

# The American Express

Wednesday, January 18, 2023

La Quinta, California, USA

PGA WEST Pete Dye Stadium Course

## Scottie Scheffler

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'll get started. We would like to welcome Scottie Scheffler to the interview room here at The American Express. Thanks for stopping by for a few minutes. You're making your fourth start here in the event, highlighted by a third place finish in 2020, I believe. Does that sound right?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Sounds good.

**Q. Okay. We'll go with that. That said, just some thoughts on being back here to a place that you've had some good success.**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, it's a fun tournament for me. It's nice to start the year here in the continental United States. This is good place to start. It's a fun event and three good golf courses that are always in great shape and good weather and should be a fun week.

THE MODERATOR: Technically, you're making your fifth start of the season with three top 10s and a runner-up at Hero unofficially. Just kind of assess the state of your game, how you're feeling as you're heading into the week.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I feel like I've been playing solid recently. Hitting it really nice and making some putts. So hopefully this week I'll hit it a little bit better and make a few more putts and be there toward the end and hopefully get a win.

But game feels like it's in a good spot, trending in a right direction and starting to see some results which is fun.

THE MODERATOR: Coming off a little bit of a break, hopefully some down time. Were you able to -- maybe you didn't do this -- but take a look back at last year, last season? Just looking at your stats, I don't need to tell everybody here, it was obviously an amazing 2022. Did you ever stop and just kind of think, What in the world was I doing?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: (Laughing.) I know I was having fun, which is good. But, no, the break was actually pretty



short between the Bahamas and having to leave for Kapalua I may have only had three weeks. My wife and I went on a trip and then we were out of town for Christmas so it went by quick.

I reflected a little bit, but I don't focus too much on the past or the future, just try to stay in the present and keep working at it.

THE MODERATOR: All right. We'll take some questions.

**Q. How do you feel different as a player than you were a year ago when you were here?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I feel like I've improved a lot since this point last year. I feel like I've added new things to my game and I'm continuing to improve at certain aspects that I've been working on. I've seen some results now, which is exciting. Definitely feel like I've improved.

**Q. Are the changes, physical, technical things or is it mental?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: It's just fine tuning stuff. So I guess you could say it's physical. Just trying to become more consistent. I would say that's probably the biggest thing.

I felt like last year was a year where I played pretty good consistent golf throughout the season. I maybe only missed a handful of cuts at the most. I was in position to win numerous different tournaments, which is nice.

**Q. I was going to say, a lot of guys go on little streaks where they play great for a month or maybe six weeks, but you were there the entire year. That's not something that a lot of people do. Was that just you being mentally strong?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I'm not sure. I think when you see guys that kind of spend a bit of time at the top of the world rankings, whether it's Rory or Jon or probably if you look at the top 10 or 15 guys in the world, most of those players are pretty consistent.

That was an area where I was trying to improve last year where I was kind of on outside in looking, when we were



trying to qualify for the Ryder Cup which would have been a year and a half ago. Was able to get on that team and play well and get some confidence and then I started to improve physically with stuff with my swing. I think my approach stats last year jumped pretty high. I think I was maybe top 5 in approach. Whereas years past I was maybe 60th or 70th. I don't know what it was, but I wasn't 5th or something like that. So that was an area that it was nice to see improvement.

When you look at the results from last year I felt like I played a lot of good golf which is nice and I guess that's why you saw me closer to the top of the world ranking versus 20th.

**Q. You start on La Quinta tomorrow. Traditionally a place where you guys often go low. Do you game plan differently for La Quinta compared to the other two courses of this event?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Not really. I think every course is a little bit different, so you kind of have a game plan for each course. I'll approach a lot of 'em pretty similar. Just try and hit good shots and make the right decisions off the tee.

La Quinta there's a few places where you can be aggressive. Then there's a few places where you have to be a little bit more patient off the tee. But if you're in the fairway on that golf course you're going to have a lot of opportunities. So most importantly just getting the ball in play and going from there.

**Q. The guys mentioned the greens at La Quinta being some of the best you see maybe in the course of the year. Do you feel that way? What's your putting experience like at La Quinta?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: They may be some of the best like surfaces I've seen ever. They're really, really good. That's consistent. It's been like that -- I think this is my fourth time here at this event and they have been like that every time I've been over there. It's pretty amazing what that superintendent and the club can do with those greens.

