

The Memorial Tournament Presented By Nationwide

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Dublin, Ohio, USA

Muirfield Village

Bryson DeChambeau

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'll get started with Bryson DeChambeau at the Memorial Tournament presented by Nationwide. Bryson won the Memorial Tournament in 2018 and is making his first start since winning the Rocket Mortgage Classic. If we could get an opening comment on returning to Muirfield Village.

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Anytime you get to play Muirfield Village and play in front of Jack, it's a special honor. I think this golf course, albeit it's a golf course I won on, it's going to play a little differently for me this year, and I'm looking forward to the challenge. It's definitely a challenge no matter how you look at it with this added length, and I appreciate it, and look forward to using it to my advantage hopefully a few times this week.

THE MODERATOR: Obviously you're on a run of seven consecutive top 10s on the PGA TOUR. You must be feeling confident about your game. How do you feel you'll play this week and your chances of winning this week?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Yeah, it's great. I didn't put in too much work this week, not like I did at Detroit, and I feel really good about my game. Ball-striking is there, wedging is getting a lot better, iron play is getting a lot better. I just feel overall more comfortable this week and hope that that translates. You never know, it may or may not translate, but that's the game of golf. That's the beauty of it.

Q. Can you go a little more into the golf course? What are the toughest challenges you face with this golf course, and how have you put a game plan together to attack this golf course?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Well, this week I'm going to have a lot more wedges in than I have previously had, so my iron play and wedge play needs to be on point, and the greens are firm surprisingly. I played this morning and had some shots running out that I wasn't expecting to run out. So I think that's going to be the most difficult challenge this week is really gauging how the greens are bouncing in and how I can control that spin on the greens. That's the

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biggest challenge.

Q. Can you unleash the Kraken here, and how many times if you can?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: There's a couple holes I can do it. No. 7 is one of them, No. 11, No. 13, maybe 17. If it's downwind on 17 and it runs out, that water is in play. And then 18, I tried to -- maybe if it's downwind I can fly it over the bunkers, all over the bunkers, so it may be useful if it's downwind on 18, but there's only a few holes out here that I can do it on.

Q. Looking back four years ago, you had the fairway finder and the crank drive, so the crank drive was always there. What changed that you just decided to go to that all the time?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Yeah, I would say as time went on, I just realized that I've really got nothing to lose, and what if I could hit it just as far as the longest players out here but hit it straighter. I've always felt like when I'm hitting it my best, I've been one of the best ball strikers out here, but what if I could hit that far and that straight, and that was kind of in the back of my mind all last year, and I decided to make the move come the fall after the Shriners. I was just like, you know what, I'm going to give it a run.

I kind of got a little -- I don't know how you say, I kind of get tired of playing the same game over and over again, my game that I was playing, and I wanted to just spice things up a little bit and see if I could make an impact.

Q. Did you change anything from the crank drive? Is it the same thing you did then, you just did it more often?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: I learned how to control it. That's the most important thing. I could do it and I wasn't really comfortable with doing it. I would even say now I have a crank ball and my fairway finder, which my fairway finder is around 185 to 190, around there, and then my crank is when I get it to 195 when I really want to unleash it. So I still think I have it, it's just more about I've moved the whole curve closer to a higher ball speed. So it's always been there, but I've refined it, I understand somewhat how to hit it straight swinging that hard, and I'm sure a lot of people are going to figure out how to do that

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as time goes on. It seems like every 20 years the game of golf kind of moves a little bit, and hopefully this is another time like that.

Q. You've spoken about how it's going to take your body a while to adjust to the changes that you've made, both your swing and just your sheer size, but there's a field of nine of the top ten players and you're the favorite this week. Are you surprised how quickly you've taken to this new method?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Yeah, I am surprised. I didn't think it was going to make this big of an impact this quick. That's a great question. I haven't had that question yet, and I feel like it's come pretty quick compared to what I was thinking. I figure if I work out this hard and I keep going it's going to take me a year to get up to the speeds that I'm at, but surprisingly I've found some methods in the golf swing that allowed me to hit it a little bit straighter than I thought I was going to be able to do, and consequently I just felt like the harder I swing, sometimes the straighter it goes, and that's been a tremendous benefit of being able to play it out here. Whenever I get a little uncomfortable I just swing it harder, and luckily the way my golf swing is, the forces lined up a lot better for me. But no, I didn't think it was going to come this quick.

Q. I'm just curious, given your increased distance, are there now clubs in your bag that you simply use less or maybe rarely?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Yeah, definitely depends on the golf course, but for example, last week I rarely used my -- or two weeks ago, I rarely used my 3-wood. It was far and few between. I just didn't use it because I felt like there were just holes where the hybrid fit way better or the 4-iron, 5-iron, whatever it was, and then the driver you just get after it. So this week there's going to be a couple clubs that I rarely use. Definitely depends on the conditions, the wind and everything, but there are definitely times, like the 53-degree, I don't know I'll use it too many times this week. It's tough to say because it's totally wind and everything dependent, as you know.

