

Sony Open in Hawaii

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Honolulu, Hawaii, USA

Waialae Country Club

Jordan Spieth

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome Jordan Spieth here at the Sony Open in Hawaii. You're making your fifth appearance at this event, first since 2019. Can you just start with your thoughts on being back here?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I think it was either here or San Diego for me and I love both tournaments. San Diego kind of seemed easier in the west coast stretch, but I can't seem to figure out how to make the cut in January there.

I have always really liked this golf course. It's just been more about how much to play on the west coast. So this year it was an easy decision before a couple weeks off, before a pretty busy stretch after.

I like this place. You got to think your way around it. It's kind of a bit of Colonial feel for me. It's still different than that, but similar feel to Hilton Head and Colonial. You have to plot your way around and pick and choose times to be aggressive.

It plays very different from last week while you're only a 30 minute flight over, so it's got great history as well. I've played well in the past. 2017 I think I finished third, so try and draw off maybe memories from that week and try and improve from last week as well.

THE MODERATOR: Speaking of last week at the Sentry Tournament of Champions, what was your takeaway, what did you build off from that coming into this week?

JORDAN SPIETH: I shook a little bit of rust off. Luckily I played in December a couple times, but I always love this event. I mean, it's one that every time after you win it's like the first thing you think about is can I start booking my trip to Maui? That will never change for me.

I just really enjoy going down there and playing that tournament, so when it's over it's kind of sad, but it's nice to come over here and still be in Hawaii and play another one.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Hugely different from last week to this week. Last week obviously you've won there at that course. This week you say you've played well also. Do you have a certain type of course you prefer, or at this point you can just win on any of them?

JORDAN SPIETH: I think that I prefer the bigger, slopiest feel courses like Augusta and Kapalua, but Colonial is probably my most successful tournament as far as finishes in the top 10 per times playing it, if you want to put it that way as far as form at a course, so it's kind of odd.

I love sometimes how trees shape shots. Like Hilton Head has a ton of that. I don't necessarily love when driver is taken out of your hands on courses, but that happens at those few that I mentioned, here and Colonial and Hilton Head.

So I'm not sure. I would say I would prefer and enjoy playing these uneven-lying, you know, in-the-wind, you know, feel-type golf courses more, but there has been a few places that are quite the opposite that I've been able to have success at.

Yeah, I think that answers that.

Q. What do you think you'll be doing in the fall?

JORDAN SPIETH: Still want to play periodically a couple times. I won't be good at taking -- if I have the chance I wouldn't be good at taking five months and no tournament golf. Maybe look at some opportunities like going back to Australia. I really loved going there and haven't gone there since 2017.

Maybe a couple overseas tournaments may come up that I hadn't really been able to go to since pre-COVID. Other than that, football games, being a dad. It will be pretty easy to fill time now. Easier than when I was not married and no kids.

Now you get that time to just be home.

Q. Point is, do you think other people will be like you,



you'll still play?

JORDAN SPIETH: I think I'll still play. This year I played one FedExCup event from East Lake until last week. I didn't really -- and then I played Tiger's event and the father-son, and so I would imagine a similar schedule where I would try to play more Thanksgiving into December than earlier in the fall.

So take that six-, eight-week break and try and play, and then play a little closer to when the season starts, because it will be so important to be off to a good start in Maui. Well, it's been that way for me because I haven't played much in the fall. More than other years.

Q. And secondly, however '24 looks like in terms of size of field, whatever gets determined, how important do you think it is to have a cut?

JORDAN SPIETH: I bounce back and forth. I'm kind of either way. I think that there is an argument to be said that if you have the ability to not, then you're guaranteed, you know, that kid that came out and Justin Thomas is his favorite player and Justin --

Q. That one kid, right.

JORDAN SPIETH: Okay. The vast thousands of kids that have Justin Thomas as their favorite player. Not that he misses a lot of cuts, but one week, say you are to even cut it on a Saturday and cut ten or fifteen guys out to be able to go twos or whatever, random times before daylight savings.

Guaranteeing that they have baseball games or tournaments on Saturday, the only day they can go Sunday. Guaranteeing that you're going to be able to see your favorite player play, regardless if they have a chance to win that day or not, see, that's the part where I'm like it would be kind of nice to be able to have that opportunity for fans.