If you're rolling it good -- there's a little bit of a pull there that can be tough to read at times, but once you start making a few putts that hole can look really big because those greens are nice.

**Q. If things go a certain way this week you can regain your stop atop the world ranking. Is that something you think about or motivates you?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: No. I don't know what "a certain

way" is this week. I'm focused on trying to put myself in position to win the tournament. I have no idea what a finish or win would do for me in the world ranking.

I haven't checked in a while, but I know I'm still No. 2 and No. 1 is better than No. 2. I don't focus too much on that stuff. I just try and -- I don't focus too much on the past, I don't focus too much on the future. For me it's always best to stay present and continue to work on the things that I've been working on for many, many years.

**Q. Along those lines, there is a weird scenario this week where you could end up sharing the top spot with Patrick Cantlay. Like, statistically. Which seems odd. It's never happened before. Can you talk to what that would possibly feel like?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: In what?

**Q. In the world ranking. You could both be world No. 1.**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: That would be pretty funny. (Laughing.) I assume that's never happened before. Yeah.

**Q. It's never happened before.**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, it would be a little bit weird to have two No. 1s. Maybe have a putt off or something to see who would be the real No. 1 (laughing.)

**Q. Going back to what you do in the off-season. How much do you and Randy kind of dig into the strokes-gained stats in between seasons and what was sort of the focus, short off-season, but this off-season?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I don't know how well you know Randy but he's not a huge stats guy. He's pretty old school. It's not something that he won't look at. Most of the times the stuff that he sees and the stuff that I feel tends to align with statistics.

So when we come back from events and kind of reflecting on a full season there's certain stuff that we already kind of know that we're going to work on.

Then some years Randy will look in the stats. Other years I'll look into the stats. We're not super organized with it. But we always have kind of an understanding of kind of where we're at. Then just going and trying to improve. We're definitely not looking at fairway statistics and which side I miss more often. If I miss more left or if I miss more right, stuff like that. It's just little things here and there.



**Q. Starting this year, Q-School is going back to five and ties are going to get PGA TOUR cards. What is your take on that and do you think it would change your Q-School approach from back in the day knowing that that's the scenario?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Well, I don't know if it would have changed my approach. It definitely would have encouraged me to move further up the leaderboard. I definitely got a little conservative in the last round and I kind of had to skate by there at the last second. So it may have helped me at the time to get to the Korn Ferry, I don't know if it would have helped me get to the PGA TOUR.

But I think it's a good opportunity for guys. I think it's something that you deserve after -- I mean, it's pretty grueling to go through Q-School, especially if you start at first stage like I did. It's a long few months.

I think it's good to give the guys a reward there at the end. Yeah, I think more opportunities for guys to get out here is better. Because you want to reward good golf wherever it is. If it's at Q-School or on the Korn Ferry or PGA TOUR Canada, Latin America, wherever it is, you want to reward good golf. So I think that's a nice improvement by the TOUR to start giving spots again to the PGA TOUR.

**Q. I saw on some junior leaderboards from back in the day you and Chandler Phillips. What do you remember about him from growing up in junior golf?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Chandler was always -- he's a East Texas guy. I've known him for a long time. He's super talented. He's a really talented player. I'm sure you'll see his name pop up here pretty soon.

**Q. He just won today.**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Did he win today? Okay. Yeah. Makes sense. He's pretty good. (Laughing.) So congrats to Chandler.

**Q. I noticed you're on the PAC this year. Why did you think it was important to be sort of part of the decision-making process now?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I think you've seen kind of more players become more involved in stuff with the TOUR in the past year. I think with LIV that's kind of an obvious deal that we had to make a few changes in order to improve our TOUR in a different way.

So for me having an opportunity to be on the PAC and talk with guys across all different levels of our TOUR, whether

it's a guy finishing 100th on the Money List or 1st, it's kind of nice to be in the room and have those conversations and figure out what is collectively going to work best for all of us so that this TOUR can succeed.

I just want to be in a position to help. So it should be a good year for us on the PAC and we got a good group of guys and hopefully just continue to improve our TOUR.

THE MODERATOR: All right, Scottie, you're the best. Thank you.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: All right. Thanks, y'all.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports