

Arnold Palmer Invitational

Sunday, March 7, 2021

Bay Hill, Florida, USA

Bay Hill Club and Lodge

Bryson DeChambeau

Press Conference



JOHN BUSH: We would like to welcome the 2021 champion of the Arnold Palmer Invitational presented by Mastercard, Bryson DeChambeau.

Bryson, of all the tournaments, just talk a little bit about what it means to win this tournament, Mr. Palmer's tournament.

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Well, when I came here first as an amateur I walked up into his office and he was there and we had a picture together and we were certainly, I was certainly excited to meet him for the first time, not knowing he would leave a lasting impression on me that would last the rest of my life. When he signed the book, he said make it legible, and when he said that, that stuck to me and I've done it ever since. And he's had an influence on me for the longest time and will continue to do so for the rest of my life. He's somebody that I look up to and will continue looking up to.

JOHN BUSH: You move to No. 1 again in the FedExCup standings. You're our first multiple winner of the season. Just talk a little bit about how this sets you up now for the rest of the season.

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Yeah, well, it's incredible. First off, I do want to say thanks to DraftKings. I think there's some people out there that may have won some stuff today, so that was really cool. And I think, also, setting me up for the rest of the season, winning twice in one year, obviously, one of the things I'm excited about is Sentry Tournaments of Champions next year, at the beginning of the next year. I always look forward to doing that, so I'm glad to get that out of the way, and I feel like now I'm free-flowing and I can just go at it for the rest of the year.

JOHN BUSH: We'll open it up to questions.

Q. What size is the cardigan sweater and does it fit?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: XL and it barely fits. (Laughing).

Q. Can you talk about, a little bit more about the text you got this morning from Tiger?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Well, it was obviously personal, I would say, for the most part, but pretty much to sum it up, he -- he texted me this morning out of the blue and I wasn't expecting anything. When I got that text, I'm like, wow, that's pretty amazing that he is thinking of me when he's in his tough times that he's going through right now. So I just texted him, I said, Keep moving forward, keep going forward. You're going to get through it. You're the hardest working person I've ever met and you'll persevere through this pretty much. One of the things that we talked about was, it's not about how many times you get kicked to the curb or knocked down. It's about how many times you can get back up and keep moving forward. And I think this red cardigan is not only for Mr. Palmer, but I would say it's a little bit for Tiger as well, knowing what place he's in right now.

Q. You've been very open about how much inspiration you take from long-drive guys. And in the past that's kind of been a side show in golf. It's been like those guys are, it's different. What inspired you to start kind of going down that rabbit hole looking at what those guys do and bring that into the PGA TOUR?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Well, I thought that if -- it was funny, in 2019 I remember watching the World Long Drive Championship and seeing Kyle win and hit it as far as he was hitting it, and I was like, man, if I could get 25 percent of that, how much more I would gain off the tee, how many more strokes I would gain off the tee. So as I kept looking into the stats, everywhere I saw, it was just a benefit. Probably around the Shriners, I think, in 2019 was when I started talking about, hey, I'm going to take a month off and come back a different person, a little stronger, and sure enough I was able to do that and I kept going through and getting stronger. And I've still gotten stronger even today. I can get it over 200 pretty easily if I really want to. And I would say for the most part they were incredibly instrumental in helping me achieve these new speeds and do things that have never been done before out here.

Hopefully I'll keep moving up and keep going forward in the



right direction, swinging harder and harder and controlling it more and more. If I could have that same accuracy, it's going to be incredible. This week had helped numerous times. I was able to get a wedge out of the rough, whereas some people were hitting 7-irons or 6-irons back in the rough. And it's kind of like the U.S. Open, I was able to dominate it a little bit the driving off the tee.

