

# John Deere Classic

Wednesday, July 3, 2024

TPC Deere Run

Silvis, Illinois, USA

## Jordan Spieth

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Afternoon everyone. We would like to welcome two-time John Deere Classic winner Jordan Spieth to the media center. Jordan, you're making your first start back here since 2015. Just get some comments on what it's like to be back.

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, now touched the old golf course and it brings back great memories. I remember a lot of shots. I remember a lot of moments.

I played it four times. I was lucky so receive an exemption in college as well here. I've kind of had this on my radar since early spring and didn't want to commit not knowing -- just with everything going on in my life right now didn't want to commit and not play.

I was pretty excited about the idea that I would be coming back the Deere this year, now that we're here, it's crazy. It really does feel like a second home. It's been really, really cool kind of the reception I received since coming back just one day at Zach Johnson's charity event and then couple days here at the golf course.

I don't have support like this anywhere outside of DFW, so hopefully that continues this week and I can pick up where I left off.

#### **Q. Made your first appearance at The Big Dig last night. Who had the most fun?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I think probably Michael had the most fun. Yeah, he and his two kids were out driving tractors around. So was I. Yeah, it was a lot of fun.

It was full circle, right? I was 21 the last time I was here and now I've got two kids that I took to The Big Dig. Incredible event, incredible facility.

I had heard all about it, but I did not think it was of that scale and that kind of -- the show that was put on. So they have some amazing machines.

#### **Q. Other than the hairline, how far removed -- back**



**does 2013 feel like? How different is life these days as a father of two and obviously an established star on the tour?**

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, my day-to-day work life is not that different. You know, I mean, I probably have -- had longer hours back then on energy level and I didn't have anything to get back home for.

So I probably spent a little more time at the course back then, but in general, my day-to-day on course hasn't changed much from back then.

Off the course it's obviously very different. But I think I try to be that kid. I try to think about being that kid every time I tee it up. Rookie year out here was such a blur. Started out with no status and ended up after this week having full status.

So it was kind of a dream come true ride, and I just kind of went where I needed to go and didn't ask questions and just played golf. Now things are quite a bit different in what you can schedule and how you set your season and whatnot. A lot of times it's hard. You want to play every week and you just can't do it.

Getting close to it this year, but back then it was like, well, I'll just go where I need to go. I'm in next week? Okay, great. I'll go there.

I feel in some ways the same, but in a lot of ways decently far removed given most of my life is off the golf course and it's quite a bit different.

**Q. You mentioned trying to be that kid. I vividly remember 2015, Saturday, coming down 18 you had a chance to shoot your career-best. You made the birdie putt. Came in the media center and you seemed giddy. It was like you were a kid who just shot -- broken 80 for the first time.**

JORDAN SPIETH: Well, almost breaking 60 for the first time should feel pretty similar. Should feel better. (Smiling.)

I remember the finishing stretches. I remember the shot I hit on 17 was quite a bit lucky. Kind of came out of it and it was spinning possibly off the green and it hit the pin and



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went in.

Then 18 I made a cool right-to-left swinging putt from the front of the green to the front pin. I remember the putt. I remember with a few feet to go being like, oh, that's going in.

But I don't remember anything right after that by any means. Like coming in here giddy, find somebody that shoots 61 and isn't giddy. I've seen Bryson shoot 60 and be upset because he should have shot 59, and that's true.

But that's the only time I've seen anyone go that low and not be pumped.

**Q. Is 2015 was obviously a significant moment for this tournament, your victory. What do you remember about 2015, about your decision to come here, and have you rethought that at any point over the last 11 years, just thinking about -- excuse me, nine years -- just thinking about what might have happened at St. Andrews had you got there a couple days earlier?**

JORDAN SPIETH: No, I don't think so. I had plenty of chances. I was in control of the tournament with two holes to go at St. Andrews and just needed to go par, par for a playoff or par, birdie to win.

So I certainly -- I wasn't off to a slow start. I was 21, too, so like the bounceback, any jet -- like I had no regrets by the end of that week.

Other than that, I don't -- like I said, it was just part of my schedule and it was the week before and I like playing into majors when I can, especially in those early years. We had Akron right into the PGA late in the season. I played into the Masters ever year regardless where it was. I tried to play into The Open.

And then in '16, the Olympics were the same week and I opted out of Olympics kind of last minute.

I don't think -- one, I don't think I would've been allowed to play here; two, I don't think it would've been a good idea to play and not play the Olympics when you're in the Olympics.

So then I started to take a -- play more leading into the Travelers and I kind of just made a schedule change and then take a break before The Open. I just kind of mixed it up a little bit.

