

Waste Management Phoenix Open

Saturday, February 6, 2021

Scottsdale, Arizona, USA

TPC Scottsdale

Jordan Spieth

Quick Quotes

Q. 10-under par 61 today. It's been a while since you had a round this good. How satisfying is it with all the work you put in lately to get results like this?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I feel -- yeah, I feel good. I was in in a pretty kind of low spot after missing the cut last week when I really -- I just had a bad back nine and I felt like I was making progress in each round.

So to come here in the first round and hit it so poorly but shoot 4-under, I just felt like I had a little space. And then to make the cut and feel like you have Saturday these kind of conditions to make a run, I just felt like I stayed really, really patient and struck the ball well.

Just tried to hit it to the fat parts of the greens when I was out of position and try and attack when I could. Just felt like I was playing golf better than swinging the golf club, and unfortunately there still needs to be a little bit of both right now.

I can't put 100% into playing golf or I run into some issues I had late in the round, but it's getting there.

Q. The birdies you made, you had a lot more people following you. How much do you feed off that? The energy and vibe on 16 is 17 looked amazing.

JORDAN SPIETH: I told Michael the only downside of the birdie putt on 16 is that it would have been arguably the loudest roar I've ever had if it were last year. But it was still loud. It is really fun. It is cool.

You know, again, it was just about getting putts. Just getting putts at it, putting the ball in the center of the green, and letting my speed control take care of it. And if they happen to drop, they happen to drop.

I mean, to shoot 10-under you got to do a lot right, but I also got quite a few really good breaks. I mean, each shot that ended up in the desert I think I ended up playing those



holes 2- or 3-under today. You could easily end up in a cactus with an unplayable.

So it's not to say I didn't get some good breaks. Hole caught a few balls and I definitely got some good ones in the desert. Overall stayed really patience. I told Michael I feel like any patience was an A while I was swinging with a B minus.

But that's what you need.

Q. So looking forward to tomorrow, how satisfying is it going to be for you to get back into a final group -- first time in a while -- with all the work that you've done, with the swing changes and where you've been? How much are you looking forward to tomorrow?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, what I'm looking forward to is just staying the course, trusting it. I have no expectations on the results tomorrow. I really don't.

I built some freedom now seeing these results the first few days here to where I feel really good about the path I'm on. I feel good about what the long-term ahead looks like for me. And sometimes that's been in question. To myself.

It's funny, I think the last time I was in the final group of a tournament was with Xander in the 2018 Open Championship. Hopefully we both play a little bit better than and get a you better result than we did then.

But should be comfortable. I'm not exactly sure -- didn't look at a scoreboard today and probably won't tomorrow. It's just about going out there and trusting what I'm doing. I know that I'm going to hit some really nice shots that will build confidence and some aren't going to be the best, and that's where I am right now.

I know I can get the job done based on a round like today.

Q. Congratulations. You tied your career best, 61. You gained almost eight shots on the field. No. 1 in strokes gained overall. Can you describe the emotions, the adrenaline, the excitement you felt after today's round?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, you know, I felt a lot more comfortable than I thought I would be today. It was weird.



I had a number of either text messages or people that were around me saying, Great job. Great playing. But I was like, I'm in seventh place and I'm four back.

For me, that was like, Okay, solid start. Historically. So I really wanted to come out and feel comfortable. Just feel really patient. I felt like I was going to try and shoot two more 4-under rounds and anything on top was bonus was my goal coming into the weekend.

Clearly accomplished that had as of now, and I wouldn't mind sticking to that being the same game plan tomorrow.

Q. Let's talk numbers. No. 1 strokes gained approach shots; gained almost five shots on the field. Iron play was special today. Have be to very pleased.

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I hit a couple really poor wedges yesterday and went to the range afterwards and tried to dial in the tempo. With what I'm working on in the swing, a lot of it is tempo related. Feeling like I hit kind of a couple different spots that allow me to feel free going through the ball.

Normally that would be harder to do with the longer clubs, but I had a couple wedge that were kind of making me a little upset. Then I think when I got to No. 3 and hit two beautiful shots into 3 and made a birdie there, I thought, you know, I kind of started to feel that tempo, feel that rhythm, and hit a lot of good shots from there on.