Q. You made kind of a rocky bogey on 1 and then there was not another bogey the whole rest of the way. What kind of an accomplishment was that on a day like today?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Man, after that drive on 1, I was thinking, Uh-oh, this is not going to be a great day. And sure enough I was able to salvage a bogey. From then on out, I just told myself, Keep your head down, this is going to be a grueling day, make as many pars as you can, make birdies where you can. And people are going to backtrack. This is not a golf course that you can shoot a lot under par and in conditions like they were today. You know, 20 mile an hour, 29 mile an hour gusts is what I saw and firm greens, firm fairways, long rough. This is what you do to make it play really, really difficult and have it be an amazing competition.

But after that start, I was just pleased to not even make a bogey. And then the last putt on the last hole was amazing, and even the putt on 11. I did some things that I didn't expect I would do, but was certainly pleased with the way the outcome came about.

Q. How big was that putt on 11, saving par there?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: It was massive. I mean, knowing what I know now, it's obviously the shot of the day for me. I think that hitting that shot out of the bunker, that's all I could do. I just had to hit from the middle of the green from a plugged lie. And I just said to myself, give it a chance, kind of lag it up there, but still kind of give it a chance. So when I saw, about three quarters of the way to the hole I saw the ball was tracking really well, and I was like, go in, go in, and certainly it did and I'm glad I don't have to hit that putt again. I certainly wouldn't want to.

Q. Lee was talking about how impressed he was with the way you flight the ball, with the skill it takes to judge things out of the rough. Do you wonder if people focus so much on your length that they're missing some of the other nuances that you've mastered a little bit?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Yeah. You can't just hit it far out here on the PGA TOUR. You have to be able to control your golf ball, flight the ball, hit it high when you

need to, and control your shots out of the rough. Today's a perfect example of you're not going to hit every fairway, which is nearly impossible. And learning how to play it out of the rough, learning how to control your golf ball and get it to run up next to holes is a very important part of the game that I think people are -- they don't look at from my game. I think that that's an underrated part of my game, for sure.

Q. Can you just real quick, what was the ruling on 16, by the green there?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: So 16, if you're within a yard of the green and a sprinkler's in your way, you get relief from that sprinkler head. So I was able to drop it on a line where I had a clear line of sight and was able to play from there.

Q. So it was just on your putting line.

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Yes, exactly. A yard from the green. It can't be any farther than that.

Q. Have you, having met Arnold and what you know about him, how do you think he would view what you've done? He was known as a pretty bold player, aggressive player, sometimes maybe even got himself in some trouble that way. How do you think that he would view it?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: As do I get myself in trouble sometimes (laughing) with the length I hit it and where I hit it. But I would say that Mr. Palmer probably would like it. I know Sam Saunders talked to me quite a bit about how he thought Mr. Palmer would love what I was doing. So that was pretty amazing to hear from Sam, and inspirational to me even. Doing what I did on 6 was kind of fun. I thought it was just kind of the little fun thing with the crowd. But knowing what I know now, that was instrumental in helping me make a few birdies to clinch the title here.

Q. You mentioned U.S. Open earlier. How close was this to U.S. Open conditions out there?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: I would say they were very similar today. It didn't play that way the first three days, considering the rain yesterday, but today definitely played like a U.S. Open. You could see that not very many people were under par. I don't know how many people were under par. There were three people under par? Yeah, and so you could definitely note how difficult the golf course conditions were. And I took a lot of pride in knowing the fact that in these difficult conditions I can persevere and win a golf tournament, like I did at the U.S. Open. So I took a lot from that tournament and played it into this

event, knowing that there are going to be weird things that come about, and just make sure that you are focused on hitting as many fairways and as many greens and having good speed control on the putting green.

Q. The quality of your last three shots, could you just kind of quantify those, please?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: The quality? Right is that what you asked?

Q. The quality of your shot on 17 and your two on 18.

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Yeah, I mean, it had to be done. I knew I had to stand up and execute three great golf shots. The putting was relatively easy for me, as it had been all week, and I've been putting great since I've went to the Sik putter and everything. So I've been putting really great.

