

THE PLAYERS Championship

Sunday, March 17, 2024

Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, USA

TPC Sawgrass

Scottie Scheffler

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome our champion of THE PLAYERS Championship, Scottie Scheffler to the media center.

Scottie, in the 50-year history of this tournament, first player to successfully defend this title. Maybe just a few opening comments.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, yeah, it's good to be sitting back here again. Today was another battle, hard-fought week. A lot of guys played some really good golf this week. A few of them finished at 19; I finished at 20. That's some really good golf around this course.

Yeah, really don't know what to say, to be honest with you.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up to some questions.

Q. Can you describe the moment when you were watching Wyndham line that up and when you saw that thing 360? I'm assuming you had a TV monitor there, right?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I was out on the range. I was listening to the crowd noise. I heard a groan, and so it sounded like a missed putt. I haven't seen his putt yet.

Q. When you were sitting on 14 tee on Friday, having the massage, could you have envisioned sitting in that chair right now?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I think so. That's probably why I kept playing. I had gotten off to a good start on -- I played really good golf on Thursday. I made an early birdie. I think I was 2-under through 4 on Friday so I was right in the thick of the tournament.

All of a sudden I get that pinch in my neck, and I gutted it out around there, getting it around in a few under par, keeping myself in the tournament. Same thing Saturday.

I said before when you get an acute injury like that, if you can wake up the next day feeling a little bit better or the



exact same, it's a win. Usually the morning after is worse the following day. So, woke up Saturday feeling a little bit better. Was able to hit some shots yesterday but not many. Then today I woke up feeling fairly close to normal. I went out there and had a good round of golf.

Q. When you're behind five guys, down five shots, what's the mentality, because you also tied the largest comeback in tournament history as well today.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I just wanted to get off to a good start on the front nine. I felt like if I could shoot a low round on the front nine and put myself back right into the tournament, that was really my goal.

I was hoping to make some early birdies, and I parred the first three, and then the hole-out really got me going there on No. 4.

Yeah, I made some nice putts to close out the back nine. When I was looking at the leaderboard, I saw that they were starting -- or Xander was starting at 17, Wyndham was starting at 16. So I needed some help, obviously, going into today if I wanted to win the tournament.

I felt like if I could go out and shoot a good round on the front nine, I could put myself in it as long as one of them didn't shoot 4- or 5-under on the front, as well.

The birdie on 9 was huge, and I was right in the tournament the whole back nine.

Q. Do you pride yourself on your ability to close tournaments?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I think that's why we put in all the work is to be able to finish off tournaments and to play well at the right time. Going into days like today it's nice coming out on top, for sure. It's a great feeling.

Q. If you think back to a couple weeks ago when you were coming off Riviera and you see the notification, Scheffler struggles with his putting again, how much differently do you feel two weeks later and how much has changed?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Well, I don't feel like a ton has



changed. I feel like I'm much more free in what I'm doing. I think I'm much more engaged in the process of things. I think Riviera was more of a -- I think it was more of an effect from the week before.

I put myself in position in Phoenix, and not being able to make the putts late on the back nine on Sunday -- I had bogey, I think I had a 3-putt there, but anyways, I was in position to win that tournament, and I was very frustrated not to be able to get it done.

So going into Riv, it was probably more the residual effects of that, the frustration.

But really Phil has done a really good job with me the last six months or so kind of keeping my head in the right frame of mind. We've been working really hard at it. Trying not to work too hard at times. It's really nice to see the fruits of all the work that we've put in, and it's exciting to be sitting up here again.

Q. When Smylie interviewed out on the range when it was over, you kind of bent over at your waist, looked pretty tired. How exhausting was this victory?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I just think playing the back-to-back weeks is challenging. Being at the top of the leaderboard last week and this week, it's a real test mentally and physically. This week was a physical test, as well, just with how my neck was Friday and Saturday. So I put a lot into trying to win this golf tournament, it's very it's very satisfying to be walking out of here with the trophy.

Q. What was the closest you may have come to withdrawing?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: When my neck pinched on me on 12 and I tried to hit like -- I think I had like 90 yards to the pin and hit a 56-degree on 12 the second day, and I mean, it was quite painful.

So, I didn't really know if I was going to be able to swing. Basically looking up to see the line on my putt was pretty difficult. It was hard to hit putts because right when I turned my head to look at the hole my brain's sending pain signals or however that works, getting pain signals to my brain. It's not easy to focus on making a putt when you're in pain.

But, you know, I figured as long as I could get through the round on Friday -- Marnus did a good job kind of getting me going for Saturday. I felt a little bit better, like I said, and then Sunday, today, I felt pretty good overall.

