

The American Express

Tuesday, January 18, 2022

La Quinta, California, USA

PGA WEST Pete Dye Stadium Course

Scottie Scheffler

Press Conference

DOUG MILNE: We would like to welcome Scottie Scheffler to the interview room here at the American Express Championship. Thanks for joining us. If I include the Hero World Challenge you've put up top-5 finishes in three of your last four starts. Got to be indicative of, feel like you're playing well. If you could just kind of bring us up to speed on how you feel like your playing heading into the calendar year of 2022.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I feel like I'm playing pretty well. This is really the first time I could remember since probably college where I played pretty good in the fall. I don't know why. For whatever reason the fall was always kind of tough for me.

So it was really good going into the off-season feeling like my game was in a good spot, not really having to fix a ton of stuff, just trying to improve the stuff I've been trying to improve on and I feel pretty good going in the new year.

DOUG MILNE: Making your third start here at the American Express Championship with a third-place showing in 2020. Just a few comments on being back here and playing PGA West and La Quinta and so forth.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: It feels good to be back here. This is great place for me to start the year. Outside of trying to be at Kapalua every year this is a good place to start in the 48 states. So great weather. Golf courses are in good shape, the greens are nice and firm this year. I think last year had a little bit of weird weather so this year with the greens being firm like they were for me in 2019 this place kind of suits my eye.

DOUG MILNE: We'll take a few questions.

Q. What was the goal, and I guess you did didn't have much of an off-season, but what did you work on, if anything on your time off?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Like I said, just kind of improving on the stuff I've been improving on throughout the year, a lot of short game work, some different stuff off the tee. I



pretty much, I don't ever really get too focused on one area. I feel like if you get overly focused on a certain aspect you're going to start to lose somewhere else.

So for me I'm trying to gradually get better at pretty much all aspects of the game. I don't really feel like there's one part that I need to work crazy hard on. I just need to keep making those incremental improvements.

Q. When it comes to the ramp-up into the season, in regards to looking to get that first win, playing as well as you have, is there a sense of maybe some urgency in the last month, it was a brief off-season, to start the year in that direction or are you kind of, hey, we're going to take this time to build up maybe towards majors and that kind of thing? How are you approaching the start of the season?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: So I would say that I definitely didn't build up to this event like I would a major. I feel like I usually play my best golf in little spurts and it's usually not the first week out.

I think in 2020 when I played well at this tournament it was kind of a little different occasion where first week out I played some really solid golf. So for me just, like I said, making those little improvements and not really over-thinking things and I think naturally I kind of just peak for those bigger events, just kind of also just where they sit in the season.

Q. When you played really well here a few years ago that was really I think maybe your first time in contention at a PGA TOUR event. What did you take away from that experience? What did you feel you did wrong on Sunday?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I didn't really feel like did I too much wrong. I played pretty poorly to start the round on Sunday day and I still gave myself a pretty good chance to win at the end of the day.

And doing that on an easier golf course like this is much more difficult than doing that at, let say, a major championship venue because if I make a bogey or a double somewhere out here I'm losing a significant amount of shots and you can only make up so many shots on



these easy courses, where those harder ones I can pretty much birdie any hole out there and you can, I should say it this way, you can either make a birdie or a bogey on pretty much any hole and so there's not as much room at these smaller events where guys are only making birdies for you to make up ground.

Like, you can only shoot so many under par just because it's golf and it's still hard, where those majors you can shoot 63, 64 and really kind of move up the board a bunch.

Q. Did you experience some nerves that you hadn't felt before that day?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I mean, there was definitely some nerves. I pretty much get nervous every time I go out to play golf. My thing is if I'm not nervous then something's off.

Looking back on that round, other than the start I really played some solid golf. I got a few weird breaks here and there and didn't make as many putts as I had in the beginning of that week.

But I had some experience that fall. I had a few top 10s. I think a couple top-5. I think I played the final group at the Greenbrier like my first event out. So I had experience playing well on the PGA TOUR. It's obviously a little different than the other levels of the game, but I've always performed well in those moments and for me I'm just looking forward to getting back there.

