

# AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am

Wednesday, February 1, 2023

Pebble Beach, California, USA

Pebble Beach Golf Links

## Jordan Spieth

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right. Well, thank you. We'll carry on with your press conference. But if you have any requests for interviews we can do one-on-ones.

But we'll carry on. Jordan, this is obviously a very special week for you. You're the 2017 AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am winner. You're a 13-time PGA TOUR winner. AT&T brand ambassador. So big week for you. Can you give some thoughts about the upcoming week.

JORDAN SPIETH: Always look forward to this week. It's one of my favorite places in the world to travel to and to play golf. We have seen a bit of everything here as everyone has over the years with weather. Looks like we're going to get a mix this week of some stunning weather and then maybe some bundle up and hold on for dear life.

So that's what you expect coming here. It's kind of a mini Open Championship early in the season in a way that you got to just be prepared for anything.

I just love playing these golf courses. And then having Jake as a partner. We know each other's games. I don't think he still knows times when not to say certain things, but that's okay. We expect that. Like, Hey, so, are you going to like make a birdie or are you just going to keep making bogeys. He'll say something like that. And I'm like, Oh, maybe that maybe isn't the nicest thing to say at the time.

But he's been a great partner. And honestly, having a good partner this week is key in these long rounds. Especially the first three rounds. You want to have someone that you can have fun with and keep it light, given the length of 'em. I think it's advantageous and I feel fortunate to have that this week.

So it's unique in that we play a pro-am, but we get to play the most beautiful golf courses maybe arguably in the world. Pebble Beach is probably a top-3 course in the world for me. It just never gets old. And we get to get paid to play it. It's pretty awesome.

THE MODERATOR: 2022, your runner-up, does that make you a little more hungry this year going into competition?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I felt I did, I felt I did everything right last year to win. When I won here in 2017 it was, it just was a checkmark on a bucket list to be able to win a professional event at Pebble Beach. You want to cross off, you know, for me, my favorite, your favorite courses in the world that you get to play, to win a tournament on 'em is just the next step after being able to play 'em.

So trying to win it multiple times here and just be on that 18th green with a trophy, I remember that feeling and I wanted it last year really badly. I was a couple yards off on 17 and then missed about a 5-footer or something. And it flipped, with Tom birdieing the hole and ended up losing by two, I think.

But, yeah, runner-ups are no fun. You can obviously, you gain momentum out of playing well, but finishing second doesn't go, does not go in that win column and that win column is what kind of solidifies legacies. So you got to close 'em out when you get close and I'm looking forward to trying to have that opportunity this week.

THE MODERATOR: We'll go into questions.

**Q. You mentioned the parallels with the Open Championship. How anything and everything can happen. You seem to play your best when there's a bit of chaos involved. What speaks to your game about playing in this type of environment?**

JORDAN SPIETH: Well, I think, what is this, like year 11 now? I think that over the years just it's quite a bit of experience out here. I feel like I've kind of had a little bit of everything happen in my career already through 10 years.

So I feel like I'm able to maybe brush off something quicker, whether it's bad weather that comes in or something. I'm like, Well, all right, we've been through this before. The first couple times it's like, Oh, no, what do I hit here. How is this going to play. I think just adjusting a little



bit quicker and being prepared for anything.

I seem to find comfort in the uncomfortable. I don't know what causes that or why. I've kind of always been that way.

Having said that, I've played well in really good conditions too. I embrace when it's going to be challenging. I feel like, not to plug Under Armour here, but I feel like when it gets really bad, having the best kind of gear that you can put on that keeps you light, dry and able to still move, I actually feel like when I actually -- I actually feel like I get an advantage from that.

So I actually kind of root for some of the tougher conditions because I feel like it gives me just a little bit of an advantage with the stuff I have on, the equipment I'm playing. So that was, that was a plug. I wasn't intending it.

But in general it's, there's just kind of, whether it's experience or just finding like, hey, you know, when it gets tough the ones with more experience and the ones that grew up in a lot of wind and some cold windy conditions. So trying to embrace them and look at it positively. I mean, mentally, if you can have a mental edge when it gets tough, that's three quarters of the battle.

**Q. How do you look back at your shot on 8 and the cliff?**

JORDAN SPIETH: Well, we came here in November with my parents and I played Pebble with my brother and my dad. So at least I've -- I had seen it prior to arriving this week. Kind of walked up and, not all the way, but walked towards there and took a look.

I think it was a stroke. I think I saved a stroke. Does the reward outweigh the risk? Not if you think the risk was dying. But I also, I felt I could whack it over the water with a 7-iron and get it up near the green. And I thought up near the green would be easier than hitting a 7-iron from 10 yards back. And, yeah, I think now knowing my son a lot better, he was really young at the time, I may not have hit that shot.

**Q. You've seen it this week or have you not seen it this week with the rough and how thick it is up there?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I have. I played on Monday. I just kind of shot out early. It's grown up, up by the edge there. Which would make a ball not go as far. But it also stops the balls that may have gone through before.

So there's no win here. I think I really messed things up by hitting that because I don't really know the solution. Other than shave it all the way so that, no matter what, it goes

right in and it has less of a chance of stopping short. I don't really know. Because you can't put a fence there because your second shot will hit the fence.

Yeah, it's not advised. I'm glad I ended up making a 4. Because if I made a 5 it would have been one of the worse decisions I ever made. Instead it was just a bad decision.

It's up. It's up pretty high. The rest of the course, there's not a whole lot of rough. It's almost like you got to play sideways out of it in certain places which should stop this anybody from trying it.

**Q. What did you hit off the tee?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I don't remember what I hit last year. It was either a hybrid or a 3-wood.

**Q. It's been a few years or a few weeks since the Sony Open. Can you describe the mental battle it takes on a player to go through what you went through that week?**

JORDAN SPIETH: Oh, not much. I look back and I toed one 3-wood and I heeled one driver and I hit most every other shot where I was looking. It was just kind of a bad run of cards. I was a foot or two off the fairway here, right behind this tree in the right spot, lipping out, whatever it was.

I didn't really let it bother me very much and hadn't really thought about it, to be honest. If anything I look back and thought, Man, I actually hit the ball a lot better those first two weeks in Hawaii than the start of the last couple years.

So regardless of the score, I feel like it's trending the right direction and just try and get a, trying to continue to improve. Really, chipping and putting, I putted pretty well at Sony. Putted pretty well at Maui. But trying to get to where I'm the hole looks as big as the ocean and just continue to press that forward.

So I did some, been doing a lot more kind of sawed-off shots getting ready for here. Some of those three-quarter punch shots that you need to not over spin the ball and to flight it under the wind and stuff.

So work on specific shots for this week that you don't really need there in Hawaii when you're trying to just kind of -- Maui's just a bomb it and try and make a bunch of birdies.

So I feel good. I only took positives really out of Maui and Sony. I got a big stretch coming up, so just trying to get one percent better each day, to be honest.

**Q. Kind of a wider-scope question. You turn 30 obviously later this year. Especially in a field like this where there are a lot of young unknown players, 22, 23, 24, do you feel different? Do you feel like you're kind of moving into a different phase of your career as you hit a landmark like that?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I really don't. I still feel like one of the younger ones out here. I don't know what the average age on the PGA TOUR is now, but I'm probably right smack dab in the middle of it. But I don't feel like I'm in a next stage at all. Maybe when I turn 30 that's the case. I don't feel a whole lot different from, call it five, six, seven years ago.

The first few years feel different because you're just starting out and something new happens each week. But since then I feel the same that I have before. I feel as healthy as I've felt in four, five years. I got sick pretty much every year from the end of 2017 until this last year over the winter break into the spring. I've been on top of it this year and been as healthy. So I feel maybe younger than certain years. Which is really nice. Especially, like I said, as I head into a pretty heavy stretch coming up through the Masters through Hilton Head.

**Q. Given the heritage and frankly the sponsorship of this tournament, are you surprised that it didn't get the elevated status and do you see that changing?**

JORDAN SPIETH: No, I'm not this year surprised. And I do think there is, I would fight for an opportunity for this to be an elevated event in future years. I'm not sure if the format would have to change or what would have to happen -- but not just because, you know, I play this event, but I really think the opportunity to get the top 50, 60, 70 players in the world playing Pebble Beach and that being a PGA TOUR event would be as successful as when the U.S. Open's held here.

