

U.S. Open Championship 2020

Tuesday, September 15, 2020

Mamaroneck, New York, USA

Winged Foot Golf Club

Bryson DeChambeau

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome back. We are pleased to welcome Bryson DeChambeau to the 2020 U.S. Open interview area. Bryson is the 2015 U.S. Amateur champion and member of the Walker Cup team is playing in his sixth U.S. Open. Just some reactions to the course here at Winged Foot.

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Man, it's a great test. I'm super excited to be here. Very fortunate to be able to play during this time, and I think as I look forward to this golf course, you've got to hit a lot of fairways, you can't be in the rough.

As my caddie described it, there's a bunch of sod puddles out there that you're going to get. If you hit it in the rough, you're going to be hitting a lot of grass out and you'd better keep it in the short stuff.

Q. That's why I think everybody is interested because some guys are talking about dialing it back with 3-woods, hybrids, driving irons, so everybody is interested in what your approach will be given your length.

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: I'm hitting it as far as I possibly can up there. Even if it's in the rough, I can still get it to the front edge or the middle of the greens with pitching wedges or 9-irons. That's the beauty of my length and that advantage.

Now, obviously, if it's into the wind and there's some of those situations going on, it's going to be different. There's certain holes I might lay up on just because of the situation, but for the most part I'm going to be trying to go after it as much as I possibly can.

Q. Do you have a lot of confidence because of the difficulty of this layout and your length over the rest of the field?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Yeah, absolutely. Even if I hit it in the rough, I still feel like I can make birdies out here. I still feel like I can run it up the middle of the green and make a 20-footer.

Give myself opportunities to still make birdie, whereas most people are laying back, short of a bunker, hit it in the rough even. It's not guaranteed if you lay up you're in the fairway. Right? So there are going to be times that people hit it in the rough, and I think the person that's going to win is going to hit the most fairways and going to make the most putts and also hit it on the greens.

It's a simple formula, obviously. But again, you have to execute it, right? That's the whole point of a U.S. Open, is it's supposed to be tough.

Q. You've played in a number of U.S. Opens now. Does your approach change at all for this week in the calendar?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: No, it doesn't. I think, if anything, it enhances what I do off the tee with the length. Hopefully it works out for me. You never know. I could be in the rough and get bad lies and not be able to execute out of the rough, or I could hit it in the fairways all day and not hit great iron shots and then not make anything.

So there's a bunch of things that could happen. That's golf and that's the beauty of golf, and that's why we're all trying to get better to make more putts and play better golf each and every day. You just never know.

Q. We're in a stretch here with I think it's six major championships in one year. Coming off a top 10 at the PGA Championship, what does that do to your confidence and how do you look at that window?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Shoot, I'm just excited for the future. I'm still learning, still trying to figure stuff out, still trying to tinker with different clubs and stuff like that. This is just a marker for me in my career. I think if I could eventually get one of these done, that would be great, but this is just part of the process and the journey, where I'm not necessarily worried about if I'm going to win this week or if I'm going to win next week, it's just about how can I get better each and every week for me.

So I really don't look at it any different. It is a major. You want to play well. You want to do your best. Want to try



and prepare and everything like that. But for me, it's just another marker and saying, hey, look, how is my game right now, and how do I make it better.

Even today I'm tinkering with different stuff, trying to figure stuff out and make myself better.

Q. I know you've worked with Scott Fawcett in the past. I'm just curious, your mentality now since you hit driver whenever possible, has that always been the way you played or is that something you learned throughout the years looking at the data?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Well, it's a combination of being able to hit your driver consistent, more consistent, and then given the certain situation where you have the ability to hit driver, and if you do err it, it's not going to go out of bounds, it's not going to go in the water. Yeah, you take on that risk because you can gain so much off the tee from a strokes gained perspective.

So anyway, it kind of has been that way, but it wasn't all the times just because I couldn't carry bunkers, I couldn't do things in previous times past. There were times where I had to lay up short of bunkers because it was too penalizing to be in that bunker compared to hitting it short and in the fairway. I'd gain more there.

But now since I can fly the bunker and have a pitching wedge in, that's more of the play for me, where I feel like I can play out of the rough all day long. And especially on these greens where you can run it up, I can play golf.

