

TOUR Championship

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East Lake Golf Club

Scottie Scheffler

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome FedExCup leader and world No. 1, Scottie Scheffler, to the interview room here at the 2023 TOUR Championship. You're the first player to enter the TOUR Championship with the lead in the FedExCup two years in a row. Just some opening comments on what it's like to be back in a similar position.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, it's obviously good to be back in the position that I'm in. I'm certain that it's most people's goal at the beginning of the year is to be No. 1 going into this tournament. It's a bit of a strange format, but I'm -- I feel like I've joked a decent amount about being No. 1, you don't get any extra strokes and you show up this week and I do get some extra strokes. So it's a bit strange, but it should be a fun week.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up to questions.

Q. Obviously when you're having a year like this year the last few months where you're No. 1 in the world, you're playing as well as you are, how do you balance that thing of -- obviously you are playing as well as anyone, but also kind of maybe tinkering to just get over the hump and get a win? How do you reconcile the consistency versus maybe not winning?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I think it's just quite difficult to win out here. I mean, like, last week I think is a great example, going into Sunday tied for the lead, and I think I was 5-under on 17 tee for the day on a golf course that's hosted the U.S. Open and I got bypassed. So I think the talent level out here is really deep and as much as I can put myself on a leaderboard, that's a good thing, so just keep putting myself in that position.

Last week was a week where I played pretty good on Sunday. I just needed to play a little bit better. I wouldn't say that getting over the hump is the right term for it. I mean, I'm just putting myself in position a good amount.

Q. Now that the 2024 calendar is out for the PGA TOUR, I'm curious what are your thoughts on the designated event model that's now the signature event

model with those big purses and consolidated schedule now for 2024 and beyond?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: It's exciting for me. I think those tournaments are a nice reward for the guys that played the best the year before and it puts them in a position to have another successful year out here. Yeah, I think it will be really fun knowing that you can get all the best players together numerous times a year. This year's been really fun having all these tournaments where we're not as spread out through out the schedule like we have been in the past, whereas you've had a lot more of kind of the battles throughout the year with the top players.

Like, last week, once again, a good example. You got Viktor chasing down me and Fitzpatrick, and then I think through the beginning of the year you had Jon and Collin, and then you had me and Jon in Phoenix, and then you had -- I'm blanking right now, but there's a lot of events where there was a lot of good players coming down -- you had Jordan and Fitzy at Hilton Head and there's just a lot of times where you had the best players playing against each other on Sunday, which I think is something that golf fans have wished for a bit more in the past and hopefully this new model will get 'em closer to those types of results.

Q. Here last year, was there any extra pressure in that final round just on wanting to end the season on such a good note and what do you feel like you learned from here last year?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I definitely wanted to end the season on a better note than I did last year, for sure.

What did I learn?

I think you take something away from every tournament. Last year, I think I just -- I maybe got -- I don't know if impatient is the right word, in the final round, but I just didn't get off to a good start and after that, I played really well. So I learned about myself that, you know, how much I like to fight out there, and I kind of had a good talking to myself. I think I lost that six-stroke lead pretty early in the round.

I remember walking down number 8 and kind of just having a talk with myself about, you know, this is why you practice, this is why you prepare, just kind of give yourself

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a little pump-up speech, and then after that I snapped right back in.

But I think at this time of the year you just get a little bit fatigued, to be honest with you. It's been a long season and to get to this point now -- this is our third week in a row, and we're going to get some pretty high temperatures this week, so it's going to be a grueling week as far as the actual tournament goes. So my prep work to start the week's a bit different, where it's just mostly focused on getting rest, especially coming off after -- sorry, coming off of last week being in contention.

But I would say mostly what I learned last year is how much fun it is to be in that moment and how much I like to fight and try to compete to win.

