

PGA Championship

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Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Quail Hollow Club

Scottie Scheffler

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Scottie Scheffler joins us now at the 107th PGA Championship. Scottie, welcome to Quail Hollow and your sixth PGA Championship. A win for you a couple weeks ago in Texas; how are you feeling coming into this week?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, feeling good. Like you said, I had a good start a couple weeks ago in Dallas. Got some good rest at home last week. Yeah, excited for the week to get started this week and then -- yeah.

Q. Scottie, how much have you practiced today? What have you seen of the course? And how uncomfortable is it if you don't get a full Tuesday, Wednesday of practice going into a major?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: It doesn't really matter that much. I mean, I think a lot of times at majors you can almost overprepare. So coming into this week, making sure you're rested, it's a big golf course, and it's pretty wet out there, but the greens are still staying pretty firm. They're still fairly new. When you get that new Bermuda, the greens can stay firm. The golf course will play long, but it should be a good test.

Q. Scottie, you got four top-8 finishes in your last PGAs but you haven't put it over the line. Is there anything you can point to specific with this tournament, or is it just a case of things not working out at the right time?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Well, I'm not sure I totally understand the question.

Q. Winning the PGA as opposed to the Masters or -- you've had a little more struggles here than at Augusta.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Like why haven't I won here? Is that what you're saying?

Q. Yeah, it's a long way of saying that, yeah.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Like you said, just a couple shots here and there. I was close at Oak Hill the year Brooks won. That was as close as I remember being to winning this tournament. But it's a good golf tournament. We're always playing a great golf course, and same thing this week, another really good golf course, and should be a good test of golf, and I'm looking forward to getting the week going.

Q. You mentioned last year that you were sort of hoping to do a better job of maintaining your rest throughout the season. I'm wondering how you feel like you're doing as the calendar flips to mid-May.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, doing pretty good. I got that extra month off to start the year. Yeah, I think a lot of it is managing my schedule week-to-week and managing the stuff I do day-to-day. I'm a guy that loves -- I really do love to practice, and a lot of times you get to a great golf course like this and the practice facilities are really nice. There's a lot of space for us to be able to do our work.

It can be really exciting to go out and practice, so I've got to manage myself, similar to an Augusta-type week where when you get to Augusta National, you just want to spend all day there and got to really manage the way I do things. Most of my prep work is done at home and then when I show up here to a tournament, I'm ready to go. Most of it is getting used to the golf course, getting used to the bunkers and greens and stuff like that.

Q. Did you feel like when you were feeling that fatigue at the end of the season, did you feel like that was more mental or physical?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I mean, probably more mental for sure. I think last year obviously was a great year, and it was -- I would be tired for a variety of reasons at the end of the year. But like I said, it was a ton of fun, and I wouldn't trade it for anything. Having that mental fatigue from being in contention a lot is great, and I was able to finish off the year the right way last year.

I definitely have a lot of good memories from last year that I can lean on for sure.



Q. Obviously Padraig, Xander, and Rory tomorrow for the first group. Just your reaction to that group, and what's it like when you're playing in a major and you're in one of those marquee groups with two of the big names, two of the winners of majors, things like that, your thoughts on that?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I'm playing with two guys that are playing some of the best golf in the world. Xander won two majors last year, and Rory already won THE PLAYERS and the Masters this year so he's playing some fantastic golf.

Yeah, it should be a lot of fun. I've seen that pairing before, and we have a good time out there, and it's competitive. I think when I look back on my career, these will be some of the fondest memories getting to play with some of the best players in the world and compete to try to win tournaments.

Q. You've talked a lot about being present in each tournament and not thinking about how you played the year before. You've mentioned we all start at even par coming into the week. Your win at the Byron Nelson, do you feel that's momentum coming into this week, or have you kind of scratched that off and just are focusing on this week?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I think there's definitely a balance there. It would be silly to say that I can't ride the positive momentum from a good week like that. To finish off that tournament the way I did and have it not really be too close on the back nine, I played some really nice golf.

I talked a little bit about how I felt like my game was trending, so it was nice to see some results from a lot of hard work to start the year, and I feel like my game is in a good spot. I think it would be silly to say I can't ride a little bit of that momentum going into this tournament.

Q. What were some of those things that you felt were trending?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I just felt like my swing is coming around. I felt like my ball-striking maybe held me back a little bit at the beginning of the year. I kept the ball -- I drove it really nice last week at the Byron and hit some really good iron shots and was able to give myself a lot of looks around that golf course, what you need to do, and was able to hole some putts, as well.

Q. Scottie, Rory was pretty candid last year, even the start of this year, that your excellent play was a motivator for him, and when you see what he's done

these first four months, does that give you a little fire?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I got asked that same question at the Byron, and it's always motivating when you just get beat, and in golf you tend to get beat a lot. You don't really get to win that many tournaments.

Rory has been off to a great start this year, and he's definitely improved and made some changes in his game from last year. There's always little things I'm trying to do to get better, and I think that's why we keep coming back. Golf is kind of an endless pursuit of getting the best out of yourself, and I'm looking forward to continuing to do that as the year goes on. But like you said, Rory has been playing some great golf this year.

Q. Just to see it tangibly how much it meant to win the Career Grand Slam and the outpouring that surrounded that, does that bring it into focus a little more for you as a goal?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I don't really set those types of goals for myself. I have some dreams and aspirations that I think about, but I've always been at my best when I stay in the present. That's what works really well for me. You have certain guys that will write down a bunch of goals at the beginning of the year and that's what motivates them, but for me, I do my best when I stay in the present.

But it was really cool to see Rory be able to finish that off and to be there for that moment. He's a good buddy of mine out here, so I was very happy for him. That tournament and having to answer each year, for a guy that's had one of the best careers in the history of the game, for him to sit in here week in, week out and have to be asked about one single golf tournament, I'm sure, can be a bit frustrating, and I'm sure that's why there was so much emotion coming out of him.

It takes a lifetime of work to be able to even have a chance to win major championships, let alone win all four of them. So it was pretty cool to see.

Q. I've been asking everybody this, and you've gotten a couple shout-outs in the process. A little bit of a hypothetical: Looking at driving, putting, approach, around the green, if you were forced to trade one element of your game with any player currently playing, what part of the game would it be, and who would you switch it with?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Who would I trade --

Q. Yeah, so I would trade approaches or putting with this person, if you were forced to. You may choose

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not to, but if you had to.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: So today I played a practice round with Sam Burns, and I remember when we played the Presidents Cup here in 2022, it was like he was putting to a hole that was the size of a basketball hoop. So I do a lot of practice rounds with Sam, and he's a tremendous putter. I would trade that with him.

I think in our game, there's always little things that I look at in people's games that I can improve on. You look at a guy like Rory, you'd be hard-pressed to find anybody that has drove the ball better than he has in the history of the game. He might be the best driver of the ball that we've ever seen.

You had a guy like Tiger had a ton of speed, but Rory just has the accuracy is what sets him apart too. Not only does he hit it really far, he hits it really straight. Those are two little examples just off the top of my head of guys that I would trade with.

But there's so much I could learn from out here. Like I play a lot of golf with Jordan at home too and the stuff he does around the greens and the creativity that he plays with, I can learn a lot from.

Honestly, I could go on and on because I've always been a very visual learner. Growing up, the way I played -- where I practiced, I was able to watch professional golfers all the time, and I just learned so much just by sitting there and watching them and then I would try to do the same thing.

Now being out here playing all the time with the best players in the world, there's always something that I can learn. You look at a guy like Jon Rahm, like I love the way he plays with passion over every shot. It's very rare for him to lose focus, and you kind of see that in his face when he plays. He plays so competitively. Tiger was kind of the same way. Tiger was obviously the best at it, but every shot he hit was the most important shot that he's ever hit.

I could go on and on, but those are a few small examples.

Q. You're one of the few guys who hasn't played this course in recent years. I know you played the Presidents Cup here, but I know last year you had the baby coming. Do you feel like you're learning it for the first time, and what are your impressions?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: No, when you play the Presidents Cup here, you play so many rounds. I played four competitive rounds and a bunch of practice rounds.

So getting to know the course, I kind of knew what to

expect coming in with the rough and the way the greens are, and most of it's just getting used to the bunkers and I guess getting used to the rough, stuff like that. I don't feel like I'm playing any sort of catch-up getting ready for the week.

Q. When a course that's already big like this one takes on this much water as it has in a short period of time, do you have to change anything about your mindset, your bag setup, or anything going into this week as you prepare?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: As far as bag setup, there is a little bit of thinking to do whether or not I'll use my 5-wood or my 3-iron, but that's pretty typical for a week. I have two really good weapons there in that part of the bag, and each week I kind of just have to pick and choose.

This week may be more of a 5-wood week just because, like you said, the golf course is going to play really long, the rough is thick, and the run-up areas after this kind of rain are going to be really soft, and the greens are still going to be really firm because they're new. You have to be able to land the ball up on the green. You can't really run it up around this golf course. That's one aspect that you've got to think about.

But as far as my approach to the course, not really. I know what my skill set is, and I'll try to use that to my advantage and hopefully hit some solid shots this week.

Q. The last three holes here obviously get a lot of attention for the difficulty. In that stretch, is there one shot that's the most intimidating or the most daunting?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I mean, I think the only shot you can really consider where you don't have to be super focused on is the drive on 16. The fairway is pretty wide, and the hole is pretty long. You're really trying to get it down there as far as you can into the fairway.

But after that, the approach shot into 16 is really tough. The tee shot on 17 is really tough. Then you've got two really challenging shots on 18 with the water on the left side. There's no real breathers in that stretch of holes and should make for a fun finish.

Q. There was a lot of talk about a burden being lifted from Rory when he finally got the Masters. I'm curious if you've ever felt that -- not the Masters, but a burden being lifted, whether it was your first Tour win, first major, first Presidents Cup point, anything like that?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah. I mean, I think every time you accomplish something in this game, there's a little bit

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of that aspect, just because I grew up as a kid, I wanted to play on the PGA TOUR, and I didn't really get past that. So winning for the first time, it took me maybe a little longer than some people would have expected, mostly just because I had a lot of good starts out here, I wasn't winning, but I was playing consistently well enough to have a high World Ranking or whatever it was.

I didn't really have that great of an amateur career. When I first came out, the guys that were being looked at -- I came out about the same time as Viktor Hovland and Collin Morikawa, and Matthew Wolff at the time was a really good prospect, as well. I kind of flew under the radar when I first came out.

Every time you win out here, there's definitely a feeling of that burden being lifted just because it's such a great accomplishment. It's not easy to win out here on any level, and every time you win a tournament, it's a pretty cool feeling.

Q. Does it change anything going forward for you?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Not really.

Q. Just show up the next week at even?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: You show up the next week, but for instance, this week I'm showing up coming off of a tournament that I won, and that's always a good feeling. You can definitely ride some of that momentum. When I look back at my career, it would be silly to say that I don't ride some of the momentum from those wins.

I like to think I don't ride a lot of the momentum from the missed cuts or poor starts, whatever it is. I feel like I've always been pretty decent at bouncing back. I look at a year like last year where I was tired at the end of the year and I had a really poor start in Colorado going into East Lake and was able to kind of bounce back and have a really good week at East Lake and finish off the year the right way.

When you look at -- when I got my first win in 2022, I won some tournaments pretty quickly after that. So it would be silly to say that I don't ride some of that momentum. But I do try to do my best to treat each week as their own tournament, but it's silly to not ride positive momentum.

Q. Scottie, now that you've kind of passed that hump of getting over the injury from earlier in the season, do you look back on it as something that might have been more difficult to overcome and get used to playing with than you initially imagined? What was it like battling that?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I mean, I always focus so hard on my preparation when it comes to showing up to tournaments, and showing up to that first tournament at Pebble, it was not my normal preparation. I had only been hitting balls for less than a week probably since I had surgery, and I had put in a lot of hard work in the off-season to make some improvements to my game, and all of a sudden you kind of lose those when you have to go a month without being able to spend time in the gym and being able to do my normal practice.

I definitely started off the year a bit more challenging than I would have expected to going into the off-season just because of the injury. Was it more difficult than I thought? I don't think so. I think I had pretty fair expectations of myself. I knew it wasn't going to be super easy, but at the end of the day, stuff happens. Life happens. I don't regret anything that I did. It's just one of those deals that happens in life. Sometimes you get hurt, and I can't live in a bubble.

Q. You talk about being able to stay in the present. Do you think that just comes naturally to you, or do you do certain things to keep yourself in the present, or do you feel like things creep in ever that you just try to block out?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Well, no, I think it's always a battle to try to stay in the present. I think when I was in college, my college coach did a really good job of helping me kind of learn that skill. He really preached on when you're at the golf course, you're at the golf course, when you're in class, you're in class. And when I'm out doing stuff with my friends, I don't want to be at home hanging out with my wife thinking about my golf swing. I don't want to be out here at the golf course thinking about being at home.

We have certain time throughout the day, and I think when you're in the present, you're able to make the most of those situations, whether it be enjoying them to the fullest or getting the most out of the work that I put in when I'm at the golf course.

I think it's a constant battle.

Q. Following up, when you don't have as much experience at a course, how much do you rely on Teddy to plot you around, and what's your guys' relationship like when you guys are trying to figure out how to attack a golf course, especially a major championship like this?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I would say there's certain



golf courses on Tour that there's really a big strategy component to. You think of a course like Hilton Head, where each time you step on the tee box there's a thought into what club you're going to hit just based on wind direction and pin placement and stuff like that.

On this golf course with it being so big, it's a little bit easier just to step on the tee box and pretty much every hole is a driver. Outside of that off the tee, there's not really a bunch of strategy stuff you can do.

But I rely very heavily on Teddy week to week. He does all the prep work on the golf courses, and yeah, I've played them year after year, but at the end of the day, Teddy is the guy that I listen to. He knows where the good spots are, he knows where the bad spots are. One year we come to a golf course and the rough may be light over a green in a certain area and the pitch shot is really easy, and then the next year we come back and for some reason the grass is totally different and now it's a really hard shot.

So Teddy is the one that does all that prep work for me, and I rely on him pretty heavily week to week.

Q. You said there's not much you have to think about for this course when you're not on the tee --

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Well, just off the tee specifically. It's pretty much a driver on each hole. That's pretty much it.

Q. What hole do you have to put the most thought into for how to attack it here?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I'd say probably that drivable one on the back. I think it's 14 or 15. 14. I would say depending on the pin position, that would be the one that takes the most thought.

Most of the other holes, off the tee you're just trying to get the ball in the fairway really, and get the ball in the fairway probably as far as you can down there, just so you can have a shorter club into the firm greens.

I think going into the greens will be a lot of strategy, especially as they firm up, just based on what pins you're able to attack and where your misses are supposed to be. I think there will be a lot of strategy going into the greens, just not as much off the tee.

Q. This field is very unique in that the Corebridge Financial team of the 20 best PGA professionals join you on a major stage. What is it specifically that impresses you the most about the PGA professionals that are able to compete and qualify at this tournament

year in and year out?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, it's a lot of fun to have those guys in this tournament. I think the PGA pros do a lot for the game of golf, running tournaments all over the country, teaching people all over the country, and it's a huge organization, and they do a lot for our game.

It's really fun to have the guys here for a week and play and compete. Seems like each year you see a couple of them make the cut, and some of them definitely have the game to be out here, just may not be the lifestyle that they want. Like I said, they're very important to the game of golf, so it's good for us to have them out here for a week.

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