



Jordan Spieth

Press Conference

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THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, we are pleased to welcome to the interview room our 2015 Masters Champion, Jordan Spieth.

Jordan, thanks for joining us.

JORDAN SPIETH: Happy to be here.

THE MODERATOR: You have a very impressive Masters résumé with five top three finishes in your first nine appearances. There's only one player that has matched that record, and it's Arnold Palmer. What is it about playing at the Masters, at Augusta National, that brings out the best in you?

JORDAN SPIETH: Well, it was my favorite tournament growing up, so qualifying to get here was always a lifelong goal of mine. I really fell in love with the game because of this tournament, back to Tiger's chip-in to Phil's first win.

These were kind of heroic moments when I was at an age where I was playing some other sports and loving golf, and it inspired me to really take up the game and see what kind of moments you can create, because the ball is always in your hands. Few things are as electric as those moments they had in sports. I wanted to create my own.

From the moment I got here I was always very excited, and I wanted to learn it and fall in love with it. Just a lot of positivity. Didn't know what to expect, and got off to a nice start my first year and tried to carry it on every year.

Yeah, 10th appearance now feels crazy and I hopefully can match some of those greats that played in how many over the years, I don't know what the record is, probably Mr. Player would be up there. You guys probably know.

It would be pretty special, but at the same time when you get opportunities at a young age and you feel good about your chances, I want to win it again. That's the goal. And was able to get a round in yesterday with my brother, which was really fun, and get to work today.

Q. You just mentioned your record here. You also have a great record at The Open Championship, and I'm wondering, can you kind of explain the difference in instinct and intuition that you use here as opposed to there?

JORDAN SPIETH: I wouldn't say there's a lot. There's a lot of similarities. There it's more the conditions outside that force you to play a certain way and feel a different way and work a lot of different shots, and here, the slopes, you have 18 flat shots, and the rest of them are significantly different, and those are just the 18 tee shots that you hit.

You're kind of forced to play flights and shots versus being just technical straight line, straight ball flight. Those are really -- you know, it's just the tee balls that are like that.

The rest of your approach shots, which is really what is golf course is about, is greens in regulation, and a second-shot golf course, along with speed control, I feel like that's a good strength of my game when I'm forced to seeing a certain

shot and I get to fight it off a hill or ride it off the hill.

At The Open Championship, if you're holding it against a breeze or trying to play a shot really low. Just kind of getting into that feel part of that, the athleticism of the game.

They are my favorite tournaments, they always have been, and there are actually a lot of similarities forced by different things in the way they play.

Speed control, you couldn't pick two different style of greens as far as the speed of them, but you have a lot of undulating putts where speed control comes very important between an Open Championship and the Masters, and you just can't stress enough how nice it is if you can lag up to inside three feet here because your 5-, 6-footers are harder here than anywhere else because of how much break you have to play.

Q. What have you learned most about yourself and all your experiences here, the ups, the downs, in handling all that?

JORDAN SPIETH: I think I've learned that it's a game. It's a game, and I've approached the highs and lows as life-and-death in different scenarios, and that's not the case. Ten years here, a lot of experience, I can look back and say I learned a lot from winning, and I learned a lot from losing.

I feel better perspective now than ever, and hopefully that continues to grow. But ultimately, our sport doesn't get heightened more than it does this week. There's not as much -- this is the highest-viewed golf tournament in the world, and I like to always call it our Super Bowl, but at the same time, that's still a game, too.

So just thinking of it that way kind of brings everything in a little bit and allows you to kind of free it up and look at each week as its own independent week. So this -- I can't draw from the shot I hit a certain time five years ago in this event because it's a different shot, and I'm a different player.

I feel good about the form I'm in. Hopefully we get a firmer, faster Augusta; like it that way. I've played better when it is that way. It doesn't look like it's going to be that way. But, you know, if it forces a lot more kind of wedges into the par 5s and some angles because of the cooler temperatures and the moisture in the ground, I can certainly look at that as advantageous to me, too. I'll just spin it positively however I can.

Q. When you left here in 2015 with your green jacket, how many more did you think you would have by the time you got to now?

