drive. It's probably the narrowest area to hit driver. If you pull it off, it's just an 8 or maybe even a 9-iron downwind, so it's not too bad.

Where you miss the fairway is where it becomes a challenge because both bunkers are difficult to get it on the green. Then the miss for most people is going to be over the right bunker. It's some of the thicker rough on the golf course, and they have a tree blocking you from being able to go at the green.

So it's all in really the tee ball. From there, you're trying to hit the middle of the green. Most of the pins are over by the runoff on the right side. So even when you hit the middle of the green, you kind of have to be defensive with your putt.

All in all, it's a hard par-4. It's not surprising that it's playing the toughest. I think we're going to see a couple different winds there this week, but primarily downwind, which helps. Then that 4-5 stretch, those two holes, you're looking at, hey, let's just get it on center of the green for a birdie putt, and if you can play them both even par, you beat the field. There's plenty of other chances out here.

Q. With the news yesterday of Brian stepping in as the new CEO, just what are your thoughts on that? Have you had the chance to speak with him yet?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I did yesterday, and I thought his comments to the players that were there, I really, really liked him. I think he seems like a steal from the most successful sports organization in the world and someone who is on the path to becoming potentially commissioner over there to coming over and taking the PGA TOUR forward.

I think he resonated a lot with some of the players about challenging some of the networks on how they're showing the product. Then being open and willing to adapt and change while maintaining the integrity of the game.

I think he said all the right things. From other players to other people that are sponsors that have reached out to me since have all been super excited about that hire and that we're very lucky to have him.

Q. And when you did speak with him yesterday, what was that conversation like?

JORDAN SPIETH: It was just kind of an introduction, not much more than that. It was with a couple others, and I was just kind of mentioning how I was on the board and I'm not anymore, and so on and so forth.

Yeah, he's encouraging everyone to reach out, and he's going to reach out to players, and he wants their perspective on things. As you know, we can get quite opinionated about certain things, so I'm sure he'll take what he knows to be something that could help and not.

It just seems like he can bring a wealth of experience in a lot of places, but then he's super open to learning more about golf and the PGA TOUR's business and the product itself from those that know more about it until he gets caught up.

It just seems like a very -- I mean, it seems like a great approach that sponsors are going to really enjoy, players are going to really enjoy, the networks should enjoy working with him, and that combination hopefully makes the product better and better for the fan, which is really what we're trying to do.

Q. Jordan, you mentioned earlier your stretch of playing golf. You've done 7 of the last 8 events. Just how do you keep a pace that allows you to have reasonable goals that you set to get the results that you want?

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JORDAN SPIETH: What do you mean by a pace?

Q. I mean, I think 7 out of 8 weeks, you're on the road a lot.

JORDAN SPIETH: Like when I'm scheduling it?

Q. Yes.

JORDAN SPIETH: I didn't play a tournament for six months, so that helps. That gets a fire under you and makes you want to be out there. From there, with Dallas and Fort Worth being important to me and where they were on the schedule, I was kind of stuck in how often I was going to play this time of year.

Then it was where do I take days off? How do I prepare? How am I taking care of my body? How am I eating? Just really taking a -- once I started, went down to San Antonio, it was, okay, we're about to start this heavy, heavy stretch that has a few majors and a bunch of elevated events mixed in. I've got to be really diligent about what I do.

Most importantly for me, not every event is going to go great. If you can feel like you're getting better each stretch, a little bit better, then that should be the goal because it's still going to be long term coming back from this injury and I shouldn't expect to come out firing right away. I feel like I've started to knock on the door a little bit, and that's made this whole stretch worth it.

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