

# BMW Championship

Wednesday, August 25, 2021

Owings Mills, Maryland, USA

Caves Valley Golf Club

## Jordan Spieth

## Michael Phelps

## Kevin Plank

### Flash Interview

JOHN BUSH: Gentlemen, thank you for joining us today. Michael, talk a little bit about playing in the pro-am together today.

MICHAEL PHELPS: I mean, we can't have a better group. This group was unbelievable. Honestly, just being back here for me in Baltimore and being here at Caves Valley, I haven't been to Caves in probably five years or so, six years, so being able to see some of the changes they've done but also be able to have some good golf shots, some good laughs out there, yeah, seeing the crowd out there, too, for me was awesome. It's so amazing being able to see fans back at sporting events.

JOHN BUSH: Kevin, talk a little bit about the experience today.

KEVIN PLANK: I was so scared. I was so scared.

No, it was great. Playing golf, I played this game for 30 years and then COVID around November last year for the holiday, for Christmas, my wife got me a simulator, and with that I committed to seeing somebody every Tuesday. The one thing about this game, I now at least know what I'm doing wrong when I do it wrong. But it is humbling, it's inspiring, and all you really care about is your last shot and there's something to hang on to to bring back with, especially when you have great friends and partners that you get to play with like Michael, Jordan and Jimmy Davis. We just had an all-star cast, so there was no chance of being a bad day out there.

**Q. Jordan, you've played with a lot of pro-am groups; talk about this one today.**

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, a lot of times when you have an 18-hole pro-am the next day, you don't know who you're going to play with, and you're somewhat kind of -- not regretting the day but more just kind of, okay, we've got to



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go out there and play 18, it's going to be a long day, how do we save energy, that kind of stuff. But with this situation I was very excited.

This was really more important than the tournament to me. I really needed to show up today or else I wasn't sure if I was going to have a job after. A lot of pressure.

We had a lot of fun. We kind of ham-and-egged it a little bit out there and had to yell "fore" a few times, but other than that, it's cool.

This has kind of been a professional home for me. When I've come up here, I've always been treated like family. It was a brand that I felt when I first came and visited KP up here that I felt that I aligned with at the time, and it's been a really fun relationship, so being able to actually come back a TOUR event at Caves in Baltimore is unique and we're going to take advantage.

JOHN BUSH: Michael, you alluded to this, but comment on playing here in your hometown and also at the home of Under Armour.

MICHAEL PHELPS: It's just good to be home. It's been a while since I've been home, so being able to come back, spend time with Kevin and the team last night a little bit, spend time with them all week, for me there's nothing better. Just going home, it's really hard to put into words what this place means to me. It's a special place.

As Jordan said, to be able to have a TOUR event here, basically a playoff event here, where I played so many rounds of golf growing up, it's a treat. It's a dream come true for me. I love this game. I'm a tremendous nerd in the golf game. It's kind of sad. But I obsess about this game.

Being able to understand and know a course like this and see what these guys do on this course, watching it on TV for me, it's just a different experience. It's incredible, and I can't say it enough how much I love this city and how great it feels to be home. Just checking into the hotel and looking out on to the water, looked out on to our tanks across the water last night, me, Ray and Cal, the big tanks across the water across from where UA is, and I just sat out on my patio and I was so calm.

This place is a very special place.

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JOHN BUSH: Kevin, just talk a little bit about this area.

KEVIN PLANK: Well, I wouldn't be here without the 16,000 plus Under Armour, my partner Patrik Frisk. They're the ones I think that give me the access to play on a day like today, too. But Under Armour wasn't started by accident; it was started because I sweat more than anybody else. If anybody questions that, I proved that today.

But what a tremendous thrill. Congratulations to Steve Fader and the whole membership here at Caves Valley. It's not going to be listed as Caves Valley or (indiscernible), it's going to say the BMW PGA Championship here in Baltimore, Maryland, and so that's something that's such a passion of Michael and mine, and Jordan I think has taken on. He's such a hallmark for the Under Armour brand, too.

It's a family affair. It really is a love fest being able to have a group like the foursome we had today plus Jimmy Davis and one of the best people from this area, too, really special day. I don't think any of us regretted it. Very appreciative right now.

JOHN BUSH: I'd like to hear about your relationship with both of these guys.

JORDAN SPIETH: Do you want us here?

KEVIN PLANK: Yeah, yeah, it's a very special one, too. Michael and I, we've known each other 15 years, and we've traveled around the world. We were talking last night about we did a bombing run through India one time and like we hit three cities in --

MICHAEL PHELPS: It was crazy.

