



Scottie Scheffler

Press Conference
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THE MODERATOR: Ladies and gentlemen, it's our pleasure to have the defending and two-time Masters champion Scottie Scheffler in the interview room this afternoon. Welcome back to Augusta National.

As you've practiced the last few days, please describe your preparation for this week's tournament.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Well, came out on Sunday, played 18 holes, so got a good practice round in on Sunday and then yesterday had a bit of a wash-out. So it was a decent rest day for me, did some stuff in the gym and got some rest for the rest of the week, and then today went out and played the front nine. I'll play the back nine tomorrow.

Q. Obviously the clear highlight of the Champions Dinner menu is the raviolis. Are you guys going to have any kind of fun make-your-own-raviolis station, or will you be sharing any tips on ravioli making?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: In terms of if I was trying to take out the competition, I would definitely do a demonstration, something along those lines. But yeah, hopefully avoid the injuries. Maybe they'll cut up my steak for me, I won't have to use a knife or anything like that. We'll see.

Q. There have been a number of wonderful shots hit throughout the history of this great tournament, Jack, Tiger, Phil. What is the best shot you've ever hit in the Masters Tournament, and why would you pick that one?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I got asked this question a while ago, and I didn't really have a good answer. I think when you look at the two Masters that I've won, on Sunday I had the chip-in on 3 in 2022. But really what I felt like was the most important shot to me was the iron shot I hit into 5 that day.

Very few times throughout a tournament do you hit a shot exactly how you want to. It was one of those shots that I flushed it, I hit it exactly the way I was intending to and felt exactly what I needed to, and it gave me a ton of confidence going throughout the rest of the day. So, I mean, both of those I'd say were very pivotal shots.

When you look at '24 on Sunday making the turn, birdieing -- I think I birdied 8, 9 and 10, hit a nice wedge shot into 9 and a really good wedge shot into 10, but I also hit some really important shots down the back nine, as well. I think I birdied 13 and 14 and 16 to give myself a nice cushion.

I think standing on 12 tee I had a decent-sized lead, and you would think parring in would be good enough, which it would have, but only by a shot. So it was nice for me to be able to build up that cushion.

But it's really hard to figure out what would be my best shot because I feel like I've hit a lot of really important shots, especially on Sunday, in the couple that I've won.

Q. You played with your mom on Sunday; when you think about how she's balanced career with family and all that, what do you admire the most about her and why?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Well, my mom is a really, really hard worker. I think I definitely learned a lot of my work ethic from watching her. She always put her best into her job and her best at being a mom, as well. She worked full-time while we were growing up. My dad stayed home and took care of all four of us.

It wasn't I would say an ideal situation for her. I think she would have rather have stayed home all day, stayed home and took care of us, and she definitely missed a little bit of that.

So now on the other side with her being retired, she gets to spend a lot of time with us and with her grandchildren. So it's really fun for her to be on this side of it now where the work is done and she can kind of relax and enjoy retirement and get to spend a lot of time with her kids and her grandkids.

I think she's really enjoying it.

Q. I'm fascinated with the way you attack golf courses. I'm curious if you've evolved at all at Augusta National in terms of just strategy and the way you attack it, or has that kind of stayed the same throughout?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: A lot of the golf course changes with the weather here. The last couple years we've had some really interesting weather days. I think of '22, we had some high wind days, and we had a really cold day that was windy and firm.

Then in '23 we had one or two days where we played through some pretty heavy rains, so softer golf course.

Then last year we had a good mix as well where we had some high winds, we also had some soft conditions and conditions that firmed up come Sunday.

A lot of the strategy for this place I think changes with the conditions of the course.

Q. Is that something you're planning that morning or as the round gets going?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I mean, it just really depends. I think a lot of it's pretty fluid around the way you play the course because, depending on the firmness of the greens, there's certain pins you can try to attack and there's certain pins you've got to steer clear of.

And then it also changes depending on the firmness of the greens. There's certain spots that are really good when it's soft, and there are certain spots that are a little bit harder when it's soft. There's certain spots when it's firm where you know you have to be, and then the reverse, as well.