This year I thought I would play here and take next week off and play The Open. Turns out I'm adding and play next week as well.

My intent originally was to play here and that kind of be -- come back to a place I have great memories, try and get in contention, try and do all the things I like to do before a major, then maybe get over there a little early, not playing a tournament and play a few rounds and then play The Open.

But I'm going to end up playing The Open as my third in a row, which has been a good spot for majors for me in the past. Masters was third in a row a number of years for me, too.

**Q. Jordan, you've seen the billboards around here. They talk about magic happening and point to you and your early success here. So much has happened since then. The major championships, Presidents Cups, Ryder Cup wins, now back here as a grizzled veteran. Do you look at this golf course through a different lens? You have the fond memories, but it's something you can do well?**

JORDAN SPIETH: You know, I think it's a phenomenal golf course. You know, the only shame at all is when it plays really soft it takes a little bit of the character away, because you can miss it in the rough or get away with flying a ball too far into the green because it'll stick.

I played it yesterday and it was the firmest I remember seeing it. I was like, man, this is a different track. You got to really -- but the shape of the holes, the shape of the greens, it's a great golf course.

I think out biggest difference right now in how I'll play it, clearly I'm not saying I'm the same player I was when I was here last time I was here, but I hit it quite a bit further now. So attacking the course off the tee will be a little bit different.

I've noticed that I hit some clubs that, shorter clubs in than I had. Today I hit one on 4 where I thought, man, I might have hit that a little too far right and it was out in the middle of fairway; cut a corner.

So I think as much as I could hopefully draw on good memories and spots and where to play from in the past, maybe I'll be able to take advantage of my length on a couple holes that I didn't maybe of back then.

I got to do a lot of other things really well to keep up with the rest of it.

**Q. Is it flattering to think of how many hackers and duffers out there have tried to replicate your sand shot and some of the things you made happen here in your**

## two visits?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I guess so. I think I've been fortunate to have a few shots over my career that either someone who plays the course wants to go try it or something like that.

I'll tell you, I mean, I know you probably don't agree with this because it's cooler the way it happened, but I wish I hit my shot to three feet and knocked it in versus going about it that way. I'll say that about most of the shots I'm talking about.

You get into some tougher spots and sometimes you can will the ball in; sometimes you get some good breaks. But if you're there quite often and you have a chance quite often, a few of them seem to find the bottom of the hole.

That's what I was doing in that few years here where I was having a chance to win most weeks, and then for whatever reason here at the John Deere, couple of those times they hit the pin and went in. Whether it was 13 on Sunday -- in 2013 on Sunday, 2015 on Saturday, both were not maybe exactly how I wanted to hit them, but you keep on putting it around the hole and every once in a while they drop.

**Q. The equipment world since you won in 2013 to now, what are some of the biggest changes would you say? I know it's a broad question.**

JORDAN SPIETH: Mainly just the driver I think, driver, 3-wood. But I would say some guys are probably hitting some 3-woods from around that time anyway still. I think the driver has come a long way. I remember mis-hits dropping ball speeds by three, four miles per hour. If I hit one off the heel it's as fast as if I hit it off the center now. Toe balls are only dropping a couple miles an hour. So much more forgiving.

They launch and spin better. Our drivers are close to maxed out. I think there was some room back then now that we see where they are now. That was probably the biggest change.

I don't think the ball -- everything has probably changed a little bit to be a little bit more forgiving and maybe just fine tuning things, but that would be the biggest thing I think.

**Q. Anything you do different from 2013 to now with equipment testing, how you go about it?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I have -- I use launch monitor devices when I practice way more now. As far as equipment, testing, no.

I would say I've probably, because of the change in drivers, I've gone through -- where I may have played the same shaft in my driver from 2011 to 2016, I've probably gone through five different ones since then just in speed uptick with the area dynamic improvement of driver heads and increased speed just from me.

So I've had to test a lot more drivers, but I'm pretty much -- most everything else is right off the shelf for me.

**Q. You're on the policy board through the end of the year. Can you give us an idea where these negotiations are? Do you see them coming to some kind of resolution by the end of your term on the board? If so, what happens to LIV players that want to come back over? What's the best way to bring them back into the fold?**

JORDAN SPIETH: That's an extremely loaded question that I could get in a lot of trouble answering. I'll just say things of that nature take a little bit of time, but they're very active. That's about as far as I can go for you.

**Q. Would you like to see it finish sooner than later?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I would like to see it done right for everyone. So the timing is the timing. Obviously if anything can be done right and done sooner, that's great.