Q. The chip-in from off the green at 10, the crowd really got into it. That was vintage Jordan. Did that kind of spur you a little bit? You had a good round going. Seemed to really get you going.

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, it was really -- I hit just a poor tee shot there. No commitment. I ended up in this hole almost. Michael was saying, Let's chip it out to the fairway. I was like, I think I can get enough club to get it left of the green and over.

So I hit where I wanted to there, and from that time walking there until I was in the fairway on 11 I was like, man, a lot good things have happened in the last three minutes here.

I had a good lie. It was a hard chip because it goes over and down a ridge, but once it left the blade I knew it was the right pace. Obviously going in is, again, a bonus from long range.

You know, as much as I felt like I played like a 6-under, 7-under round yesterday, I felt like I played a 4- or 5-under today. It's funny how there were six strokes on the other side apart.

So I'm looking to have more Friday's round tomorrow where I felt a little bit better off the tee, smoother with my ball striking. But it certainly on the approach game, like you mentioned, was really solid today.

Q. Describe the fans. They really got into it at 16 and 17 when you rolled in the long ones. You were reacting to them.

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah.

Q. This is great to see. We haven't seen in this golf in a long time.

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, it's true. I mean, it really actually felt normal. It's not felt normal this week because we haven't been used it this and we come from California last week.

Then all of a sudden today when you kind of get in the thick of things and the crowd was feeding off and really willing those putts in with me, it actually kind of felt like nothing had happened. That was pretty neat.

So tomorrow, again, the biggest thing for me is going to be to walk slowly, be patient, deep breaths, trust what I'm trusting. Just set a goal for the day for a score to shoot and play the holes the way they're supposed to be played. Hit to the middle of the greens when you're out of unfortunate position.

You don't have to do anything special. If you get a few putts to go, things obviously work out.

Q. Talk about tomorrow. Obviously been there many, many times. It's been a while. Will you be nervous?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I think I'll be -- I expect myself to be extremely nervous. Again, I mean, I've been there a lot of times, but it's been a long time.

So I imagine I'll be very uncomfortable at least to start, but a lot times that kind of -- I kind of like that sometimes. You know, it kind of almost makes you really play a little safer early and just get into the round.

But absolutely. I mean, it's a really good point. Doesn't matter how many times you're there. If it's been a while you get a little anxious to get going, and I certainly will be.

Q. You say you've been looking for trust in your swing. How would you describe the trust today?

JORDAN SPIETH: Really good. Really good until the last

three holes. You know, but for a while there it was really nice.

I'm kind of tapping in -- you know, I hit a number of shots today that were like -- and as I took it back transitionally I knew exactly where that was going to go. That's what I'm trying to find. I mean, that seems like something that we should do all the time because it's our job, but when you kind of need to make some adjustments and you got to trust it in a tournament, it becomes more challenging.

So it was nice. I mean, the putts at the end were a big bonus. I was trying to hit three greens and maybe make one birdie coming in on the last three holes, so to play 2-under from the position I was in was stealing a couple there.

So just excited about the round. Happy with no bogeys. Really happy only missing a couple greens in regulation the whole day. Obviously regardless of where I hit, some tee shots got offline today, so need it tighten it up a little bit for tomorrow to play a more consist round.

Q. In the process of you getting to the place you want to be, I know that bar is high, how important was today?

JORDAN SPIETH: Like I said yesterday when you asked, do you need to have a good round tomorrow, one of you guys, I said I don't at all.

This round wasn't -- I mean, it's a confidence builder. I stayed the course trusting everything I've been doing. That seems easy to do that, but sometimes it's hard when you get a shot that you just haven't been able to hit for a long time.

My shot into 15 is a good example. That's just one that I get extra nervous on right now because of how much that shot has been a struggle for me when you got water left and right and you got to really dial in have good tempo and hit just a high fade hybrid like that.

That's a shot I just haven't had in the bag, and when I hit a shot like that it boosts that confidence level up to the next level where the more I can pull those shots off, especially in big moments like that, moves me back in closer to where I want to be.