I think that trying to go to the world's best courses, when you have the opportunity, would be advantageous for the PGA TOUR. So I will fight for it.

**Q. If it ever went down that road would it be important to keep the Am part of this tournament? Or would it lose too much?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I think it would -- I think the Am portion of this tournament is obviously -- how old is this tournament? 75 years old or something. Back to the Bing Crosby. I mean, that's what this tournament is.

So I'm not sure how it could work. Let's put it this way: I'm not sure exactly how it could work. I think maintaining, at

least, if it's not every year elevated, if it were to rotate or something like that. You know, you still have the opportunity to have the pro-am portion and you could still work it into an elevated event, I think. It doesn't really need to change. Or that year you have the pro-am going on on other two courses or -- I think there's some options to play around with that's way above my pay grade and onto really the sponsors, the networks, on the TOUR, to try and figure out.

But I would fight for seeing those options and trying to have one of 'em work out to try and showcase essentially a major championship type field here around Pebble Beach. I just, it's that good.

**Q. What is your pay grade anyway?**

JORDAN SPIETH: Power. I guess that's above my level of power, of decision making.

**Q. You're a retired board member or do you feel like you still have some significant input?**

JORDAN SPIETH: Both. I think I am -- yeah, I'm a retired board member. Potentially, later on, go back on if I have the opportunity. But not for a little while. And then I do feel like if I spoke to people they would listen. How much affect that has, I don't know.

**Q. Probably when you turn 30.**

JORDAN SPIETH: You know, you guys have been calling me 40 since I was 21. So I don't know what that makes me now.

**Q. The first time you played here I think you were here on an exemption. Could you revisit that first year, as opposed to last year, your famous shot and other things that you've done through the years. What was the first year like? Do you have some good memories of the first time?**

JORDAN SPIETH: Absolutely. It was my first paycheck as a professional. I finished I think like somewhere around 20. I had missed the cut in San Diego, which was my first professional start. I got an exemption last minute there. So this was on the docket because of AT&T and our relationship with them. I didn't represent them at the time either. But they were, they worked hard to help give me that exemption.

I remember, I think I made about a 4-footer on 18. I think it was for birdie. It was to finish like 20th. At that time you go in, the first thing you do is you, they have the pieces of paper that have FedExCup and money and you go look

and you see how much money you're going to make, right? I was 19 years old. First professional check made. So I remember that.

But I also remember like it was the old range. I remember hitting balls on the old range. I remember getting out and seeing -- it's hard to -- we were here early. We were here for -- the Super Bowl I think was the Sunday prior to the event. I remember practicing with Michael out on 2 green. We stayed in a house by No. 2 at Pebble. And then I remember just it being a fun week trying to learn all three of the golf courses, which was unusual.

So, yeah, a lot of things have happened since then around this place. A lot of great memories.

So it's kind of consistent at this point. I have my partner that we don't, even if we don't talk about this event until three weeks before, we know that we're going to be playing together. And then come here and kind of get in the same routine each time now. It's one of those few events I've played more than 10 times and so it becomes, like when you have success doing it, you kind of have a really good game plan on how to attack the week.

**Q. Kind of following up his question about this tournament. How important is it that the TOUR, whether it's elevate or in some way support this tournament? I mean, it's obviously very distinctive and has sort of spread the interest in golf beyond the normal audience. Is it vital in your mind that this tournament gets that kind of support and find a way to thrive going forward? Because obviously it's a difficult run right now to get the pro field the way they want it.**

JORDAN SPIETH: Sure. I think that it's very important. I don't know if I would call it vital. I think that it's very important. I think that AT&T's commitment into professional golf with their commitment into the Masters and then consistently in multiple events over the PGA TOUR, you want them to stay very involved in the PGA TOUR. That's really, really good for us.

So figuring out a way to do so at what they would probably consider their flagship event, other than obviously the Masters, I think is very important. As a title sponsor of, what is it, 35 to 40 years, something like that, of this event. That's a long-term sponsorship of one of the oldest events on the PGA TOUR at one of the most iconic venues in the world.

