

# WGC Dell Technologies Match Play

Tuesday, March 21, 2023  
Austin, Texas, USA  
Austin Country Club

## Scottie Scheffler

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome the defending champion to the interview room here at the 2023 Dell Match Play, Scottie Scheffler.

Scottie, you're entering the week at world No. 1, defending champ, and in two starts just two really impressive finishes with a runner-up in 2021 and winning in 2022. So just thoughts on this course, being back to defend, and your thoughts on the week.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Good to be back in Austin. One of our favorite places to come visit, definitely one of our favorite tournaments of the year, and looking forward to this week. I love match play. I like the simplicity of it. All you have to do is just go out there and try and beat the guy that's in front of you and if you don't, you lose, and if you beat him, you win. So the simplicity of it is what I enjoy.

It's a nice change of pace throughout the year to have match play. I think it's going to be a fun week and looking forward to the challenge. I've got a good group of guys that I'm playing against in the first three matches and it should be a fun challenge.

THE MODERATOR: You're coming off of a win at THE PLAYERS Championship. It was your second win of the season after WM Phoenix Open. Just give some thoughts on your form and that momentum going into the rest of this season right now.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Form is good. I've had a lot of good finishes this year, which is nice. This calendar year I've played some really solid golf, and I've been in contention a good amount and been fortunate to come out with two wins. I'm hoping to continue that trend moving forward and it's nice being in contention a lot and just like I said, hoping to improve on that.

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

**Q. With this format and how it's obviously a little**



**different from what you see week-in week-out. Have you in this tournament had a day where you played outstanding and didn't really get much out of it, got a tie or a loss; and conversely, have you played sort of mediocre and -- had a day where you played sort of mediocre and gotten a win out of it or a half?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Hard for me to remember, but my memories from the tournament last year were I started to play better as the week went on, and so I think I lost my first match, and then I won the next one, and then I won the one on Friday, and then I went out and won the playoff to get into the knockout rounds.

A lot of what I remember last year was I lost to Tommy not playing my best golf, and then I started to kind of trend and then by the time the weekend came around, especially Sunday, I just was playing great. I think of Sunday's match a lot where I played Kiz where I didn't really make many mistakes, and I just kept the pedal down and I just played great golf.

I think the year before that I did that, maybe on Saturday I think I played some of my best golf. I think I beat Poulter and Rahm maybe in the same day. I just played really good. I made a bunch of birdies. The golf course was playing easy, and I just remember playing great golf. I don't remember playing any bad or mediocre golf or how it was rewarded. I remember those two -- kind of last year playing really good, and then I remember the Saturday the year before that where I just played some really great golf.

**Q. If you could wave a magic wand, would you bring match play back for 2025? In your opinion, would this be a good part of the schedule?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I think so, but it's a selfish opinion on my part. I love Austin, I love this tournament, the city, and like I said, it's our favorite tournament of the year. So I would love to have it back, but it's pretty obvious at this point that it's not going to happen.

Throughout the year, I think match play is a good change of pace. Commercially, I don't know how well it works when it comes to TV and only having so many guys on the



golf course on the weekend. So we'll see what happens in the future. I think the TOUR's doing a really good job of making the right business decisions for us, and as a player, I obviously have a biased opinion. I have a second and a first year, and so I would love to see this tournament continue to come back, but I don't make the decisions around here.

**Q. A lot of the people say, oh, it's tough on Sundays because you never know who you're going to get. Have you been surprised -- and I know you're included in this group, by just how good the finals and semifinals have been the last few years? It feels like there's not been one where it's like, oh, this is kind of a dud.**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I'm sorry, what's the question?

**Q. Have you been surprised by how well this tournament has done at getting the top players into the finals and semifinals where it could be the opposite?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I don't think surprised would be the right word. I think when the guys that are the most talented and that work the hardest are out there playing their best, that they're going to be there at the end. Match play's such a funny deal because, like, hypothetically, you get the No. 64 player in the world and he shows up and he's playing Rory McIlroy, and you got to get inside that guy's head of who is No. 64 in the world and whether or not he can -- he believes he can really beat Rory McIlroy or John Rahm or whoever it is, and some guys don't have that belief and some guys do, and so that's why sometimes you have the surprises.

But it's also those guys that have the belief that they can be the best and beat the best, and so those are the guys that you're also going to see down the road that maybe turn into a Rory McIlroy or something like that. And so when it comes to these leaderboards, I think you just -- no matter what, when you're playing golf, you get rewarded for playing good golf, and we have a very deep TOUR with a lot of talented guys and when you're playing really good golf out here, you're going to get rewarded for it know matter what.