Q. Xander and Wyndham were both asked what they

thought when you were charging up the leaderboard. Wyndham said he thought, of course, and Xander said he thought, Just another week out here. What's it like it hear compliments like that and kind of give off like that inevitable feeling when you're charging up the board?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Well, anytime you can get the respect and the compliments of your peers I think is really special. We all put a lot of work in into our games, and to receive compliments from the guys that are in here week in, week out is always really special and we're competing against each other like crazy and I think those guys are going to leave this tournament more motivated than ever and I got to do my best to keep up with that.

Q. When you were finishing top 5 seemingly every week through last summer and fall, you said, okay, I'm proud of my consistency, but now getting these two straight wins, do you think that's just the consistency balancing out, or do you think you kind of had to do something to get over this hump a bit?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Not really sure if I understand the question.

Q. Do you feel like you needed something because were you obviously playing so consistently but just not quite getting those wins, some of those weeks?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, yeah. I would say the consistency is great. It's definitely frustrating not getting or getting close to winning tournaments and not winning tournaments. Like I said, Phoenix was tough, being there towards the end and not closing out the tournament.

Those losses, they hurt a lot. They really do. We put a lot of work in to be in these positions to perform, and when you don't perform at your best, it's very frustrating. It's sad and it's tough. But you wake up and try and do your best the next week.

Fortunately I was able to close out one very nicely last week to where it wasn't too close and then it may be even more satisfying finishing out a close one this week.

Q. Is that almost a different challenge emotionally to be in the mix every single week because you have to, I imagine, emotionally get up for that each week?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I think mentally it can be very taxing. Physically it's fairly taxing, as well, but mentally it's a lot of fun being in the final groups, but it also takes a toll on your body and your mind.



So, yeah, there's definitely a big mental aspect to that. But that's the most fun. It's the most fun you can have on a golf course I think is being in contention.

Q. Could you just describe what the feeling is like for you personally when you're waiting on the putting green. I mean, are your nerves up at all, or are you just calm and just, it's like no big deal because it's out of your control what's happening at the 18th hole?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I looked at Teddy in the locker room today when we were watching, because I sat down and watched for a few minutes just to pass the time basically because I had a decent amount of time before a playoff would have started, and it's not fun sitting around being helpless just watching guys be in control.

So it's usually easier to be in the final group just because you know what you need to do. Today I just did my best to stay patient and get ready for a playoff. That's really all it is is just trying to stay mentally ready because you're still in the zone of a golf tournament. You're in there competing, and all of a sudden you got to stop and sit for 45 minutes and wait. It's a bit, it's different, for sure.

Q. On a different note, could you talk about what the black patch on your neck does. Does it actually do anything in terms of any relief because it looked like you were annoyed by it more than anything?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: That's a good question. Sometimes it might be the placebo effect. I don't know what it is, but I feel like the tape sometimes gives me some extra support. Taped me up yesterday. It seemed to help a little bit with the pain. Today I hit balls with two straps on or two pieces of tape on, and it seemed to feel good and I had good warm-up session, so I just stuck with it.

Yeah, it's tough because I sweat a lot on my neck and it gets dirty and so the tape tends to come off. It's a bit annoying, but it's also not the worst thing just to have something to fiddle around with during the day if you're out there for four and a half hours or whatever it is.

Q. You seem to have such an unpretentious, unassuming manner, sort of see ball, hit ball, it's not common among superstars in any sport and I'm wondering what you attribute that to?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Well, I just think that we come out here and try and compete and try and win tournaments and being in that environment, being in the arena days like today is a ton of fun. It doesn't change me as a person when I go home.

The flight home tonight we're going to be here for a couple extra hours, but flying home tonight's going to look pretty similar to what it would if I finished second this week. Obviously I have a bit different feelings, they would be tough, but at the end of the day, I have a great support system at home, I have a great wife, great parents, great siblings, and I'm just thankful to be out here playing on TOUR.

Q. That one comment you made after winning at the Masters when you said you cried with your wife and it was like, I'm not really sure if I'm ready for this. Have you found that that sort of entered the public consciousness because it very much did for me just watching you from a distance.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Well, I just think that I try to be as honest as I can. This environment here where everything's being recorded I think it can be a tough place to be a hundred percent honest all the time. You got to be cautious and don't want to say the wrong thing this day and age.

But at the end of the day, I think it all goes back to the support system at home. I really do have a great support system. I'm very thankful for it. I have a great wife, and if I started taking my trophies and putting them all over the house and walking in all big-time, I think she would smack me on the side of the head and tell me to get over myself pretty quickly. Winning golf tournaments doesn't give me any brownie points at home, so I just try and do my best. (Laughing.)

Q. When you spoke after winning the HERO World Challenge in the Bahamas, you said your summer schedule was up in the air due to the Olympics being an added factor. Have you figured that out yet?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: No. We've got a few added factors with the Olympics being there and a baby on the way so a lot of different stuff going on at home, and we're just trying to navigate this new journey together as parents and just do our best.