But I would rather see it done correctly and done the right way for golf going forward for the longest amount of time, regardless how long that takes to get there, yeah.

**Q. You said you're going to play the Scottish Open. Are you on the charter over?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I am, yes.

**Q. Okay. Does that factor into --**

JORDAN SPIETH: I don't love publically going into my travel plans, but thank you for that.

**Q. Does a perk like that get your attention and get you back to this event when they offer hassle-free...**

JORDAN SPIETH: Had nothing to do with me playing this week at all. They're flying people over on jets from wherever you want to play in the tournament.

No, it is fantastic that you can go from Davenport, Iowa right into Edinburgh, Scotland. I didn't see that pop up on any of the airlines.

So absolutely is great that it's been done like that, whether

it was to the Scottish or The Open, but especially to the Scottish where you're not getting guys to go to a major that seems easier.

It's a great perk, but made no difference in me playing next week or playing this week.

**Q. Fatherhood for you, has that changed your golf perspective at all?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I think on one side it hasn't changed my drive. I think it's changed kind of what is my drive. Like I accomplished most of the actual written goals I wrote down by the time I was 22 years old. That's an unusual situation and leaves you in a spot like, what now?

I think now getting perspective on what drives me and what do I really want to accomplish in the game, that's changed. I think having kids and recognizing that, you know, where golf was life, I don't think it's necessarily a very healthy thing. I would like to be a lot of other things and what I do is play golf versus it was all encompassing.

So that frees your mind up a little bit to not maybe take a little bit of pressure off on the bad weeks. But my drive is to be as close to where my ceiling is at because it allows me to have the most fun I can have doing something that I love.

That's the healthiest way to look at it. Although I played great golf, I wasn't in that mindset back in the day. Had I been, the bad days would've been even better. So it's tough because I'm not -- there are certain places of my game when I'm at my ceiling, they've measured -- the worst I've ever been at one category would be 20th in driving and I've been in the Top 3 in every other category at my best.

So it's a very high bar, so you're not always going to live at that. But the drive to be as close to or at my ceiling in every level is just as high with or without kids. It's just finding the right balance to be able to get enough work in to be able to keep inching that way while living life on the side.

**Q. Has it been frustrating the last couple years not being as close to your ceiling as you want to be?**

JORDAN SPIETH: It was a little more frustrating a couple years before that, you know, being -- living back in the top whatever, 25 in the world the last four years has been a lot more fun than the previous few.

Yeah, this year has been a bit frustrating because I feel like I've been a better player than any of the previous few years. I just haven't produced the results yet, had it all

come together. It's been a patience test this year, but it's a better place than kind of having no idea what to do, where I've lived before.

So I can be patient if I'm confident about what I'm working on.

**Q. You had mentioned the Quad Cities, second to DFW with support. Any particular instance or moments in your time here, whether on or off the course that leads you to say that?**

JORDAN SPIETH: It's just -- no, not one. It's all the moments. It's everywhere. It's very cool. From going over to Cedar Rapids on Monday and having that feel like it did nine years ago. I stopped by an event yesterday of a friend close to here. And then just being out here today, I mean, the amount of kids, the amount of -- I don't know. I don't know what I was expecting.

I wasn't expecting the people to be like, why haven't you've been back? All I am hearing is, man, we're so glad you're here. Everyone is so excited to come out. It's a good feeling because I feel really good about this place, too. A lot of the positivity this week.

**Q. Does that translate as play begins tomorrow for the next four days?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I hope so. I mean, there is no such thing as too much positivity. My plan is to continue to try to play with a smile on my face around this place like I've done before and hopefully yields a bunch of birdies.

You can control what I can control but it's really nice to feel like you have everybody else will it in too.

**Q. Back to looking at it through your lens of today, how important is this event and these regular PGA TOUR events as opposed to the new elevated ones and all the change that's taken place the last couple years?**

JORDAN SPIETH: How important are the non-elevated events compared to elevated?

**Q. As you look through the lens of Neal Shipley or Jordan Spieth, two different lenses.**

JORDAN SPIETH: Sure, they both bring a tremendous opportunity to compete against the best players in the world; best players in the world are in every event on the PGA TOUR.

And then this event has provided a springboard for me a



couple different times into great success right after. Even back in college what it did for me after; then obviously rookie year.

But it's 500 FedExCup points. It's a lot of people's job security. There is a lot at stake in every event that you play.

I think the idea to be competitive against some of the best players in the world every week, and you come here and nothing changes, that's probably looking at it from the same lens in that way.

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