Q. You and Viktor, you came into the PGA at the same time, you were Rookie of the Year the first year ahead of Viktor, you had some awesome competitions with him. How do you feel like the competition between you and Viktor has made you a better golfer?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Viktor's a guy I've been competing against for a really long time. When I turned pro -- I feel like Collin, Viktor, Matt, and I turned pro all about the same time and it was kind of like you had the three guys, Collin, Viktor, and Matt, who I guess in the media were kind of the three guys that were looked at to be like the next Jordans and JTs and then, like, Jon Rahms and that group of guys, and I was kind of on the outside looking in on that little group.

And Viktor's been a guy that -- he's been such a great ball-striker for so long that -- he used to beat up on me in college and then when we turned pro, I remember our rookie year we were coming into this tournament competing for the Rookie of the Year, and he's just been a guy that he works really hard too. He's not a guy that he just has a ton of talent and he just shows up and does it. Like, whenever I'm in the gym, I usually see Viktor in there. When I'm out practicing, I usually see Viktor out there practicing. He's not one of the guys that just shows up and does it. He's a guy that puts in the work. Whenever you see somebody like that putting in that type of effort, it just continues to push you to want to do more.

Q. Two questions for you. What has your college degree done for you?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I finished college, which I'm proud of, but I haven't really had to use it very much, thankfully. If golf would have taken a different path for me, I probably would have had to use it, so I'm just very fortunate to not have had to use it.

Q. My point is, you don't strike me as someone who would tell someone how to live their life. But there's so many good players coming through. If someone was, after his first or second year in college, and was trying to decide whether to stay all four and get a degree or turn pro, what would you tell 'em?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: It's just a personal decision. Like, Sam Burns is one of my best friends and he did two years in college and he doesn't really care about finishing his degree and that's his thing.

I enjoyed college so much. I loved being part of a team. I loved -- I made some of my best friends in college and all those guys are outside of golf. And I enjoyed my college experience and it's four years of my life that I wouldn't take back.

But being out here is pretty fun too. So some guys just get really excited to get out here on the PGA TOUR. Sam would be an example of a guy that kind of made it to the peak in college and felt like it was the right time for him to turn pro. But I didn't really have that great of a college career and I liked being kind of a normal kid, to be honest with you. It was really fun. I enjoyed it.

Q. Hold on. If you go back to your freshman year at UT, did you go to college for the golf or for the education as a freshman?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: As a freshman? Well, I mean, in my head, it was mostly for the golf. My parents kind of pushed the education on me. I never really enjoyed school that much, the actual school part. I think it still gets me a little antsy thinking about taking tests and stuff like that because it was hard.

But it was fun. Like I said, I met some of my best friends in the whole world while I was at UT. And that's why it's a personal decision. It's what works best for everybody, but for me, college was a lot of fun and I enjoyed it.

Q. Working to try and improve your game, how do you sort of come about the thinking or what goes through your head when you decide, I need to work on either a stroke or something about the way that I'm swinging the club and maybe this is, like, something I need to change equipment that -- how do you sort of differentiate when it's going to be one or when it's going to maybe be the other?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: That's a good question. For me, I've always been a guy that -- I'm a firm believer in that I could pretty much figure out how to play with just about any

club. That's why it's so hard for me to switch into new equipment because there's just little, tiny changes. Even, like, getting a new set of irons, I really don't like having to switch into a new set of irons. There's just little things that are different about each club. Like, they could make me five backup drivers in the TaylorMade truck and tell me they're all the same and I'd hit 'em, and I'd be like, guys, I really don't think that they're the same.

So when it comes to testing equipment that's always where it gets really challenging, and really the best way to do it is just to put it out in competition. But it takes a lot of that prep work at home with the new equipment to make sure it's ready to go.

And then as far as making changes in my golf game, I've never really made a huge, like, rebuilding kind of change. Like, I've never rebuilt my golf swing. I've never really changed anything that drastically. I've just tried to kind of -- you know, with the help of Randy, he's always just tried to make little changes over time. I mean, he's taught me basically everything I know about the game and I haven't really learned from anybody else, and so he's been kind of in charge of that.

When it comes time to make those minor changes most of it is getting the form work out on the driving range, and then once I feel like I have a good feel for the form, then it just goes back into hitting shots and playing the game. I don't like to get too caught up in the fundamentals of things. I like to get my basis down and then just go out and play.