**Q. I wanted to follow on that question from what seems like an hour ago. If this thing were to come -- if you took a pulse of kind of the players and this thing came back as a non-elevated event, what would be the appeal? Do you think enough guys would want to play? On the one hand, you've got a change of pace, as you mentioned, and something different. On the other hand, you've got the -- you know, it's kind of a weird week. It's either a short one or a long one. Do**

**you think guys would show up?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: That's a good question. I haven't really asked too many guys what their opinions are. I know this is a tournament in the past where a lot of guys have always showed up.

**Q. It was a WGC.**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, it's always WGC, and so who knows. I think I would show up. It depends -- obviously depends on scheduling and what part of the year it's in. But match play is fun. I really enjoy it. The only negative is, like you said, sometimes you could play golf that's good enough to finish maybe top 10 or top 15 in a tournament and you get into a tough bracket -- I think there was one year here where Maverick McNealy played some insane golf and didn't make it out of his group, and he would have made it out of every other group.

But then again, if you're playing the best golf, you're going to get rewarded for it. Usually I think the guy who wins this tournament at the end of the week is the one who played the best golf and probably would have won stroke play anyway. It's just match play is a little bit different. But I think the guys playing the best golf do what they have to do to win the match and win the tournament and I think it's a good format. Yeah, it's a little funky, but a change of pace.

**Q. Now that you don't drink coffee you expect every other golfer to give up coffee now during tournament play? So now you're drinking. Until Wednesday?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, until Wednesday.

**Q. Do you feel like you're playing better golf this year than even last year? How would you compare it, the level of your play?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: It's hard to say. I think if you looked at a deep dive into my stats, you may find a little something there. I feel like I'm playing good golf. I think I'm -- I'm hoping that I'm a little bit better than I was last year. That's always the goal is just to keep trying to improve a little bit at a time.

Right now, I've been playing so solid, but I'm not doing a whole lot of, I think, reflecting. I think right now, I'm just trying to stay present and continue to work on the things that I've been working on and just hope to continue to see improvement in those areas and then go from there.

**Q. What do you look to to sustain that level of play? Guys like Tiger were great his whole career. Brooks Koepka was great for a few years. What, in your mind,**

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

**is the key to sustaining that level of play? Is there any secret to it?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I think if there was a secret, you would have seen a lot more guys do it than just Tiger Woods and Jack Nicklaus. (Laughing.) It's a tough question. It's different for everybody. I think I've developed a good recipe for good golf out here and that will be something that I'm going to try to not change in the future. I have the same coach since I was young, Randy Smith. He's taught me since I was probably seven years old. I have the same trainer that I've had since I was in high school. My manager, I've known my whole life.

I mean, I have a great team of people around me that help keep me grounded and help me be able to go out here and do my best and not think about all the other stuff. I can go out here and focus on golf and just go out and play. And so I have a great team around me that's helping me do that and just going to kind of stick to the program that we've been doing for years and go from there.

**Q. Growing up, I don't know how much golf you watched, but what did the WGCs mean to you? Were they different? Were they special? Did they stand out?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I thought they were, growing up. I always thought it was really cool to kind of get the best players in the world together. The part that didn't make a lot of sense to me about the WGCs was all the other tours that were out here. I always found that part to be a little bit interesting. I understand it's a World Golf Championship, and you want to get the best players from the world, but I think the PGA TOUR's always been a place where those players gathered.

For instance, when I was coming off the Korn Ferry Tour, and I looked at some of the fields in the WGCs and they were getting guys from -- I hate to pick on the Sunshine Tour, but Sunshine Tour, like Australia Asian Tour. There were a lot of ancillary tours out there that were getting into these events, and I was like, well, I'm playing here in the States and I'm playing really good. Like, we should also get an opportunity. I think right now is you're seeing the PGA TOUR now will be kind of controlling a little bit more of who is going to get into those fields, and so I think the WGC fields are going to only get better and now our elevated events are more like kind of WGCs.

**Q. I apologize, but have you taken a scouting trip to Augusta National?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I did.

**Q. What did you think of the changes on 13?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: It's longer. (Laughing.) It's a lot longer.

**Q. Harder? Easier?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Definitely harder. I think with modern technology and that tee shot -- I used to hit 3-wood there because I can sling hook a 3-wood. I can't sling hook a driver on purpose. The ball just doesn't spin enough. I can do it on accident, but I can't quite sling it on purpose. Because I like to fade my driver more off the tee, and so when it comes to that tee shot and hitting a hard hook with the driver, it's not really a shot that I'll try just because it's not worth the risk for me.

That hole was one where I'd hit the same shot I hit on 10. The 3-wood, it has enough spin where the ball can actually stay in the air. With the driver, when I hook it, the ball doesn't have enough spin to where it can stay in the air and hook that much. It kind of nosedives. But the 3-wood, I can sit up there and it will just be like a boomerang.