Q. In that video, the Every Hole at Augusta National video, it seemed like the one consistent theme you kept hitting was the importance of finding fairways and being in position off the tee. But you also about, with the exception of maybe left side of 2, left side of 8, if you get out of position, if you miss a fairway, you can scramble and get back into play. Just wondering if you could explain the mechanics of the suite of options you have when you find the fairway and you have the ability to maybe go at a pin versus you're punching out, you have to maybe spin control with a wedge, things like that.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Anytime you're missing a fairway out here, like you said, you're going to be scrambling to make par. I guess just like a lot of golf courses, I think hitting the fairway is always important. It's important to get off to a good start on the hole.

Like you said, when you're in the fairway, there's some things that can open up for you. And when you miss a fairway, especially at a golf course like this, you're going to be behind some trees, you're going to be in a spot that is not as advantageous as being in the middle of the fairway.

I think that's one of the things that's great about this golf course is I love the trees, and when you hit the ball out of play, I think you're punished according to your miss. If you hit it really far into the trees, you're going to have to hit it through more trees to get it back in the fairway.

I think this golf course also does a really good job of graduating it to where when you're barely off the fairway, in most cases you should have some sort of shot to get up around the green. But as you start getting further and further into the trees, it gets harder and harder to get the ball up by the green.

So I think directionally off the tee here, the further you hit it off line, the more you're punished. And granted, a lot of the fairways are pretty generous, but if you're not in them, you're going to be in trouble.

Q. When you played and won here last year, you weren't yet a father. That changed shortly afterwards, of course. How would you say you have changed in the year since, and how has that changed your approach to the game?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Well, I think definitely a good bit of perspective. Looking at this year, I haven't had the starts that I would have hoped to start the year. I've had some good starts, but I haven't had any really great ones yet.

When you get home at the end of the day, Bennett is still going to do pretty much the exact same thing he always does when I get home. My work is definitely not going to affect him and definitely going to give a bit of perspective. It also has given me a much greater appreciation for my parents knowing what they did for us for years.

When you look at myself, I'm 28 years old, you can't imagine that I was once this big. And I think gaining that perspective, I think, gives you a greater appreciation for your parents for sure.

Q. Curious how you're feeling this week. You sound kind of stopped up.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, this rain and pollen out here. I get out of my car in the morning, my eyes start watering. It's a little bit worse than normal years. But I feel good.

Q. Are you feeling 100 percent?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I'm feeling good, ready to roll. Sniffles aren't going to stop me.

Q. Your scrambling stats have been terrific. Last year you were short of the green on 1, you were over the green on 2, you were in the front bunker left on 3, and you were very efficient. Can your tidiness and your scrambling, by not losing momentum, can you feel a sense of gaining momentum?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I would say for sure. When you look at the start to the tournament last year, if I don't get those two balls up-and-down on 1 and 2, I'm 2-over through 2, starting with a one-shot lead, and suddenly that lead is now gone.

I think you can definitely gain a little bit of momentum from getting those balls up-and-down. It doesn't necessarily feel like you're stealing a full shot, but you get up-and-down on 1, you're stealing maybe three tenths of a shot; then you get up-and-down on 2, you're stealing another maybe half shot from back there; and get up-and-down on 3, saving another quarter to half a shot. All of a sudden you're like I'm doing some good stuff out here and saving some shots.

It's not like I was missing close birdie looks and feeling like -- I think there's a difference between if you hit it to six feet on the first hole and miss it and hit it to six feet on the second hole, you feel like you're playing behind a little bit or losing some shots, but then all of a sudden you get up-and-down twice. It's the same score, but I think sometimes it can definitely feel a little bit different.

Q. I see that Nike has scripted outfits for Bennett this week. Curious about what that's looking like. Subsequently, who's in charge of the merch runs for Bennett? Is that you or Meredith? And did you get some selects there? Is he like a 12 to 18 right about now?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, he's probably about a 12 to 18. Meredith is definitely in charge of any and all merch runs for sure. I don't quite qualify for those.

But yeah, Nike has been a supporter of mine for a long time, and they've been a great partner for me over the years.

And they've kind of enjoyed having little Bennett around, and we'll send them some photos of him wearing some Nike gear every now and then. And so they were pretty excited to have some stuff for his first Masters this year, and it's pretty fun.