JORDAN SPIETH: I was only guaranteed that one. I didn't think ahead other than in 2016, I wanted to win it then and 2017, I wanted to win it then and put myself in position a number of times. When I look back on the times where I've had real legitimate chances, I look at the middle two rounds of 2018, I really could have, should have won it that year. I wasn't playing great. I just had two really good rounds.

I had chances in 2014 and 2016 down the stretch, and other than that, it's just been 2018 that I was nine back. 2021, I was pretty far back. I really haven't had a lot of opportunities on the back nine with how many top -- like I've backdoored some of those top finishes, and I'd love to get in the mix because I feel like right now, I feel better about my game than I've felt since probably 2017.

That doesn't necessarily answer your question. I would have liked to have won it every year, but I also never assumed that, that the bounces go your way a second time, you know.

Q. You mentioned if it's playing a little bit longer and laying up potentially on the par 5s, is that something you've assessed? Do you have different locations you lay up in for different pins on both of those holes, or with a new tee on 13, is that something that you're revisiting when you practice this week?

JORDAN SPIETH: There's only a really minor adjustment on 13, and the rest of the holes I've got -- and even then, it's really just the one spot, the one pin I don't love -- you don't love laying up on is the front one just because you're not able to push it up close to the green and have a real chance to get it close because you're pitching off a downslope into

almost no room. So you'd have 15 feet.

So the front pin, if you have to lay it up, you have to lay it further back in order to get it close so you can get spin on it. The rest of the spins, it's no different if I drove it through in the pine straw and you're playing to lay up to a certain position.

It's really -- it's going to be kind of weighing on, hey, if I'm more than 210 front, let's not even try. If I'm less than 210 front, let's see if it's a good number. I don't know if that's the number. But what I'm saying is, it is a change because if you hit a drive, you were looking before, you were looking at a 6-iron, and that's a lot different than between 4 and 3 into that green.

I disagree that it's less exciting. Like, I think you've heard mixed reviews. Some people say more, some people say less. I mean, I think if you are stuck in between you and get more mayhem because you're going to get more water balls than guys hitting 7-iron to the middle of the green, how is that not more exciting? It's not very exciting if someone hits 7-, 8-iron into the middle of the green and 2-putts. You want to see someone hit it from further away or a harder shot.

I don't know if it's a better or worse hole; it's a different hole, and I think you have to be determined if it's more or less exciting. If it's warmer, it's more exciting; but when it's this cool, it may just be a lot of lay-ups. But we'll see.

Q. The mystique and reverence for the green jacket, it's my understanding, you didn't want a tailor to touch yours, and if that's true, what went into that decision?

JORDAN SPIETH: I think that was only true, like, the day or two after when we went on to New York. I just wanted to keep it in my possession because I just got it the day or two before. After that, I just had it with me everywhere, and I never got it fixed, and I think they have done it since here because the arms certainly fit a lot better. I left a little room just in case I put on a few pounds over the years.

Q. Any memories associated with the actual jacket?

JORDAN SPIETH: A lot. I was able to go to Mavs games, Rangers games, go on the court, go on the field, to University of Texas and a football game and do some of the stuff where you wear the jacket; and everybody knows what the jacket is. You carry a trophy around, if you're not a golf fan, you may get confused. But even the non-golf fans know what the jacket is.

So it was very cool. Maybe the coolest part is just everywhere I went, I traveled with a little hanging bag, and on the bag that holds the jacket says "2015 Masters Champion" or whatever on it. So it was just kind of cool to look in my closet every week and see that. I'd love to have another one, maybe a little bigger and fit it to my size.

Q. Can you describe your feelings and mindset on the first tee and how that can change from Thursday to potentially Sunday?

JORDAN SPIETH: I don't feel that it changes a ton from Thursday to Sunday. It's one of the only places it doesn't for me regardless of the position I'm in. It feels like it's a Sunday, first tee shot in contention each day.

It's just the first major of the year, and you know, you kind of tried to tailor your game to get it really ready for this week, and you're anxious, and normally you're in a different routine because you're here earlier. Have you ever seen this many people practicing this hard on a Monday? Typically in a stretch, you take a Monday off or do really light work.