But at the same time, I think that the golf that we've -- the professional golf that we've been playing for all this time, 80% of the tournaments that I've played in, maybe more, have had cuts, and you have to play well, and that's part of when you're off, the fight to not mail it in and try to work your way into making that cut.

So I'm either way. I'm indifferent on it. But I've been stronger on one side or the other at different time periods, but when it comes to the argument of cut for world ranking points or whatever, and obviously the conversation with LIV, I just -- I don't think that we should be doing something -- we should be doing what's best for our or tour and forget

about the consequences and any reaction that would cause elsewhere.

Q. Does Jordan Spieth, the board member, and the Jordan Spieth, the member, have different thoughts or different ideas when you're in those meetings?

JORDAN SPIETH: I think that -- well, and I haven't been a board member for well over a year. But to answer your question on the way it was when I was, I would say that you have to be -- yeah, you have to be -- you're representing the entire membership. You're representing No. 1 and No. 200 on the FedEx and the guy with medical status.

You have to throw out where your position is regardless of if you're playing poorly you want help positions you're in; if you're playing poor you only want help top guys.

You have to look out for the membership and really the maybe the future of the PGA TOUR, and that doesn't mean helping certain guys or others, but it might if the product is going to be better one way or the other.

So you have to be somewhat objective versus when I'm out playing myself, being like, man, I wish this was this way. That would help me.

So, yeah, a little bit.

Q. We were talking to Adam Scott about all different things, world rankings, points in the system. One of the things that came up was the idea of potentially changing the 18% rule in regards to the winner's check to a larger number. Maybe proportionally different depending how tough the field is. Would you be in favor of something like that?

JORDAN SPIETH: I hadn't really thought about that on the winner's cut. If so, then not by much. Certainly winning is winning. It is very different. Second and fourth feels pretty similar. Third and sixth feels very similar. Winning feels very different.

If that percentage were to go up a couple points I wouldn't be opposed to that at all if it aligned with world ranking system, that got adjusted to a strokes-gained system where somehow got aligned in what could be changed going forward on the world ranking, then maybe that would be the best way to do it.

Q. What about 40%?

JORDAN SPIETH: No, I don't think...



Q. Adam brought that number up.

JORDAN SPIETH: I mean, I just don't like...

Q. Too big?

JORDAN SPIETH: I just think our sport, as much as I just said it's so different winning and second and fourth, like it could be a bit frustrating where you could finish second but have outplayed first significantly because of the draw you were on. You hit a pin and the ball -- there is so much in our sport that can be affected, that the difference in it being 20% and I don't know what second place is. 12?

So from 20 to 12 versus 18 to 12 versus 40 to 15, it seems like that's too big of a spread for the way our sport works.

It's not always an even playing field for four rounds.

Q. Not trying to pin you down on a number, but I'd like your explanation as to why you think it shouldn't be too big of a change.

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I think there should be as much emphasis on winning as possible, and there is no bigger spread than between first and second. But I think that if you start to separate it so much I think it -- I just wonder as we go forward here -- I don't remember ever contending, even my rookie year in an event, and thinking about the difference in the money in first and second ever coming down the stretch.

So does that add to it for the general, like the fan watching on TV? Maybe. I guess. But you're still just looking at who wins. You want to know who wins for the privilege of winning, not because of the difference in the paycheck. Until you get to the FedExCup. Then that's the bigger play and that's what's selling there. But that's tens of millions of dollars difference.

I think that when you look, I guess last week is probably a good way to look at it on how we're looking going forward with elevated events. There is a significant difference there in the money, enough to where someone might be thinking about it a little, and certainly the public is looking at it differently than when it was a million and 700 grand or 750 grand to 2.7 to whatever second was.

Q. 1.5.

JORDAN SPIETH: 1.5, so almost double once you get up to whatever that number is. \$25 million purse it's like double, right? So I think if it were adjusted, just minorly, because I've never -- and I'm going back to rookie year, and I may be so wrong compared to other guys, but I don't

remember ever being like, oh, if I win this playoff that's a difference in -- I know exactly what that is, it's \$700,000 difference.

That's the last thing you should be thinking about I think as a competitor.