Q. You say you don't need to have a great round today, but you did. So how much did today prepare you for tomorrow?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I mean, you know, it got me leading, which is obviously now I'm in control of my own

destiny. I don't know. Maybe not even be leading.

Q. You're tied.

JORDAN SPIETH: Tied. So if I beat the guy across from me and nobody else goes super low, like I did today, you this course, you know, it can yield -- someone shoots 4- or 5-under on the front, that back nine yields a lot of birdies.

So it's less about playing one-on-one and more about setting a goal for the day. Ours today was trying to get 4-under by 17 tee. Clearly that got adjusted throughout the round. I think that will be a similar goal tomorrow, and you can do that on the par-5s just by playing consistent golf and snagging one somewhere else.

So it feels good. I feel good right now. I'm excited about the position I'm in. I don't have -- I'll be nervous, but not because I feel extra pressure to have to do anything. Just because I haven't been in the last group holding the lead in a while. That's something you get more comfortable with the more times you do it.

Q. I know you got time to think about this, but is there one thing you're committed to tomorrow?

JORDAN SPIETH: I'm committed to committing. I'm committed to trusting. I'm committed to -- I mean, you know, again, I really -- I can't stress enough, I don't feel the need to win. Instead, I feel the need to trust my swing, make progress, and the way it's gone this week, you know, I can continue to roll in some putts, then hopefully gets to the last few holes and I have a chance to win. You let the crowd feed off that, and then you become super competitive.

But be really kind of patient before that to try and settle into the round.

Q. Your swing this week, today, this week, most resembles when? What period of time?

JORDAN SPIETH: I'm just trying to get out of the bad habits I got into. I didn't try and make any significant changes. Just try to get back to what I did best that I didn't realize I did at the time.

Now I know what that was and now I know it's just --it's reversing how I was steepening the club to shallowing the club transitionally. My early few years on TOUR I did a tremendous amount of that without realizing it, without almost having to feel the opposite. Almost did too much of it.

That's such a weapon when it comes down to wedge play



and off the tee. It's just last few holes are an example of where I get a little long right now as I'm still kind of carrying on not totally trusting the feel.

So it's a work in progress. It's pretty cool to be able to shoot 10-under saying it's a work in progress out here. I'll take that as confidence knowing that it's going to get better going forward.

Q. How much did you feed off the fans today? Describe what it happened there on 17.

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I mean, I thought -- starting out I thought there was a nice crowd getting going, which is really cool. Then started to build there around the turn, and once I chipped in on 10 felt like we had most of the fans that weren't on 16 and 17 with us.

17, yeah, the guy's chair broke, and so it broke and he fell backwards and everyone went nuts. We were all laughing. So then I was laughing a bunch, got back into my putt, and when I made it I was pointing at him. I didn't realize he was getting arrested at the time because I hadn't seen him since he fell out of the chair.

I looked up and he was getting arrested, so when I pointed at him it got him going even more, which was not the plan. I thought he was going to just yell louder. Then they wanted him to jump in the water and then he was trying to and resisting. I don't know what happened overall.

I told Billy I felt horrible that Billy still had to putt when that was happening in his through-line. That wasn't my intention. I thought he was just standing out of the chair that he was sitting in when it broke. But he was dressed like Borat I think, so definitely came to have a good time.

I don't think he's having a great time right now. That was an unfortunate set of circumstances.

Q. What are you feeling when the putts are pouring in, 16, 17?

JORDAN SPIETH: I feel really dialed into the speed when that happens. The one on 17 went in a little hot, so the with one on 18 I was like, Let's go ahead and try drip this one and in tap-in if it doesn't.

So I don't feel really much different, I mean, than a normal putt. Those weren't easy. Both of them went a little up and then downhill so they could kind of get away from you. I was happy once I struck them they were both good speed putts.

Again, like I mentioned before, when a hole catches it,

whether it's a chip-in or a long-range putt, that's obviously -- I think I can make it from anywhere, but the idea is do it with the right speed, and if the hole catches, great.

It's funny. Momentum is a crazy thing. Just seems when a couple of them go they all start to go, and the hole starts looking bigger and bigger.

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