

Arnold Palmer Invitational

Friday, March 5, 2021

Bay Hill, Florida, USA

Bay Hill Club and Lodge

Jordan Spieth

Quick Quotes



Q. Couple of straight rounds under par for you here at Bay Hill. First time in this event. How has the learning curve been out here for you here this week?

JORDAN SPIETH: It's been good. I mean I really -- I've enjoyed getting to know this golf course. I mean, I told Michael on the range today that this golf course, even though I kind of feel like I'm still progressing, you can play this golf course and feel like, well maybe I'm not quite as close as I think I am. Just because you have to be so precise. You get away with a little bit more on the West Coast I think on just softer conditions.

So distance control has to be spot on, you got to take risks certain places, lay back other places, and I like the strategy that we have gone to so far. Certain pins, try and push it up further. Lay back. I mean, you got probably five or six holes where you can hit multiple clubs off the tee.

So in that sense it's a little tougher than some courses the first time you go play them, but I think it's all thrown out the window this weekend. We got what looks to be anywhere from 10 to 20 mile an hour winds and some rain tomorrow and then gusts to 25 or 30 on Sunday.

So it's going to be difficult to hit the fairways, which means it's going to be really hard to hit the greens and you got to be out there scrambling. So I like the idea of that coming from -- what am I -- four behind.

Q. You talked about building the momentum you've had the last three tournaments out. How has this start sort of continued to see that progression that you're looking for?

JORDAN SPIETH: It has. I'm still kind of -- I mean I'm still working the same things and it's, certain shots are clearing up a little bit each week or each day, and then I'll kind of have -- yesterday I felt like I took a step back. I just didn't swing the club very well at all.

And that's how it kind of started a little today. And then I really had a very solid ball striking last really 12 or 13

holes. So from kind of -- yeah, I actually -- I felt like I played really well today. I felt like I shot a 4-, 5-under round. Yesterday I felt like I shot an even or 1-over round.

Q. How do you deal with that in the course of a round or even warming up where you're like, uh oh, maybe it's a step back, a step forward, but yet you still have to post a number.

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I don't feel like I have to post a number and I don't put that kind of pressure on it. Instead it's, this is what we have got, I've stepped to the tee with far worse and I know that staying the course is the right course of action and you just go out and you trust it.

Again, at this point, shots like 11 tee where I pushed driver up today that allowed me to hit a wedge, when a lot of guys were laying back and playing from about 200 in. If I hit a bad shot, I hit a bad shot and it's a mis-executed shot, but I don't want to stand out here, get done and say, Man, I wish I trusted that.

So I'm doing a better job of just saying, I'm going to trust this and if I don't pull it off, I don't pull it off. And I can't be mad at execution errors, that's why we go to the range. But I don't feel that I'm playing safely anymore, I feel that I'm playing the way it should be played.

Q. Did not having spectators when you first came back impact you in any way and are you finding it nice to have them now even limited?

JORDAN SPIETH: I think I speak for everyone in that it was really weird. I think people really enjoy spectators on the weekend. I mean, the winners that you had last year and the guys towards the top of the leaderboard are the same with and without fans, so I don't think it really, you can really say it made a huge difference in actually the tournament itself.

But when we come out -- it almost was like Houston was the first event that we had any fans, and I'll tell you, it felt like I was playing a Ryder Cup for the first time. Like after six months of no fans, it's really quiet and then all of a sudden you got fans out there yelling and especially as you



get to like a Friday afternoon.

We haven't had it this year until Phoenix, and that felt, that brought the nerves out a lot too.

So it's almost like readjusting to professional golf from like junior or college golf, where you had a couple people, maybe some family out there, to having fans. And it's been a fun adjustment, I've really enjoyed it and I've played well so far in these couple events with fans.

I don't think it necessarily is a game changer, but it's definitely more fun to try and ride that momentum.

Q. Does the walk from 16 green to the 17th tee next week, is that a lot different if there's nobody there? In other words, that's a fairly long walk and a really tough tee shot. Curious if that would be different without fans.

JORDAN SPIETH: I'm sure. We haven't experienced that. I played Thursday afternoon last year, there were a lot of people there. And I've not had a ton of success at that tournament, so I can't speak much to the weekend, other than a couple times. But I think we're going to have quite a few fans there, right? 10,000? What's this one?

Q. Eight?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, yeah, so it will feel -- it will certainly feel like normal, I think, as we approach those holes. But I'm sure when we get out on the golf course, out in the middle of the front nine or so, that will be different at THE PLAYERS from what we're used to. It feels like a major, it's every bit a major championship, and because of the crowds and the setting is what kind of makes it feel that way.

Q. Can you talk about seeing Bryson firsthand, being a part of that this week. It seems like the fans are really starting to embrace him and embrace the show, embrace the distance. What's it like being a part of that dynamic and seeing it this week?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, it's, I saw, I saw, I got the text on Tuesday with the pairing and I thought, what better place to be paired with him than here, with some of these holes.

Hey, I was, it was really, really -- I was really upset that the wind was flipping around when we got to 6, because he would have taken it really far left. It was actually into the wind, which it was forecasted that it was straight down.

So we were kind of dealing with a little bit of that today and it's probably a good thing he didn't try and go straight over

the left side. But, yeah, there's some holes, I mean 10 today, he took out driver and hit it just in front of the green on 10. He's done that on a number of holes out here.

He's hit the fairway on 15 twice, which is pretty ridiculous, with driver.

What's amazing to me, obviously it's coming off his driver fast, which it does for Rory and Cam Champ, there's a number of guys who strike the ball and it just sounds a little different like that, but the amount of control he has with how hard he's going at it is really impressive. I mean, he's driving the ball extremely well and straight.

Honestly, like I figured -- I mean, if I'm going to be shorter than him I would like to be straighter and I don't think I was those two days. I don't think I hit as many fairways. So I'm going to need to work on my own driver. But more from that accuracy standpoint than distance.

It's a show. It's fun. It was really cool to watch. I nudged Michael half a dozen times the last two days, being like, Watch this, you know, and that doesn't happen out here very often.

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