Yeah, certainly I've found I'm using a lot of the longer clubs a lot less. For par-4s I haven't had a 6-iron into a par-4 -- or a 7-iron into a par-4 in a while now.

Q. Realistically given there were no weather conditions to deal with, how many clubs could you put in your bag and not feel an impact compared to 14?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Do you mean like what clubs would I not use if it was the golf course it is today and it was the same throughout the week?

Q. Right.

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: I probably wouldn't -- well, the par-5s, I'm hitting a lot of 6-irons. I would say the 5-iron would be the one club that I wouldn't be hitting very much this week.

Q. I wanted to pick up on something you said after your win in Detroit. What new challenges do your distance gains off the tee present to your iron play and your wedges?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Yeah, you know, one of the things people have been talking about wedges even since last week. I would say that I was pretty, I thought -- I might have it wrong, but I thought in Detroit I was pretty average to maybe a little sub-par, just not great. I haven't really worked that hard on it because I've been working so hard on the driving and on the putting, and it showed in Detroit. That's the next step for us and for my team, what Chris and I are working on trying to figure out, is how to become like a Steve Stricker or like a Tiger with his wedges or J.T., Justin Thomas. He's unbelievable with his wedges. If I could gain a little bit of that magic, that's just another edge that we're trying to get at.

I have worked on it a little bit. I know where we're going to be heading to try and test some stuff. I'm not really willing to give that out because I don't want to say something that's just completely wrong.

Q. Can you walk us through your strategy on 5 this week and perhaps how that may be different from your approach last year?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Well, it's an interesting hole. I feel like if I was to hit driver all four times that I know I'd get it in the fairway at least one or two times. The other two I might hit it in the water. The problem is when you drop it, you're on the side slope. Even though I'm hitting 9-iron, it's not really a great lie that you're going to be giving yourself. So I've had to think long and deep about that. There may be one day when it's downwind and I just feel like I've got nothing to lose and I might do it. But obviously today hitting driver and having one on the side slope in the rough and then one that just flew into the water, that's actually what we heard happened. The guy up in front of us was nice enough to tell us it landed 10 yards short of the bridge and flew straight in the water. But it would have cleared the end of the second fairway had I hit it on line with it by 20, 30 yards, had it been on the right line.

Is it a benefit? Yes. I don't think it's that big of a benefit because if I hit 4-iron out there and hit 5-iron on the green

every day, I don't know. I really don't know the gains on that. But there may be a day I pull it out. We'll see. It could go either way. I'm still not decided on it yet.

Q. I was just wondering what it's like to talk to Tiger about -- he's clearly curious about the changes that you've made in your game. He's also someone that in the past was at one point longer than everyone else on TOUR. I was just wondering what those conversations with like and how cool that is for you to have someone to talk to about it.

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Well, it's first off, amazing to get to play with Tiger. I respect him. I have the highest respect for him and what he's done for the game and inspired a whole new generation and generations to come. For me being able to play with him this morning, it was, again, another honor. It was fun. I hit a good drive on the first hole and Tiger said as a joke, You got that number? He's like, I didn't get that number for a bunker, to clear the bunker over on the right-hand side into the fairway.

So he threw some jokes out there all day, but it really wasn't -- he wasn't worried -- he's worried about winning the tournament this week just like I am, and he's pretty good at protecting himself from anything that could be potentially -- I don't know, he's really, really good at keeping to himself. I don't feel like we talked too much about it. I will tell you, though, that it was fun, he played a couple jokes on me today, just messing with me. I'll keep it personal, though.

Q. When you were younger, how much did you watch Tiger and how much of an influence was he to you, and how awed were you by how much longer he was than everybody else back when he first came on?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Back in the day, he was it. He was the golden star. He was the one everybody looked up to. I can tell you that the junior golfers that I played with were all inspired by Tiger and how far he hit it and how he dominated tournaments. So there's a lot of kids that tried to be like him, tried to act like him, tried to do the things he was doing, which was great for junior golf. I was aware of it every single week he played because I watched in just complete awe, going, man, how is he doing this, especially when you're young and you know you can't hit it more than 250 or something like that, he's hitting it 330 back in the day. Even now, he's hitting it pretty long. There was a couple holes he hit 320, 325. I'm like, that's pretty good for his age. It's amazing for his age.

You know, and so again, to answer your question, I'd say that he inspired a whole new group of golfers to do new and amazing things, to not be afraid of hazards, to not be

afraid of tough golf courses and go after it and just play without fear.