Q. If I told you that day that you still would not have a win today would you have believed me?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: You know, I don't really look too far ahead, so if you were to tell me half the things I accomplished on TOUR since then I probably wouldn't believe you with that.

It's just you don't really know where the next day's coming and for me I'm just out here playing and enjoying myself.

Q. Just to get a couple impressions on a few players. With Jon Rahm coming off the U.S. Open last year, just with his game and his mentality, why is he always a threat?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I mean, he seems to play pretty good every week, so kind of makes him a pretty good threat. He hits a ton of fairways. He plays golf, I would say, kind of with a lot of authority. Like, he usually really knows exactly what he's doing. You very rarely see Jon hit a shot that he's not committed to.

I mean, he was playing such good golf last year. We played with him Saturday at Memorial before he tested positive for COVID and it was pretty special to watch. I mean, he had like a six- or seven-shot lead out there and so you knew some good things were going to come.

Q. With Phil, I think in 2019 here he flirted with a 59 and then he won the PGA at 50 last year. What goes through your head when you think about some of the things he's still able to do in fits and spurts at that age?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I mean, it's pretty amazing for him at his age to be still out here grinding and playing as many tournaments as he does. I mean, he still hits it really far too, which I think is pretty amazing. He really still sends it off the tee. And I know that's something he's worked hard at. But still at 50 years old the longevity that he's had is pretty incredible.

Q. You say it's still golf and it's still hard, but it seems maybe a little less hard here. Does it affect your mindset coming in, knowing that there are 60s and 61s to be played out there or is that just what we expect on the PGA TOUR now because we have seen that the last couple of weeks?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I think the last few weeks, like for instance, Kapalua was kind of an anomaly there for there to be no wind and it be so soft for four days.

But here you just get perfect weather, and with perfect conditions out here, these guys are pretty good at golf, so you're going to see some low scores kind of no matter where you go when you get the conditions that we do out here.

I wouldn't say it changes the mindset too much. It's just golf. Just go out there and just play and take what the golf course gives you.

Q. Just to follow up on that, for going, looking at the three different courses, you're going, I mean you say these guys are good. You're all good. The conditions are perfect. So does the course matter if you're somewhere, maybe somewhere else, does it make a difference for what you're trying to do on that particular day?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: For sure. Like I would say approaching a U.S. Open is a lot different than approaching this tournament, the American Express, just because it's, I mean, it definitely takes a different type of player to play really good on those major championship golf courses and I would say a tournament like this is a

little bit different than those, but you're still going to have a great champion this week.

Q. I guess maybe what I'm referring to is like being at La Quinta versus being at the Nicklaus Course, the Stadium Course?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: The courses here?

Q. Is there any one in particular that, hey, this suits me really well or is it, hey, we can score on all of these?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I mean, we can score on all of them. I would say Stadium obviously is the most challenging to score on. I think those other courses maybe you can fake it around a little bit.

But I played a practice round on the Stadium today, you got to drive the ball pretty well off the tee out there and still have to get the ball in the fairway and hit good shots. Especially with the green firmness being up, it definitely kind of brings difficulty up a little bit for sure. If you play this golf course in soft conditions, it doesn't really make a big difference whether or not you're in the fairway or in the rough that's that long, but now if the rough's that long (indicating) it takes spin off the ball and if you're going into a firm green and if the pin is tucked at all it makes it a lot more challenging. So you good still got to get the ball in play.

DOUG MILNE: One question for you, Russell Henley said last week he admitted to not sleeping well the night before with a lead. Obviously you can't win after rounds 1 and 2, but do you ever struggle with tough nights of sleep when you're hanging on to the lead and if so how do you combat that or do you just kind of roll with it and do what you can?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I'm not a good sleeper in general, so I kind of battle sleeping any ways. So it's really not much of a difference for me.

DOUG MILNE: All right, well Scottie, thank you for your time and best of luck this week.

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