Q. Do you think that also is because of where you were, your financial situation?

JORDAN SPIETH: That's why I mentioned this was rookie year I remember thinking back that way.

Q. You still were probably taken care. You had an Under Armour deal, a Titleist deal.

JORDAN SPIETH: I mean, if I look at the people, I was in the playoff with Jack Johnson at the John Deere. I was not in the same financial position as Zach Johnson. I'm just saying, I guess it depends on who is in the group.

In '14 I had chances to win and didn't, but it wasn't because I ever thought about that. I was with Bubba at the Masters and Martin Kaymer at the THE PLAYERS, and those are the biggest purses.

It was just about the prestige of the golf tournament versus the purse. As you're pointing out, may be a very different thought for somebody else.

Q. Along that thread, shifting over to points, as stupid as that seems, I want to say it was '18 you came close to the Tour Championship.

JORDAN SPIETH: 31st.

Q. Have you ever gone back and looked at the year when you mailed it in at the end of a round at a tournament finishing 40th...

JORDAN SPIETH: Actually, it's funny. I really didn't think about it, and something made me think about it the other day. The tournament that stuck out to me that year was The Open Championship. I was in the final group on Sunday and I played a really bad round. I played with Xander and I played a really poor round and a really bad finish to a round. A couple like ones that almost scooted a bunker and tipped in the back lip on like maybe 15, the par-4. That would've been a wedge but it was a full stroke penalty.

I finished 9th, and in a major with heightened points, if I finish eighth I'm in the Tour Championship. Like that one stroke, I don't care about it then because I'm trying to win the tournament, play aggressively. It probably cost me the



Tour Championship playing aggressively versus playing a round that if I wasn't going to win I was going to finish sixth or one or two shots better.

But I would never play that way, and it's just the way the cookie crumbled that year. I should have played better in the playoffs.

Q. Sure. You ever caught yourself mailing it in though? Knowing what I mean by mailing it in.

JORDAN SPIETH: Only time -- there has been a few times where I've been enough out of the cut line where I couldn't make it with four or five to go. In a tournament on Saturday or Sunday, I can't say that I've ever just not sat and picked target and tried to hit the right shot.

I don't think it ever had to do with the fact that it could affect -- I mean, like afterwards I would be like, yeah, I'm glad I didn't give up because that shot or two could mean something at the end.

But in the process I just hate when the course beats me. I want to beat the golf course. I want to win that hole, you know.

Q. Couple others for you. Have you decided which elevated event you're skipping?

JORDAN SPIETH: I have not. I have a tough go from -- a tough schedule from Quail Hollow until Travelers, and so if I play Quail Hollow and Jack's event, that's five in a row, which I've never done. Two of them are at home, but then one week off and coast to coast, U.S. Open to Travelers.

And so, I mean, it would be an easy decision if it weren't for the Presidents Cup last year. And now I'm going, maybe this -- I've always wanted to play Quail Hollow and it just always would be five in a row.

Q. Because of Texas.

JORDAN SPIETH: And now I like -- I love Quail Hollow, and now that I kind of have the memories there from the last Presidents Cup, I guess I would have to go back and look at my scores and see if it was just the matches or how much Justin helped or whatever to see if that would be useful.

Q. Didn't help much on Saturday.

JORDAN SPIETH: Well, he probably did on Thursday and Friday.

Q. He had that one kid out there watching.

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, and I don't know yet, but looks like it's another Quail Hollow or Travelers for me, which I like both. That's tough. But I don't think I could skip Jack's event.

Q. Still thinking about Tampa?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah.

Q. Would you consider Bay Hill?

JORDAN SPIETH: No. I played Bay Hill once and finished fourth so...

Q. You did?

JORDAN SPIETH: I played it in 2021 when Bryson won. I had a chance on the weekend there, and I played it once and finished fourth and I love really difficult courses on bermuda. That's about as hard as it gets.

Q. Back nine today, right?

JORDAN SPIETH: Uh-huh.

Q. Did you notice that there is internal OB on 13?

JORDAN SPIETH: No.

Q. Par-4 that goes back toward the ocean. Really hard hole.

JORDAN SPIETH: One that doglegs around the bunker? Down the right side? I hit it right of the bunker but I wasn't out of bounds. I wasn't out of cart path.