Q. Just a more general question. When you're mapping a course you haven't been to before, how much of it is looking at satellite imagery, how much of it is looking at carry distance, and how much of it is going out and playing a practice round?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: It's definitely going out and playing the practice round for me. You can do all the analytics you want, but until you feel the wind, the elevation, all that different stuff, when you're hitting up into elevated fairway compared to a de-elevated -- there's just different things at play than just looking at a satellite map and going, oh, you've got this distance and that's how far it's -- the air is and that's -- I'm going to obviously hit driver here. Not all the time. It doesn't work that way. So you've got to definitely take into account the wind and the elevation. It's a big part of it, as well.

Q. So far in your practice this week, what's the toughest lie that you've faced so far and how was it?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: The toughest lie I've faced so

far was on No. 8, I believe. I was in the right rough -- I mean, I placed a ball there just to see how it was. I think it was 160, 165 yards out. And I tried hitting 9-iron, and it barely got it out. I got it to the front edge of the green, but it was on the ground in that rough, and I just took a big lash at it as fast as I possibly could, 110-mile-an-hour swing speed, and just barely got it there.

It is a tremendous advantage, but it is very, very long out there this week.

Q. It's not like you were ever scrawny, but how does your added strength now help you play from the rough?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Well, I can swing it faster and get through a lot more grass. That's personally where I feel like it's been a tremendous advantage. For example, Brooks and what he was able to do at Bethpage Black. He just obliterated the golf course with his strength, and that's something that I admired and wanted to try to model myself after to try to do what he did.

Q. What have you worked on over the off-season of six days?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Six days, okay. Well, for me, it's about hitting it straighter with a driver and trying to add speed while still hitting it straighter. You know, I felt like I got some stuff taken care of, but again, it's this never-ending journey of, man, I hit this one good and then I feel like I make the same motion and it doesn't do the same thing, and I'm like, hmm, why is that, FlightScope told me it was the exact same thing, so what's going on there.

So we're working through some stuff to try and understand how to make it less sensitive when I'm swinging at these high speeds because obviously when you're swinging 15 miles an hour faster than what they test, than what anybody tests, it's going to affect how the ball performs a little differently. We're working on how to optimize what I'm doing.

Q. That's one last thing I wanted to ask you about was given where your swing speed is now and the extreme distances you're hitting, you mentioned Brooks as a role model, but have you talked or worked with any of these guys who were in the long drive contest?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Yeah, Justin James, Kyle Berkshire, I've talked to a lot of them, Maurice Allen, I've talked to them a little bit about how they swing it faster and the benefits that they feel like they have and then where they lack, as well, because I want to understand what they feel like they aren't good at so I can make sure when I'm

trying to swing faster I don't have that happen, as well; I still work on those things.

Q. But it seems like you have more control than they do.

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Well, I swing it a lot different, so it's definitely -- if I wanted to swing it like them and go as far back as I possibly could, I would probably gain five to six miles an hour more, maybe even more, I don't even know, and I'm swinging 45-and-a-half-inch driver, so the added length is going to create a lot of different things that can make the ball go sideways if you don't have the right shaft in it.

We're working on testing a 48-inch driver after this week. It's just going to happen, too. So we'll see how far I can go.

Q. Talk about your experience so far with the lack of fans, not just the change in energy but also some guys have mentioned not having trampled-down lies and some of the effects of that.

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Well, also pressure. I don't feel like there's as much pressure out there. Usually with the fans and the interaction you have with them between green to tee box, it's different. It's definitely different out here. You're walking to the next tee box like, oh, nothing happened, whereas if you just made birdie or whatever, you made bogey, they're trying to pump you up, it gives you a little energy with the fans out here.

It is sad to not have them out there, but at the same point in time, you've got to look at it as it's still a major championship, I've got to go out there and try and amp myself up.

Q. Have you used a 48-inch driver just messing around?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: I have, but it wasn't the right stiffness, and that thing went everywhere. I had no control over it. I'm working with LAGP to build a shaft that's stable but I can get that ball speed up to 210. That would be fun.

Q. You could conceivably put that in play at a PGA TOUR event?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: A hundred percent, yeah, why not. If it's as consistent as what I'm doing now, there's no reason why. If I was 205-mile-an-hour ball speed, I'd be using it everywhere out here. It would be even more of an asset to me. That's the way I look at it.

There's this point of no return where if you're around like 180 and you try and get faster but it gets that much more drastically off line, it really doesn't help you that much. You don't gain that much. But once you start getting 195 to 200 to 205, even though you're missing it that far off line, you're so far up close to these greens, it's too big of an advantage to take away.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Bryson. Appreciate it.

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