But those last three shots, considering how I wasn't really striking it that well all week, it showed me that I could do it. It was, another example was Memorial in 2018 when I won, I hadn't hit a fairway the whole back nine and was able to stripe a 3-wood, I think, three times in a row on that 18th hole and even in the playoffs, playoff holes. So I took from that as well and was saying, you know what, you got to bear down and hit a great shot these last couple holes and that's what I was able to do.

Q. A lot of people think that the way to mitigate big hitters like yourself are super tight fairways and long rough, longer golf courses. How does that actually play to your advantage?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Well, that's a great question. If you make the golf course super difficult in regards to the fairway width and you grow the rough up, again, long hitters are still going to have an advantage. They're going to be the ones that are the farthest up and they're going to be the ones that can hit a wedge out of the rough on to the green.

Lee played unable golf today. He struck it beautifully, hit a lot of fairways, and that's one way to play. Another way to play is bomb it all the way up there and gouge it out of the rough. Albeit I still hit a lot of fairways, you still have to putt well. I putted really well this week. My speed control was great. But I would say it plays into my hand from a statistics point of view and a strokes gained point of view. If you make the fairways super wide where nobody is really hitting the fairway, the longest is going to win. If you make the fairways super wide where everybody can hit the fairways, the longest is always going to win. So, no matter what, those two situations, the long players are always

going to have the better advantage.

Even on the par-3s. I was able to hit 8-irons and 7-irons into these holes that were over 200 yards, all week, and that played into my hand pretty well.

Q. If you were Bryson-proofing a golf course what would you do with it?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: I don't think you can Bryson-proof a golf course necessarily. I think it's, from a -- whatever way you look at it, even if -- if you tighten the fairways up and you make water across the fairway and you have to lay up and everything, you're just putting everybody in the same place. And no matter what, if we're playing from the fairway, I'm always going to have a shorter club in, if we're playing have the same spot. So I really wouldn't know how to do so.

Obviously I don't play well every week. I still hit bad shots. I don't play my best. So it doesn't mean I'm going to win all the time hitting it as far as I am. You still got to play and execute great golf.

Lee Westwood almost won today. He played amazing golf. I was fortunate enough to just to have a couple things go my way and at the end of the day that's the result that came about.

Q. I know you have a lot of admiration for both Arnold and for Ben Hogan. You probably know those two were famously not close at all, a very frosty relationship. If the three of you were playing together, what do you think you could do to get both these very different guys and different styles on the same page?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: I would say, relax, it's just golf. That's what everybody tells me. So I'm my own worse psychologist. (Laughing).

I would say, for the most part, Hogan was definitely steely-eyed and super focused, didn't say much. And Mr. Palmer was very vibrant and had the fans with him, the whole deal. They definitely had different styles. I wouldn't know necessarily what to say, because I'm just a young gun, but hopefully I would show them a little something different and they would like that and kind of be able to talk on the same level, if I was there.

Q. Wondering if you feel like you created your own logo this week sort of with your reaction on the 6th hole both days, and how much of an entertainer do you feel like? I mean, it was pretty theatrical when you get to that point there.

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: No doubt. It was purely a reaction that just came about out of nowhere. It wasn't anything preplanned. It just, it was a pure reaction out of trying to hit it as far as I possibly can. And I think one of the things, too, to note, when I'm doing my speed-training sessions, there are some times where I'm doing stuff like that, where it's really emotional, I'm hitting it as hard as I can, and I'm like, Yeah, let's go.

So I feel like when I hit that one really hard that was just my raw emotion saying Go, come on, clear the water. So that was definitely fun. I think that, yes, there is an entertaining part of it. We are the PGA TOUR and I do believe that we are amazing entertainers and we show the world why we're the best, and it's fun to certainly do so and do it in a manner that's a little different than what's been done before.

Q. There was a school of thought that you might not be as aggressive off the tee on Sunday if you were in or around the lead. What was your thought process to go, to hit the line that you did take?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: On 6?