Q. Right of the red hazard area it's constituted internal out of bounds. Just trying to figure out why.

JORDAN SPIETH: Thank you. I would've never known and it would've never been a problem. Now I'm going to be in the left rough for days.

Q. Are you playing Waste Management this year?

JORDAN SPIETH: I don't know why it would be like that.

Q. Is there any advantage to 12, going down 12 fairway?

JORDAN SPIETH: The green is so big that maybe the left pins, you would be like that fairway is so difficult to hit, you kind of have to hit driver there. You just have to pinch it around that bunker, that maybe those left pins, you would

say there is no trees on the right if you go far enough right, and then you have the whole green. It's one of the bigger greens and flatter and pitched at you, so it would be like a 9-iron. It be a guaranteed 9-iron with a good angle. I could buy that.

They did on 18. They started three, four years ago.

Q. Yeah. I think there was either a tree issue or TIO from the stands. I don't think they do it anymore.

JORDAN SPIETH: Oh, you can go left now?

Q. Anyway, Phoenix.

JORDAN SPIETH: Yes.

Q. Were you able to secure housing or was that a challenge this year?

JORDAN SPIETH: We're doing the RV life. Yeah, bought a bus last fall so we'll be in that every week.

Q. Would you ever consider finishing your final round and going to the Super Bowl?

JORDAN SPIETH: Did it in 2015 when it was there. I went with Michael. It was the Seahawks-Patriots, and Michael is a big Seahawks fan, and that's when they threw it instead of handing it to Lynch on fourth down. I've been a Tom Brady guy, him being an Under Armour guy, and so I was on the good end and Michael was not. It was just us two went to the game sitting together.

Q. That's awkward.

JORDAN SPIETH: It was fine. It was a wild ending. It was good. It was fun. Certainly made the Phoenix Open crazier than it is.

Q. Crazier.

JORDAN SPIETH: Crazier. The Super Bowl itself, I've been to a lot of games I enjoyed more. It's just very corporate and there is not a ton of true fans of either team at the Super Bowl.

Q. Is there a team that could make it this year that you would go?

JORDAN SPIETH: I would say more than 50% chance of going regardless, and if the Cowboys so, I would call that 100% chance.

Q. Staying with Phoenix, these elevated events,

Phoenix has a Monday qualifier. Seems like that might be an interesting story. Monday qualifiers winning anyway would be an interesting story.

JORDAN SPIETH: Uh-huh.

Q. 20 million and how much his life could change.

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, absolutely, yeah.

Q. Thoughts on that? Expound if you could.

JORDAN SPIETH: It's one of the really cool things about the PGA TOUR that that's possible, and it has happened. Shoot, I played with the last guy to do it on Saturday, Corey Connors I think, in San Antonio. Played with him on Saturday or Sunday. Was he the last one to do it. 2019 maybe in San Antonio. Sound right? Yeah, he won that week. Presidents Cup player, you know, multiple tour winner now.

But, yeah, to be an elevated event with now the money that comes with that.

But back to that point, I did have one more thing to say on the -- like what you're thinking about. I don't think it necessarily matters your financial status. I think what's more important than anything about the difference in money coming down the stretch -- and, again, I may not be the player to poll on this, is the idea that it secures your job for multiple years versus not securing it for the next year.

There has been a number of guys who lose a playoff and finish second and they don't get their doesn't get their card back, but the guy who won off beating him in a playoff, one hole, is guaranteed at least two years, which gives you so much -- it's just a massive -- it's not just that two years. Like the freedom you must feel, the difference.

I know that I'm out here for this much longer. My contracts get more guaranteed now. It's a much bigger deal than thinking about the difference in the money from that week think is the status difference.

Q. Would you look at changing that to maybe three years?

JORDAN SPIETH: I don't think so. I think it's significant enough to make it -- again, making a bigger spread is making that purse 40%, because the difference would be -- I think we have plenty of playing opportunities. I don't think you need to look to add more.

I think it's in a good spot on that front, where if you win invitationals I think it is three, majors it's five, and then tour



events are two.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thank you, Jordan.

JORDAN SPIETH: Thanks.

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