Q. Zach has made it clear that the automatic qualifiers for the Ryder Cup would have a say in who the captains picks would be. There's been a lot of talk about Brooks who slipped to 7. What are your thoughts about him being a pick and being on that team?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Brooks? I mean, I looked at the points list the other night. He was about, like 300 or, I think he was 30 points shy? Which is, I think it was the equivalent of like \$30,000 throughout the year. So...

Q. 29.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: 29. Yeah. So if he played one tournament on TOUR I think he probably would have been on the team.

Q. And then switching gears a little bit, are you going to play or what's your schedule going to be in the fall based on --

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I'm not going to do much. I'm going to play the Ryder Cup. I don't know what I have planned after that, but it's not going to be much. You won't be seeing much of me. I'll be hiding.

Q. Look at the last couple parings in this tournament, you all can hit it really far. But what do you see in Rory, a guy of modest stature, that allows him to hit it just a little bit farther?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Well, hitting it far is a really, really good skill to have. It's not really that good of a skill if you can't control where the ball is going. And Rory being at a smaller build, but, I mean, he may be smaller in height, but he's pretty athletic, so that's why he hits the ball really far. Height, I guess, could help him. Maybe if he was my height he would hit it even further. But it may be harder for him to control. So it's kind of finding that balance. And Rory's been a guy for the last 15 years of professional golf that's been able to strike a really good balance with having immense, like extreme power off the tee, but still being able to hit enough fairways. I'm pretty sure he's very high up in approach this year. So just because he hits it far it's not why he's good at golf. He does a lot of things that are really, really good. To me it's still about being able to control your ball versus being able to be who hits it the furthest.

Q. After the last two seasons that you put together I'm just curious how significant and as much of a goal is it for you to not only get here but to finish the season No. 1 in the FedExCup?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: It's definitely a goal. I grew up watching the FedExCup. I want to win the FedExCup. I think in our sport the majors kind of stand alone in terms of that type of kind of distinction in the game. This tournament is a little bit weird because there's starting strokes now and, I mean, I wouldn't say that it is the best format to identify the best golfer for the year. Jon Rahm played some of the best golf of anybody this year and he's coming into this tournament fourth and he's four shots back. And, in theory, he could have won 20 times this year and he would only have a two-shot lead. And it's, I mean, I get it. It's made for TV. It's more, it may be more exciting for the fans to have this type of format. But as players I think it's not the best identifier of who is playing the best throughout the year. But with that being said, I'm starting this week with a two-shot lead and, I mean, I'm not complaining about it. It's pretty nice. And we're playing for a lot of money this week and I'm very grateful for that. But as far as identifying the best player throughout the year, I don't think it's the best format. But made for TV and I'm definitely grateful to be here and grateful to be in the position that I'm in.

Q. You mentioned we might not see a whole lot of you this fall. How involved to you do you expect to be in the governance of the PGA TOUR going forward? How focused in are you on this framework agreement or, you know, potential other futures for the PGA TOUR?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I'll be very focused when I'm needed. I think we have a good group of guys that are kind of taking charge on that and they will ask opinions of players like myself when needed. I mean, it's only my fourth year out here on TOUR. I don't know if I'm equipped to be making the decisions for the entire TOUR. But when my opinion is needed I'm definitely glad to give input. They will still be hearing and seeing a lot from me this fall because I'll be at home. But I'll just be kind of hiding from you guys this fall, if that makes more sense.

Q. Last one. What are you proudest of and what are you most disappointed by this PGA TOUR season?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I guess definitely I'm most proud of how I've approached each week and my consistency. I would say those are the two things I'm most proud of. Definitely my most consistent year as a professional. Yeah, it's been a really good year as far as a consistency standpoint. Obviously, any time I don't win a tournament I'm disappointed, but being a professional golfer I think you try to find a way to live with that disappointment, because you just, you can win that often. But I'm trying my best to do it every week.

THE MODERATOR: Appreciate the time, Scottie, good luck this week.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: All right. Thanks, y'all.

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