Having said all that, I think it is very important. Back to his point, I don't know exactly how it could work because I don't even know how it's all going to work in any elevated

event going forward. And that's trying to be figured out soon. So I think once that happens, then you can -- this is the unique one where it's a pro-am, right. So that -- a lot of -- most of the tournaments are going to want to be an elevated event. I would imagine even if that requires a little more of a commitment, and I don't think AT&T would shy down from that. But I think that it's going to be, it's a little trickier than your typical elevated event, given the format. But I think something can be done. I think it's extremely important that it does get done here.

I just, can you imagine, you know, at this point who are the hottest players in the world? Rory and Rahm, the hottest two players in the world right now, coming down, 16, 17, 18 at Pebble Beach? A bunch of others in the top-10 in the world gunning them down. It's hypothetically, you know, it would be must-watch television. I would love to see it happen somehow.

**Q. My point was just, historically, this event has thrived the most when there's a balance. You have good celebs, but you also have Tiger and Phil --**

JORDAN SPIETH: I think so. But also the U.S. Open does well here. So, I mean, I'm just saying, like it would be, you can make it a U.S. Open in February. I mean, you could grow the rough up, make it tough and just have it be -- if Saturday, Sunday were just professionals and you kind of get both. I don't know how it looks. I don't know what the possibilities are at all. These are all -- none of this has been discussed anywhere outside of just my brain right now. But, so, please, take that with a grain of salt.

**Q. LIV's had a small effect on this event in particular, but it got me to wondering that the one thing I've heard over the last probably six or seven months of the players who have gone over, the one guy that players seem to miss the most is D.J. Who used to be a regular of yours here. Why is that? Why do people miss D.J.?**

JORDAN SPIETH: Well, I think he had, what does he have 20, 21 or 22 wins? Yeah, he's one of the, he's a Hall of Fame player. Somebody who guys, people and the celebrities here really enjoyed being around. He was -- he's a freak athlete that plays golf. He really loved this event. Loved playing with Wayne. We had a blast. I know that because we had a blast with him for, what, eight years I think we played with them. Eight or nine we played together.

If you're talking about in general and not just this event, you know, I think there's a number of guys that are missed. But I think D.J. being maybe the first one to go over there and somebody who is not, never was really controversial

over here and more so just kind of worked his butt off, it paid off, got his breakthrough at the U.S. Open, then went and won the Masters. Just a Hall of Fame player that didn't create controversy with any other players and played on a bunch of Presidents Cup and Ryder Cup teams. Represented 'em really well. He was a friend of mine. He is a friend of mine. I just haven't seen him.

But I always really enjoyed playing with him and being around him. He plays fast. Easy to play with. Fun to watch. Smooth. I don't know what else to say.

**Q. Your memories here, are they greater memories of D.J. or A.J.?**

JORDAN SPIETH: Well, it's really, it was really, I was always interested in the D.J. and Jake banter. It was always really fun for me. Because Jake would always just -- he was more interested in asking D.J. questions than me. And like D.J. would kind of fire back, you know. There was some good banter between them. Certainly I miss that. Doc or Wayne, you know, his playing here, we would always have a good match with them every time.

So me and D.J. wouldn't really talk smack to each other because we were both playing in the tournament. But like it was designated -- and Wayne wasn't going to do it to me. So it was kind of a Jake and D.J. back and forth within our match.

Sometimes it was, you know, awfully close to when D.J. was actually hitting or as he was about to hit. He hit so fast that, he hits so fast that it would surprise Jake and even me sometimes.

So, yeah, a lot of good memories, unfortunately, that we won't continue here with them. But we had a great time in our tenure with them.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

JORDAN SPIETH: Do I think D.J.'s going to be in the Hall of Fame? Well I imagine the criteria, from what I heard, is two majors and 10 wins. He's got 20 something and two majors. So I mean, I imagine so, yeah. Do you think so?

**Q. No. Not because of his play. Not because of his play. But because I don't think anybody's going to vote him in.**

JORDAN SPIETH: I think they will vote him in.

THE MODERATOR: Jordan, thanks for joining us. Good luck this week.