Q. 6. Yeah.

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Yeah. No, I knew that the wind was helping. It's funny, the farther left you go, the more helping it was today. I knew that if I tried to go at the bunkers, it would, I would be hitting it into the wind. And so I said, You know what, if I hit a draw, if I just hit a draw and I start it out and draw it far enough left it will get over. And certainly I was able to do that. And I hit it a little low, so I was not really sure if it was going to get over, but luckily I hit it good enough and had the right spin rate on it to get it over today.

Q. We talk a lot about your driving, but do you feel you get enough credit for your putting yet?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: I don't think so. I think that it's a very underrated aspect of my game. I thought I made the putt on 18 and then it rolled out a lot. I was not expecting it to roll out that much -- and it did on 17, so the greens got really, really fast, late in the day.

But certainly there are moments in time where making that putt on 11, massive. Making the putt on 2, massive. Making the putt on 3, huge. 4, the 40-footer, huge. Those are just moments in time that I think people forget that's very, very important and instrumental in winning a golf tournament.

Q. I just am curious, on Saturday, when you went over

the lake on 6, you talked about how, I gave the fans what they wanted. I'm kind of curious, I mean, today really you gave yourself what you wanted. I'm curious as to what you will remember out of this week most.

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: I think I'll remember today, the final round and persevering through a very difficult day where I didn't have my best golf swing out there. I was working really hard last night, I really couldn't figure much out. This morning I didn't have my best, and I came out and hit a really bad drive off of 1, made a bad bogey -- well actually kind of a good bogey, considering where I hit it.

And after that I buckled up and saddled up and I was able to push through it and not make another mistake, really, the rest of the round. I was proud of myself for controlling the speed on the green. That's why I work so hard on my speed control on the greens, as you guys see every single week. And even though I didn't have my best I was still proud of the fact that I got it done when it came down to it and it mattered most on 17 and 18.

Q. People have been talking about what you would do on No. 6 for about two months now. I'm just curious if you've looked ahead to Sawgrass and is there anything goofy can you do there?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Oh, man, that's a great question. I have thought about sometimes on 18 going left into 9. But we'll see, with the stands and everything, if it's even worth it. But that's really the only one that I could see being unique and a little different as of right now. There's really not another hole.

Q. Why would you go to 9 fairway? What would that do for you? I've never done that myself.

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: It just gives you a better shot into the green, I think, personally, where you can just hit it a little long and you're always going to be okay. Considering if you try and hit the fairway out to the right -- it's probably not worth it. I mean, the cover's like 310, but we'll see. I just, I look at all options and hopefully there's an advantage there. But if not I'll just hit 4-iron down the fairway and hopefully an 8-iron or 7-iron into the green.

Q. You got emotional there, accepting the trophy, talking about Arnold Palmer, you got choked up even. Just curious where that came from and if you could elaborate on what you were feeling in that moment.

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Yeah, you know, I talked to Captain Spider Miller of the -- he was the captain of the Walker Cup team the year I played on it -- and he made a big deal out of meeting Mr. Palmer and getting to have



dinner with him and having -- I have a lot of fond memories of talking with him about how he played golf, why he played golf and why he loved it so much. Really just all those memories flooding in at that moment of winning his event, wishing that he was here still and I know he's smiling down on me today and how I played, played boldly. Just everything that he's done for the game of golf and how he handled himself is something that I will try and do for the rest of my life the way he did it. That's something special. How he moved the crowds, how he made them a part of his life was pretty special and something that I take a heavy heart to, because I feel like that's something that I want to do and it's inspirational to me.

So there's a lot of memories just coming back from the Walker Cup, getting to meet him there, meeting him here as an amateur, really just I was overwhelmed with emotions in that moment thinking about Mr. Palmer.

JOHN BUSH: Well, thank you for everyone's participation and Bryson, congratulations once again.

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Thanks, John. Thank you.

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