Q. How surreal is it for you to be so much longer than him now, and back then when you were watching him, could you ever have imagined you eclipsing the things that he was doing distance-wise, so to speak?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: No, I never imagined that I'd be even hitting it this far. That was never my game. I was never a long player growing up. So I never even thought about it. It wasn't a thought until this last fall, until I started saying, you know what, maybe there's something here. Maybe I can gain a little bit of yardage if I go down this route, and lo and behold, there was a lot of yardage to be gained that I never thought I would have done when I was a kid.

Q. Did he reach out to you to play today or how did it all come about?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: That's personal. I don't really delve too much into that. I will say that on this one -- whenever we play, I usually ask kindly. That's the way it kind of goes about.

Q. I'm wondering if you feel like there was any curiosity level on his part because he hasn't been out here the last five weeks as you've had a great run here. Obviously there's been a lot of focus on your length and whatnot.

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: No, it was more of me wanting to see what he was doing actually to be honest with you. I'm always interested to see what new things he's doing. And I think it was mutual. Obviously he likes playing with me. We've had a great relationship. We have great conversations. So it was just mutually beneficial, I think, and we had a lot of fun.

Q. I don't know of a better way to put this, but everybody is talking about you every single week, whether it's Martin Slumbers, whether it's players. Are you comfortable with that, and with the level of conversation, do you at times expect that to include some cynicism, some negativity, some jealousy?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Yeah, that's a great question. From my perspective, anything negative that comes my way now, I try and look at it in a positive light. I try and view it as a compliment, in a sense. When Tiger was doing his stuff and dominating, I'm sure there were times when people were criticizing him on certain things. I just have to look at it from the light that it's a compliment that I'm being talked about, and I'm not going to think anything more than

that. I'm going to sit back and play my game, try and win as many golf tournaments as I can, give myself chances to win golf tournaments, and not focus on the negativity that people are trying to bring to me. I'm just going to do my absolute best to play my game and enjoy the benefits of what comes about from playing your best.

Q. 10, 15 years from now, would you, do you think, take more satisfaction out of whatever number of victories you have or if you were to become an agent of change? What would give you the bigger thrill?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Well, for me in life, I really am about human progress and how much good I can do for the world, so albeit, it would be amazing to win however many tournaments, do whatever. I think being a proponent of change in a good way would be something that hopefully I would be proud about more than winning all the tournaments, to be honest with you.

Q. Bryson, if we could pretend that it's Sunday at Augusta, you're on the 13th tee, you're in contention. What's your line, and how close to the green could you hit it?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: I don't know that. I haven't been there since my length has increased. I will say that I'm going to try and hit it into 14 fairway if I can, if it's the right wind. If it's into the wind, there's no way, obviously, but I'm going to try to give myself the best opportunity to launch it as high and far down the chute and draw it with the contours of the hole and try and get as far down there as possible. Yeah, I won't hold up on that hole, for sure. I just feel like if I can take the left out of play, even if it goes in the trees on the right I can still chip it out and hopefully make a birdie with a wedge.

Q. Still, are you trying to hit a cut over those trees or are you trying to hit it more right to left?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: On 13, I'm hitting a big draw and trying to -- high draw up around the corner.

Q. I'm sure Tiger is going to give you a ribbing about hitting it that far being that old.

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Well, no, that's a good thing. He talks about that, too. He knows. I mean, maybe, but it's all good. I've told him that before.

Q. I wanted to ask, Slumbers talked about the fact that they're going to have to address what's going on, and you seem to be now the newest poster boy for this. Would you be upset if they rolled things back in regards to equipment because you've shown them that

you can hit the ball as far as you can hit it?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Hmm. No, I wouldn't. No matter what rules they give me, I'm going to try and do my best to maximize my athletic ability. They can't take working out away from me. I know that. At least as of right now. Whatever -- look, 1998 the COR test was put in stone where you couldn't have a certain number off the face, and they've used that ever since. It's now a CT test. The ball speeds coming off the face are what they are, and they really haven't changed that much. If anything, the clubs have gotten longer, the shafts have gotten stiffer, and we can swing it faster with more control. Back in the day, the shafts were a little more flexible, and LA Golf Shafts has provided me with a shaft that's super stiff, super stable and allowed me to swing at the speeds while retaining the same control with the face.

Yeah, it's a lot of work on my end, too, to gain strength and to swing it hard, to train. It's a lot of hard work. People don't realize how hard I've worked to get here. It's been working out for at least an hour every single day for the past five, six months, fixing my body when it breaks down. I have to go, okay, I've got to go fix my body and work out and train in the right way to be able to tolerate all these forces going through my body and out of my body.

So in regards to whoever is saying we're going to have to look at equipment, I've got no problem. I'm, again, just going to look at my game and how I can improve it in the best way possible, no matter if they roll the ball back there's still going to be a percentage difference. Even if it gets rolled back there's still going to be a gap. Whether it's closer now, it is what it is. I'm not really worried about it. I'm just going to keep trying to make those athletic gains so that I can be the best golfer that I can possibly be.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Bryson. We appreciate the time. Best of luck this week.

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