Q. What was the injury? Just a pinched nerve? Was there anything more than that?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I wouldn't even really know how to describe it. We get Marnus up here, and he can explain it a lot better than me, but basically where the joint is, sometimes it kind of locks up in the fascia was the term I think that he used, like the joint muscles around it somehow get stressed. I don't know; I'm not a doctor. (Laughing.) I wish I had a better answer but usually --

Q. I do, too.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I would call it just some sort of like light strain or sprain or something like that. The frustrating thing about these types of little injuries playing golf is I'm assuming by the time Tuesday comes around, I'm going to feel totally normal. Today after the adrenaline's wearing off I'll probably be a bit sore, but I'll ice down again tonight and go home get some more treatment and I'll probably be fine by the middle of the week.

Q. Secondly, I realize you can't win every week, but is there part of you that feels unbeatable, and if not, are you at least tempted to feel that way?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I try not to place too much emphasis on results good or bad. I think you can take some positives in the momentum, but at the end of the day I'm going to go home, get some rest and continue my prep work for Houston. I show up to try and perform my best and hopefully win tournaments, but when I stand on the tee on Thursday I'm not thinking about the trophy ceremony at the end of the week. I'm just trying to be committed to the shot and just go from there.

Q. We noticed earlier this week a practice putting routine where you throw your Chapstick and then just putt from there. Wondered if you could shed some insight on where that comes from.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, just doing some speed control. Basically I'm just hitting towards that piece of Chapstick, hitting all different kinds of putts. I'm basically trying to close my eyes and judge when the ball's going to be rolling past the Chapstick. It's kind of entertaining, too. Sometimes I throw the Chapstick at people when we're out there, depending upon if any of my buddies are on the putting green.

But yeah, it's just a good way to just kind of get more engaged into my feel, be more outward with things, not focus so much on what's going on down there.

Q. Any particular why it's been Chapstick?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Well, typically I would have a coin, but a lot of times when I get out on the practice green I always forget, and I just happen to have Chapstick in my pocket. That's pretty much it.

Q. You talk about how you're very controlled in settings like this where it's maybe weird to be emotional or you're kind of controlling yourself, but we know sometimes you're more nervous than you let on,

you can be more emotional. You've talked about crying before. I'm curious about the emotion of excitement. Is there a time after all this is over where you'll go in a room by yourself and just sort of scream in triumph? Do you have that emotional register where you just kind of go nuts and let it sink in what you've done and express it?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I think I definitely have that level. Usually it wears off by the time I get home and it's time to scream and yell.

But those moments of victory are always really special. Today it was we were out there on the range with Blake and Teddy, and these guys, it's really not just me out there putting in the work. There's so much stuff that goes on behind the scenes. I mean, I think they have a pretty good group chat between Teddy, Randy, Blake and Phil. They have been doing a lot of work behind the scenes, and there's a lot of work that goes into me going out there on the golf course, and I'm just very thankful to have such a great support system not only at home but have a great team around me as well.

Q. We saw the back and forth between you and Ted on 4 after the hole-out. Can you run us through your friendly wager that you got going?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, it's basically I'm just trying to get to 10 hole-outs for the year, whether it be chip-ins or whatnot. I'm up to six now. I got off to a slow start this year. I didn't hole out any until Riv. But I've hit the ground running pretty quick after that.

So it was actually I think it was last year this time where I got to 10. So now we're at six and hopefully we can keep the momentum rolling and get some of Teddy's money back in my pocket.

Q. Is that what it is, it's a money bet, not a present or anything specific?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, nothing really crazy. It was just something Teddy came up with for fun. I think he enjoys that aspect of it, and yeah, it's just a fun way for us to celebrate there out on the course, as well.

Q. Obviously like a lot of younger players of your generation guys idolized Tiger, which you've spoke about before. Was there any part of you when you maybe were trying to dream of what you're doing right now that thought about being as dominant as Tiger was. I know obviously he's won a lot more, but you're on a path right now. The results are dominant, and I'm just kind of curious if you feel that way?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I think that's a funny question. I'm not going to remember the exact numbers, but like we're playing at Riv this year, and I hit my tee ball and this guy yells out, like, Congrats on being No. 1 Scottie. 11 more years to go. 11 more years to go.

Anytime you can be compared to Tiger I think is really special, but, I mean, the guy stands alone I think in our game. He really does. This is my eighth tournament win now out here, I've tied him in PLAYERS Championships. Outside of that, I got 14 more majors and 70-some PGA TOUR events to catch up. So I think I'm going to stick to my routine and just continue to plot along, try and stay as even keeled as I can.

Yeah, we all idolize Tiger. He's been our guy. Watching what he did in special moments over the years is crazy to watch. I've learned a lot just from being around him. We're just very thankful that he's still a part of our sport.

THE MODERATOR: Awesome, Scottie, 2024 PLAYERS champion. Thank you so much.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: All right, thanks y'all.

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