Q. When you look at your run of play the last few years with the multiple wins, the two Masters and whatnot, where does your staying power at the top and sustaining your form fall in terms of what you're most proud of in this run here?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I mean, I really don't focus a lot of that stuff. I focus a lot on the preparation and getting ready to play in tournaments, and then I try to, while I'm playing, have a good attitude and approach the shots the right way. And that's what I define success as.

When I think about getting ready for this week, when I step on the first tee on Thursday, I'm going to remind myself that I've done what I needed to do to play well, and it's all about going out and competing now.

I really try not to look too much into the past. I try not to look too far into the future. I just like to stay in the present and just go one week at a time.

Q. How do you approach this week from a mental perspective and kind of managing that pressure knowing that you're the defending champion?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I mean, at the end of the day, when I tee it up on Thursday, I start the tournament even par just like everybody else. Last year doesn't have a lot to do with this year, outside of I can go back on some of the experience that I've had playing well on this golf course and reflect on that.

Let's say I get off to a bad start on Thursday, and I can use some stuff that I've done here the past few years as confidence to kind of turn things around. But at the end of the day, when I step on there on Thursday, we're at even par, and it's a totally new golf tournament. Last year means nothing.

Q. I wanted to go back to the Champions Dinner. I know a lot of us would love to be a fly on the wall during one of those. Just want to talk to you about when you enter that room, what's it like when you look around, you're seeing all this greatness, and obviously including yourself now. Does it ever seem surreal?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I think it always seems surreal. The Dinner is a very special night for all of us. It's a really cool club to be a part of, and it's fun to come here and celebrate being back at Augusta National.

And getting to wear your green jacket I think is always really fun, and enjoying some good food with some good friends, as well. I'll definitely looking forward to tonight. And, yeah, I think surreal would be a pretty good description of how it feels sometimes.

Q. A couple years ago, actually a few years ago, we were in here and we were talking about your old truck and stuff like that. Since then you've become No. 1 in the world, won two Masters and accomplished an awful lot. I wonder how much more complicated your life has become, and has it affected you at all?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I mean, complicated? I wouldn't really say so. I think I try to live a fairly simple life at home. I think on the road things have changed significantly than where they were three, four years ago when I first came out on Tour. I used to be able to come out and essentially do whatever I wanted whenever I wanted because I had a bunch of time throughout the day where I could do things, and I never really got worn out because I didn't have any obligations other than showing up and playing golf.

I could practice for as long as I wanted to, I could waste time and do things a bit differently. Now being on this side of it where I have more stuff that I need to do throughout a tournament week and I have a family that I'd like to get home to at a reasonable time, I try to be much more efficient now with my time. And I would say that's the thing that has changed the most, is trying to be more efficient with my time out here on the road.

But as far as things at home, nothing has really changed for us. We still kinda do the exact same things we used to.

Q. Obviously a little bit of a slow start this year because of the injury, but would you say your game is where you'd like it to be at this point in time, given that you had to overcome that?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah. I mean, I would say that I feel very prepared for this golf tournament. This is definitely the most prepared that I've felt all year. I talked a lot about my preparation and stepping up on the tee at Pebble feeling like I wasn't exactly where I was when I ended the year just because I had taken so much time off. That was a different feeling because coming into the off-season I think you're always really excited to get out and play and kind of -- not test out the things you worked on but almost show them off a little bit, as in these are the things I've been working on and hopefully improving and you're excited to go out and kind of test them out.

This year coming off an injury was definitely a different feeling than I've had in the last few years. But as far as preparedness goes, this is definitely as prepared as I've felt going into any event this year, and I'm excited to get the tournament going.

Q. Was there any impatience that you had to fight in those early events coming back, recognizing that, yeah, I might need a little more time to get where I want to be?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I think playing golf tournaments is always -- playing the game of golf I think has always tested your patience. I think we all have high expectations of ourselves, and you put a lot of work into trying to come out here and play good golf. I think it's a test of your patience every time you don't hit a shot the way that you feel you should have. I think golf is always a good test of patience.