But that's really the biggest change for me. Now I'll just hit driver kind of out towards the corner and try and use more of the contouring to get the ball that way versus before -- I should say it this way: My driver is now going where my 3-wood kind of used to go. My 3-wood I could maybe get it a little bit further around the corner, but my driver is now going to where that 3-wood was before.

**Q. Being a former golfer for UT do you feel more comfortable playing in Austin compared to other areas?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I definitely feel more comfortable visiting Austin. I know where I like to eat, I know where I like to stay. We got great friends that live here and that we can spend time with. So when it comes to all the other stuff around a tournament, this tournament's one of our favorites just because of the people we get to spend time with throughout the week. Just good catching up with friends and eating early dinners with them and then kind of sticking to my routine. Usually we'll go out to dinner at tournaments and it's usually just Meredith and me and a couple of our TOUR friends. So it's nice coming this week and seeing some good buddies from college and people that I haven't seen in a little while and going out and spending some time with them.

**Q. For the Champions Dinner during the Masters week, we've heard a lot of players say that are going to be at that dinner that they're there to celebrate you. Have you thought about the emotions you will have in**

**that room talking to all the past champions?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: That's a tough one. I think -- I'll put it this way: When we went to Augusta last week, that was really one of the first times where winning the Masters felt real. Because we got back on property, I'd just come off the win at THE PLAYERS, so our celebration kind of was just going to play Augusta. That was really one of the first times where it felt real that I had won the Masters. So when it comes to Tuesday night and being there in that dinner and talking to everybody else who has won that tournament in the past, it will be pretty special. It will definitely be emotional for me. I'm going to try and hold back the tears. But I think it will just be a really, really cool experience. One of the greatest fraternities in golf to be in that room.

Yeah, it's going to be really special. I don't know exactly what I'll feel like, but it will definitely be really special.

**Q. Can you go into a little more detail about how you developed the menu?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, we -- I think it was Blake, Meredith and me one day, we were kind of sitting around and it was like, okay, well it's probably time to figure out the menu. And we kind of went like, all right, well, what are your favorite foods. And it was like Meredith and I just started listing them off like steak, burgers, fried shrimp, mac and cheese, jalapeno cream corn. Like I just went through all the list. And we got basically all the foods and it's like, okay, what could we actually do and we kind of narrowed it down a little bit. And then we talked to the chef at Augusta who kind of is the professional in the room, because I'm definitely not a professional when it comes to this stuff. He kind of helped us put it together and I think we did a good job of -- it's definitely not going to be on any nutritionist's plan, but we're going to have fun, we're going to eat some good food.

**Q. Have you gotten any indication that you're going to have to pay for this? You're getting the bill?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I'm pretty sure I'm getting the bill.

**Q. Just want to make sure you knew.**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah. (Laughing.)

**Q. Back to the golf course, I actually wanted to go back to 11, as much attention as there is on 13. Because there's a lot of talk now about trees and tree removal, etcetera. When you get to 11 does that change your thinking on the tee shot with the fewer trees there on the right than used to be?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yes. When you hit it -- so when I first started in the tournament it was all the trees. And in years past there wasn't all the trees there. That was kind of a new addition when I first started playing in the tournament.

I think what they're trying to do now is still give an opportunity to hit a great shot, because that's a really special hole with the way the green is shaped and you have those two mounds in the front. Before when you hit it up the right it was kind of an automatic chip-out. Unless you hit it like way, way right. Because then a matter of luck is involved in that.

Now there's a little bit less luck involved. Now if you hit it over to the right, you're going to be in the fairway still, but you have three trees in your way and you can hit it over the trees, under the trees and it leaves an opportunity for a great shot. Whereas before there really wasn't that opportunity.

I'm still definitely not trying to hit it over there because you can hit a really good shot from that area and just land it a little short of your number and it's going to hit that mound and go into the water. But I think that's kind of what they were trying to do on that hole is give an opportunity to still have a great shot. I mean, I think of -- when I think of the Masters or I think of some of the historic shots that have been hit out there and most of 'em are from peculiar areas of the golf course. They're not all necessarily from the center of the fairway. I think that hole provides another opportunity for a pretty incredible shot.

**Q. And then lastly, on the par-4s, which second shot makes you the most nervous or gets your attention the most?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Still 11. I feel like when you're standing up there in the fairway it kind of almost begs you to hit it at the pin. I don't know what it is about that hole or the way the green is shaped. Maybe it's the way the pond is. I don't know what it is, but it really kind of begs you to hit at the pin. So I basically just try and stay away from the pin as much as possible.

THE MODERATOR: All right, thank you so much.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports