

The Saudi International powered by SoftBank Investment Advisers

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King Abdullah Economic City, Saudi Arabia
Royal Greens Golf and Country Club

Bryson DeChambeau

Press Conference

STEVE TODD: Thanks for joining us back in Saudi. You were here a couple years ago for the inaugural event and finished tied sixth, and spoke to you on a call a couple weeks ago and you said how much you were looking forward to it. Now you've been here, played the Pro-Am. Give us your thoughts on this week.

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: First off, it's an honour to be here. I'm always about growing the game, and I think this is a great opportunity to do it. And Majed (Al Sourer) and His Excellency have done amazing things for the game around here and I think it's only going to continue to keep growing and I love the vision they have for the game of golf.

The golf course itself is in great condition. The greens are in immaculate shape. I love them. They have tightened it up in certain areas from when I was here a couple years ago. But again, I think hitting it long and far is an advantage here and being able to wedge it on to the green is huge. Kind of keep the same game plan as the U.S. Open in a sense and go at it with that.

STEVE TODD: Served you well there. Go straight into some questions.

Q. I don't know if you had a chance to see the fact that the USGA and the R&A -- you have, good. You seem to be the only one that's literate coming into this thing.

Anyways, what's your thoughts on it, and do you think that distance is an issue?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Well, look, I had a great conversation with John Bodenheimer and Jason Gore yesterday when it came out, pretty much right when it came out. That was my doing. I wanted to talk to them and get their piece on it. I totally understand what they are about. They are trying not to take the human element out of it, which I think is the most important factor in this whole



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conversation.

When it comes to the equipment aspect, they are trying to make it more of a -- I guess you could say same or fair playing field where you can't just put a 48-inch driver and it works for this person, you could gain six, seven miles an hour where somebody couldn't because the driver just doesn't work for them or whatever.

I think the most important factor in this whole discussion is that they are focused on keeping the integrity of the game and trying to make it more of a fair playing field while not taking out the human element.

From my perspective, I think it suits me really well because as of right now, I'm still playing the 45-and-a-half-inch driver, and it's suiting me perfectly well, and I'm not going to the 48. So if someone was trying to go to the 48 for them they could gain six, seven miles an hour pretty quickly and now it's not a possibility. And I think it's going to be more difficult for people to gain speed easily. They are going to have to work really hard, just like I have.

For me right now, I feel like it's a pretty good advantage from the way I look at it.

Q. Did you initiate the conversation?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: I did.

Q. All that being said, would you not have a problem if they decided not to make adjustments into the rules?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: No, I welcome it as long as they don't change the human element. Again, I'm going to play with whatever they gave me. I'm not worried about it. I'm going to do what that they say is legal and I'll just go from there and find the best way to play for me under The Rules of Golf.

There's no issues -- it's funny, I'm sure there's a lot of excitement about me having a potentially controversial thought on it but I don't. I think it's a really cool thought process. It's a little flattering in a sense, because I did talk about that 48-inch driver for so long, and it just didn't work

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for me the way I wanted it to.

As it's played out, I think it's really cool to see that there's some change off of the conversations that I've had, and it's just pretty interesting to me.

Q. You already said that you did try to work out the 48-inch driver, it didn't work out for you. You're back to 45.6. But can you tell us if you had spent two or three months developing that 48 for yourself, would you have been disappointed then?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Well, yeah, if you put the work in and it doesn't work, it would be disappointing. I did work with it quite a bit, but we just didn't have the right heads for me yet at that point in time. We were getting close, but right now it's made the decision really easy on what to do next.

So I don't think -- it didn't happen. It potentially could have been something that would have been a bummer but luckily it didn't and it didn't work out for me right off the bat because then I would have been losing distance.

But again, my driving ball speed is so high that it's tough to get to those speeds with anybody else on Tour unless you're Kyle Berkshire or Dustin James or anybody else that's hitting it really far out there.

Q. I wanted to ask you, once there was Tiger-proofing and now there's Bryson-proofing of the golf courses and talks of that, but your biggest strength has always been your putting and short game I think.

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Yeah.

Q. Do you feel a little disappointed that people don't talk as much about it as they talk about your driving and the physique you have built?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Not disappointed. It's more my secret weapon, I guess you could say.

It was not a strength of mine coming out on Tour. I wasn't a great putter and I was still trying to find a way that would be consistent for me to play the game, and I stumbled upon it. I have been a great putter and improved every single year.

Does it mean I'm going to be better this year? I don't know. There's a lot of great putters out there and hopefully the law of averages works out where I can be a top five or Top-10 putter again. If it doesn't, and if I can still be in the Top-20 and get my wedging and iron play into the top 30 in the world from a short game perspective, it's going to be

nice to compete every single week up near the leaderboard. You just put yourself in a position where you're hitting it in the fairway, you're strokes gained No. 1 or No. 2 off the tee and you're top 30 with iron play and top 30 around the green, and you know, top in putting, you're going to be up in the leaderboard.

Q. Do you think in way you've frightened the R&A and the USGA, thinking about this 48-inch driver and bombing it all the way around? Do you think that's some sort of a reaction or not?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: I think I might be pushing them a little bit. I don't know if anybody's pushed them like -- and I'm not really trying to push. I'm just trying to play my best golf and get the ball golf ball in the hole in the least amount of strokes possible in whatever way the rules allow me to do that, right. I think that I'm willing to try things that people don't really -- are not okay with trying.

So with that regard, when you go to the fringe limits of the rules, there will be conversations about it for sure. I'm okay with that, as long as I'm playing under the rules, which I will continue to do so, there's never going to be an issue.

Q. Again on the subject of the R&A and USGA, you mentioned the human element. Is there anything specific that would be in your mind a step too far for them to go down this road?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: I think when they start trying to limit like how fast you can swing it and what you can practise with or what -- what would be another one, I can't really think too much off the top of my head. But if they say you can't grip it a certain way or you can't have a certain look to your swing, that's when I would say it would be too far.

But other than that, as long as it's all equipment, we've all got to play under the same rules.

Q. Forgive me if you've been asked this before, but how do you feel about long putters?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: What do you mean in that regard? There are different versions of long putters.

Q. Do you think that's putting, for -- off the bat.

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Yeah, I mean, back in the early, I guess you could say 1900s, they were still chipping on greens. So you could say that that's putting and it just evolved to being a flatter loft, and when the greens got better, we could use flatter lofts. So the putter wasn't as short as it used to be. It used to be a little wedge that they

used to chip it off the green. It's evolved over time and grown into what it is today.

And if somebody wants to use a putter a certain way to play their best golf, I don't see why -- why you should hinder it or why it should be hindered. But again, I'll keep going back to the same statement: Whatever they make, whatever rules they have, I'm going to find the best way to play under those rules.

I do think it's putting whatever you want to do it, as long as it's rolling on the green. You could chip on the green. You could hit a driver on the green, right. It's irrelevant.

Q. So given what we've just heard about the quality of your short game, you're not more worried about them banning long putters than you are about them banning long drivers?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: I'm honestly indifferent to either. If they did do it, again, the same statement is going to come out, but it's the truth. I mean, I'm going to find the best way to play the game, and under the rules right now, you can arm-lock, you can do that and you can have a long putter that's off your chest, and whatever way that makes you feel comfortable on the green I think is great for the game.

That's what I look at when I'm thinking about growing the game. You want people to play the game and enjoy the game under The Rules of Golf. You don't really want to hinder it too much. There's definitely a balance there.

Q. Can I please ask what you made about the situation involving Patrick Reed at the weekend which got a lot of attention?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Man, yeah, I don't know what actually happened. I've heard what happened. I've talked to him and he said that when he picked it up, there was stuff under it. There was mud.

So I mean, the rules official made the decision and you go with what the rules official says in any situation. That's what you have to do. So he made that call, and I would defer to the rules official.

Q. Even from speaking to Patrick, can you imagine what it's like when you go and win a tournament and there's so much noise in the background about something like this? It can't be very pleasant, I would imagine.

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: No, no. It's unfortunate that things have happened that way for Patrick. He's been a

nice guy to me and I don't have issues with him at all.

Unfortunately there are just things that have happened in his life that hasn't made it look great, but at the same point in time he's just trying to play golf the best way he can under The Rules of Golf. We all mess up. I've messed up in the past and we're all human. Unfortunately sometimes it comes out in a way that doesn't look great. But we all just learn from it. And I hope Patrick learns from it, and just like I did with my slow play stuff and all the other stuff that went on a couple years ago. I've grown a lot from it and I'll continue to grow, as I'm sure he will.

Q. Given what you were saying earlier, in terms of having an advantage in distance already, if these rules come in and equipment is sort of limited, does that play into your hands?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: I think whenever you're trying to shorten the equipment or whatever, the person that can swing it the fastest will always have an advantage. I mean, even on golf courses that are short, I can hit, for example -- a great example, actually. No. 12 out here, I can hit 3-wood up there but it tightens up quite a bit. But I can leave it short of the bunker and have 155 yards into the flag which is a 47-degree for me, less than a 47-degree for me, which is a 6-iron off the tee. So I'm literally hitting 6-iron off the tee compared to somebody's hybrid or sometimes 3-wood or whatever.