KEVIN PLANK: In two days, and just pushing it and watching -- it's so much fun traveling with Michael, too. You walk into a mall and we had this little like 3,000-, 4,000-square-foot Under Armour store, and we were going to do a showing for Michael, and he walked in and nobody was around. All of a sudden it was like, we heard he's over here. Next thing there was like 2,000 people just chasing him, and we were throwing him out the back door. We've had nights like that, and then we'd get to play poker on the rides home and have all kinds of fun.

Jordan I've been -- very special. So going back to 2012 when we started it, and frankly Jordan taking a chance on us as a 19-year-old freshman at the University of Texas, our first meeting was at the Humble and Hungry Cafe at Under Armour and we had a chance to meet, and I met Jordan's dad Shawn and I remember Jordan just saying, he's like, look, I've got other people talking to me, but I'm

really an Under Armour guy; I'm an athlete; I'm a quarterback, I'm a pitcher, I'm a point guard, and I think this is my brand.

We took a chance, and we've never looked back. It's been a lot of fun, and three majors, a couple 13 wins later, so we're looking at No. 14 here right about now.

JOHN BUSH: Jordan, I wanted to hear a little report card on their game today.

JORDAN SPIETH: When the pressure was most on, which was the hole of Kelly James, to no surprise Michael stepped up and hit his best shot of the day. It's actually amazing that he can just -- some of the shots he hit were not his best and then he'll step up in that situation and put it to like eight feet and then knocked it right in the hole.

We got KP hitting some really nice drives toward the end, including on the last there.

So yeah, it was -- it's cool to see from when we first started until now really start to really love the game and actually want to go practice and have a simulator. He shows up the other day when we got in to let us in, and he's sweating. I'm like, did you just run up the hill? He's like, no, I've been hitting balls in the simulator until my hands bled.

So it's cool to see the passion these guys have for golf, and obviously within everything else that we do, it makes for a nice common area to spend some time.

**Q. Jordan, talk about how you're feeling this week, and given that you've played here so much, talk about your confidence level.**

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I feel good. This will be nice playing consecutive tournaments. I haven't done that since Colonial to Memorial, so it's been a long time. I always feel that I play better as kind of a stretch goes on, knock some rust off, figure out -- you're just hitting more shots, less kind of practice shots at home and more shots on course.

I've played here, but it's been different. I've ridden in a cart, and I can't even say that we've played half these tee boxes that I teed off on because they're pretty far from where the cart paths loop around, and most of the time we're just getting around and doing stuff in the city or whatever it may be.

I don't have a ton of course knowledge, but I did love this place from the second we've -- there's actually a couple tees that I've hit about 150 balls off of at different times during photo shoots, so I feel pretty comfortable on a couple of the tee boxes where I've hit so many shots that I

know exactly what to do.

What a beautiful place in the hills here. It's stunning. The greens are about as good a surface as we see all year, and that's always really exciting when we come to a place like this. They have a lot of slope, too, so a lot of slope and speed. Should be scorable to where it can be kind of fun, but at the same time you get on the wrong side of some holes you can get into some trouble.

**Q. You and Michael are among the most longstanding Under Armour athletes. What have you learned from him specifically from a competitive standpoint?**

JORDAN SPIETH: We've actually done some cool, unique stuff, just us two through the brand. We were in Vegas for a shoe launch and did some really cool one-on-one kind of sit-down talks. It just is -- his preparation, his passion to his preparation, what goes into his recovery. So I've talked to him a lot about that.

I pick his brain on the mental side of things now. He's getting very involved in mental health, and it's been something that I've actually worked on a lot in the last few years, and that's been a space that probably should be talked about more within athletes, their experiences across different sports, too. I've been really fortunate that he's lent an ear and also bounced ideas off me.

Without getting into details that are competitive advantages, I think he's been a fantastic kind of friend, and we've been able to spend time down in Mexico separate from the brand, too, and get to know his family. Again, to have a golf lover be the most decorated Olympian of all time, it's really good for our sport, and it's even better that I'm able to access it, as well.

**Q. This will be your first year in the new format at the TOUR Championship. You've never played it. What do you think of it? Do you like it? Comments, please.**

JORDAN SPIETH: So it's interesting, I asked Justin what he thought about it the first year when he went in as No. 1, and he didn't like that as much given he felt like instead of playing -- even though the scenarios have checked out the same almost since 2007, the idea that you're playing with a lead may be a little safer than you would trying to win a golf tournament is a little harder.