It's just you're anxious to get going. It's not -- it's more anxious than nervous. I think there's a difference there. You know, they give you big enough fairway if you want to lay back, but it's also one of the harder holes on the golf course.

That's really -- my mind goes to, I want to get off to a good start because this is a hard hole. I want to put two shots on this green and have a look. I don't feel that changes a whole lot Sunday to Thursday. It just always feels the same.

Q. You have talked recently about talking less when it comes to conversations with Michael. I'm just curious, what prompted that and how it's going?

JORDAN SPIETH: I just found what I was doing was justifying why something I did was good, or why something I did wasn't or could have been better. I'm essentially telling myself, so there's no reason to say it out loud.

Michael's seen everything, and I don't need to -- you know, I shouldn't have his expectation be me at my very best at every facet of my game, every single day, because it's not going to happen.

So I kind of just got into that, like I've got to justify it or whatever to him, and I didn't feel that was healthy, and I could save a lot of energy if I didn't. And I felt like I've been doing a pretty good job of it since I became really aware of trying. A couple rounds here and there where I've fallen back a little, but for the most part it's something I'll continue to work on.

Q. We learned your foundation made a donation to the Children's Hospital here in Augusta. What went behind that decision?

JORDAN SPIETH: That's a recent pillar we've added. This is a special place for us, and then Annie and Laura Moses reached out, and got to learn a lot about where it was going to go to. I think it became a pretty easy grant for us to feel like it was going to go to the right place in a community that we find very special to us. Kind of in line with what we do with the foundation.

Q. You mentioned being inspired by players, creating moments here, and you've obviously done that yourself. Would you ascribe that to the design of the course or the occasion itself or a combination?

JORDAN SPIETH: Definitely a combination. The setup, you have a pretty good idea on Sunday where you can get some really exciting moments. You know 16 is going to be a really exciting spot. You know where it's going to be on 18. 17 changes a lot. 15 can change. 14 ends up being a really exciting pin and makes it the easiest that hole can play.

The back nine gets set up to where if you're in the wrong spots you can go downhill, and if you're kind of in the right spots, you can really -- Schwartzel was four birdies in a row to finish. There's been comebacks. I almost came back one year; I lost the lead one year; I've maintained one. It can yield just about anything.

So I think the course setup has a lot to do with it, and as I mentioned this being essentially the Super Bowl to golfers, then you get those moments toward the end combined with that course setup, and creates that kind of iconic finishes that stick with kids and drive you to want to go out on the putting green after the Masters finishes and hit the same putt, the same chip.

I've done both. When I was a kid I would watch the end of it and run right out to the chipping green or putting green and try those shots.

Q. You had a lot of success early in your life in golf and in your career, and then things became a little more difficult and kind of lost your way. I wonder if you can talk a little about how hard to work and what that process was like?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I tried working really, really hard without really knowing what I was doing, and I think that put me more in a hole.

Then there was a time period where I, along with some help, talking to some guys that I trusted and knew and using my same team and letting my guard down and being a little less stubborn and underworking, until I got to that point, where I was like, okay, let's refigure this out. Stop trying the same thing and overworking it, thinking something is going to click and it's all over.

Instead, started to really re-engineer backwards what kind of made me so successful that I didn't realize that I kind of did without knowing, and I had to reengineer it from impact backwards to get it freed up again, and it's been a process ever since then.

But it's exciting because when I go to the range, I'm confident by the end of the day I know what to improve. That seems like it would be standard every day for a golfer, but there were a lot of years in a row where I would go to the course and I would be uncertain if I would come out that day feeling better or worse. That's tough to go into.

So falling in love with the process starts with knowing what you need to work on and then from there, putting in the hours. I mean, I've got the scars to show the hours. But it's what I want to do, too, because it's really, really enjoyable when you start to feel progression and confidence coming back.

You know, to me, there's nothing like it. It's everything to kind of re-fall in love with the game and enjoy working it back. You know, I don't feel I have all the weapons right now. But I have enough, and I'm continuing to work on the ones that I don't have, and I get a little better each day with them.

The ones I don't have may have let me down a couple weeks ago, and I've got to work on it. But the point is I feel the ability to have the consistency that I once had, and that's really what I was striving for.