So no matter what way you look at it, from a swing speed perspective, the person that could swing it the fastest and control it the best is going to have a greater advantage in that regard no matter what way you look at it.

So that's kind of my perspective on it. I don't know if that answered the question or not.

Q. Can I take you back to Augusta last year, you identified some health issues that were making you feel dizzy and give you an upset stomach. Over the off-season, what have you done to correct that and what did you identify were the problems?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: So I did an MRI, an MRA, an ultrasound on the blood vessels going up, the arteries going up in the neck, I did an ultrasound on the heart. I wasn't to an ear, nose and throat doctor. I saw an eye doctor. And everything from the tests came back completely normal. There was nothing -- nothing weird about it.

The last thing that I tested was oxygen levels, and that actually was a little more profound. So what we believe was happening was I wasn't utilising enough oxygen when

it came into my system. So essentially, I put like an oxygen thing on and I was actually breathing out oxygen, like a lot of oxygen.

So I was storing a lot of carbon dioxide in my system and that usually constricts the blood vessels and makes you feel really light headed and dizzy and just upset stomach.

So I started learning some techniques on how to breathe a little bit better and control it and whenever I do it, I feel great. I think that was the fix was just some of the oxygen levels. That's why some of the stuff was going off in like I said the frontal lobe and everybody kind of had a laugh about that.

But it does affect the brain, how much oxygen you breathe in. It's an energy source and if you don't get the right amount and right mixture in your body, you can really have some weird effects. Especially with how much I've changed my body over the course of this past year, things were going to pop up and I'm glad I've found it and nipped it in the bud and I can move on in a really good way.

Q. Are you still on seven milkshakes a day?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: I've cut down a little bit. I'm trying to lean out and retain strength. I'm trying to look better than look a little pudgy. I don't want to look that way anymore.

Q. Quick question. I have a colleague beside me. She's just curious, what's the shaft angle of your putter, please.

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Oh, so you're back -- well, I've got 6 1/2 degrees on the loft of the face. So then when I move it, I have about a degree-and-a-half of loft, so you're talking five-degree shaft lean off of it.

Q. Following up on that, in terms of having that health scare, about that put things into perspective for you at the moment and how do you feel now about managing your condition? Is it more of a priority at the top of your mind?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Yeah, last week I really focused on -- and this is when I figured it out was a week and a half ago. I got an oxygen machine and have been working on controlling my breathing every single night before I go to bed, and in the morning when I wake up. That's usually when I feel it the most so I really focus on how I'm breathing in the morning. And it doesn't scare me at all since I know what's going on. I'll continually monitor it.

I'm 27, I'm not old by any means, but as time goes on, you want to keep monitoring yourself to make sure you're the healthiest you can be and that's what I'll keep doing.

Q. Given that you are probably not going to use the 48-inch driver anyway that's not going to make much of a difference but the R&A and USGA are also talking about areas of interest including a local rule that could lead to tournament-specific clubs and tournament balls. What do you think about that and do you think we are going to end up in a big fight between -- a legal fight between the manufacturers and the R&A?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Well, I'm not a manufacturer. I do talk with them quite a bit. I know it's going to make -- it's going to be more difficult for them, right. It's going to cost them a lot of money to change a lot of the product that they have already put into work. Companies are already a year, year and a half ahead of -- right now, they are already working on 2022, 2023 designs. So they are going to have to re-engineer that.

It's going to be a cost to them. But I don't know what the future holds, if companies -- I don't know. I'm not in the position to say other than the fact that I don't think they will be happy about it but any stretch of the imagination. But certainly I'm sure that one company, some company would probably do it if it really came down to that.

Q. And final question. Did you get a sense from your talk with John Bodenheimer that the USGA are very resolved and determined to finally do something?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Yeah, I think they are looking at it from a different perspective this time. It's not just about we want to cut distance down. That's not what it's about. It's about making sure that you're playing with the relative integrity of back in the day. People weren't using 48-inch shafts a long time ago, and so they are really trying to make it similar to back in the day in a sense while having a modern flair to it obviously with the graphite shafts and all that.

So I understand that point of view and I don't think there's any harm to it. We've all got to play under the rules and do what they say when it comes to legal conformity.

STEVE TODD: Thank you for joining us, Bryson.

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