I think when you run the numbers and you see that -- you can't give up on any round. I think that's great. You've really got to -- if you're not playing well, you can't be like, well, it's not really going to make a difference; I'll finish 25th and I'll only drop four spots in the FedExCup. Instead you've got to buckle down and make sure every stroke

counts. On that side I like it.

I think the idea that it could -- we haven't really had this scenario yet, but you could have four or five guys right up within a stroke of the lead with those last four holes to go or five holes to go. With the nines changed now, I think that it could make it more exciting than it's ever been, so I do like that idea optically as a consumer.

**Q. You talk to Patrick about it?**

JORDAN SPIETH: Patrick?

**Q. Cantlay.**

JORDAN SPIETH: No, but I'm --

**Q. Don't.**

JORDAN SPIETH: Okay.

**Q. Tony Finau was in talking with us this morning, and one of the things he said was that it's harder than it looks to talk to the reporters after tough losses, especially a string of them like he had in close finishes --**

JORDAN SPIETH: Like he had you said?

**Q. Yeah, but he felt it was the right thing to do even when he maybe didn't really want to talk. Do you feel similarly? Is that how you approach it?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I think when you have a tough loss you don't really want to talk to anybody, and then when you recognize that you don't want to talk to anybody, it's not necessarily the reporter, it's more the idea that it's however many people are then listening -- it's not the 30 in the room, it's the thousands that are going to -- are potentially tuning in or see or read or whatever it may be. So I think sometimes it's tough to explain that in our game, you can do everything right and it doesn't go your way, and then you can go on streaks like that, and then you can do ones where you're like, man, I just really didn't think I was going to win that week and then it turned out.

It's just a weird -- I don't mean that as luck, I mean you put yourself in position enough, it works out, and as you can see with Tony, it did. But there are probably plenty of events where he didn't do anything wrong and then you sit in there and people say, What did you do wrong, and you have to try and come up with an answer.

I think sometimes that gets tough, and it can deplete your confidence because now you think maybe something went

wrong and nothing did.

So I think holding confidence through that when the questions are asked from what they should be, which is why didn't you win, which is I think maybe sometimes not a totally fair question given the scenarios of our sport.

**Q. Is it also harder that you often have to do that immediately, whereas in other sports there's at least a 10-, 15-minute cooling off period?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I think for me it lasts hours to a day, so it wouldn't really make a difference if you gave me an extra 10 minutes I don't think. I'd still be just as pissed.

I've had a couple of them this year where I was like, man, I really should have won this golf tournament and I'm upset about that. I don't think it would make a difference for me, but I'm sure individually it just depends.

**Q. Talking about getting over things, I'm just curious what was going through your brain when you went to the 11th tee in the final round at Northern Trust last week after what happened on 9 and 10? How long does it take you to get over something like that?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I mean, that one was a weird one because I actually felt like I was hitting it better that day than the other days, and that's to my point exactly on unless you're out there -- like if you're not Michael or me, you don't know that. You see the scores.

It wasn't very hard because I really had nothing to lose at that point. Like I could make five birdies or five bogeys, it wasn't going to make any difference really whatsoever as far as regrouping to finish the round. But I just wanted to hit -- I just wanted to make good swings, hit good shots.

I think it was maybe a couple holes later where I just said, let's get into next-week prep mode. It's Monday; let's try and make progress on what I need to make progress on regardless of results and kind of went into the whole Monday round like that. It wasn't working very well, so I just kind of adjusted a little.

I think I feel like it's a once every couple years hopefully it's a round where you just -- you're lagging a putt on the last hole to break 80 out here on the PGA TOUR, and I feel like it happens to just about everybody, and I actually walked away from it more upset that I had three over-par rounds than I cared about the actual Monday round itself. I just want to be a little bit better consistently.

**Q. What does it mean to you personally to be a part of Baltimore's first PGA TOUR event in nearly 60 years?**

JORDAN SPIETH: Well, for me personally, I have the Under Armour connection, a brand that started out of Kevin's grandma's basement and has grown into a pretty special place for this city and done a lot for the city, grown a lot of the areas around the marina or the bay. I'm not exactly sure what you --

So I've come here dozens of times over the last eight years and been able to come out here but also spend quite a bit of time around headquarters and in the city. So I've always -- I think it's a cool opportunity to come back to a place that I -- one of the places I've visited the most in the last 10 years and play a PGA TOUR event.

It's far from home but kind of feels more like I've got family around me in a way. For me personally it's special, but going to new cities that are good markets where you get good crowds and a lot of interest I think is very important, and it's something the TOUR tries to do.

I think the BMW Championship itself does a great job of trying to find that, and we've played a lot of different places all the way from Denver to here to Philly to Chicago area. Hopefully that continues.

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