Q. When you're assessing the run-up to this event, what's the balance for you between finding results, be it score or tournament results, versus deriving a comfort level with your game and how it feels?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Comparing score --

Q. Qualitative versus quantitative. Can you feel good about your game if you don't have the results, or do you feel you need to have the results in order to feel that level of preparation that you feel?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, that's a good question. I think golf is a funny game sometimes, and I lean more on my feel than the results a lot of the time. I think sometimes you can feel when you're really close and you can feel when you're pretty far off, and a lot of times it doesn't exactly align with the scores.

At a tournament for me, I'll look at the Houston Open last week or two weeks ago, I had shot -- on Friday I shot 62, and it felt like quite literally the lowest score I could have possibly shot that day, and getting off the golf course, I was like, man, I need to go hit some balls because I did not hit it very good today. Swing felt off, didn't really feel good.

Then the next day I go out and I think I shot 1-under, lost some shots to Min Woo, he had a great day, and going into the next round being four or five back after losing the lead, and I felt way better about my game walking off the golf course on Friday than I did on Saturday.

Golf can be funny like that, and so I try to trust my feel more than I do just the results. I think the results can be skewed a bit sometimes.

I definitely lean more towards the feel side of it.

Q. Between you and Jordan and Will Zalatoris and Bryson, guys who play out of Dallas have been pretty prominent on the leaderboard the past decade. Do you have any theory on why that would be? And also, is it ever a topic of conversation, the Masters, when you guys play at, say, Maridoe?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I wouldn't say the Masters comes up too much in our general conversation. I think a lot of times when we go out and play -- Jordan and I especially, we're both pretty competitive guys. Not only do we have like a wolf game or something like that going in the group, but each of us probably have individual matches with everybody

in the group, as well, just because we love to compete. That's really fun for us at home.

The conversation doesn't get too far outside of a little bit of smack talk and just cutting up with the guys.

As far as a theory on why we play well, why Texans have had some success here at the Masters, I think growing up in Texas we play in a lot of different conditions and you learn from a young age to hit a lot of different types of shots because just we play in so many different types of weather and winds and stuff like that. I just think from a young age we're challenged at home a lot just by the conditions, and I think it's paid off at a tournament like this where the conditions can change significantly from year to year.

Q. Rory McIlroy has spoken this season about studying your success and trying to learn from it. He said he would like to limit his mistakes, play smart, be more like Scottie Scheffler basically. Going the other way, is there anything you've learned from Rory's game or you'd like from Rory's game, and do you think --

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I'm just trying to hit it 350 down the middle. (Laughter.)

I think when you look at a lot of the players out here on Tour, I think there's a lot we can learn from each other. Like Rory, I feel like has always been someone who's played really freely. All the times I've played with him, he swings it really hard off the tee, and I feel like he does a really good job of playing free and playing loose at times.

I think there's a lot that I can learn from a lot of the guys out here. That was one of the things that impressed me the most and inspired me a bit when I first came out is I felt like there was so much I could learn by watching people do things.

Even though somebody may be ranked the best and doing this sort of certain thing, let's say I'm the best iron player and Rory is the best driver, in golf I feel like there's always somebody that's a little bit better at doing something than you are that you can learn from.

It's easy to notice that. It's very hard to enact that, if that makes sense. Rory, I always like how he plays freely. It's real easy for me to notice that. It's a lot harder to go out there and say, hey, I'm going to play freely, then actually do it. I think in golf a lot of times it's easier said than done.

So when you look at the historically great players like guys like that have won major championships, guys like the Rory McIlroys and Tiger Woods and Phil Mickelsons and all those guys, they were really good at noticing things they could improve at and actually being able to do it is really the thing that they were best at.

Q. Given the form Rory is in this season, do you see him as your biggest rival here this week?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I mean, golf is such a funny game, and I think on any given week there's anybody that earns their way into a tournament has a good chance to win, and I think that the talent pool that we have in the game of golf is so deep right now that when you step on to the first tee it's even par, and I feel like it's anybody's tournament. It's one of our jobs to go out there and take it.

Q. Talk about how you feel about the change on the golf course from last year to this year.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Changes to the golf course this year from last year? Well, there were a significant amount of trees lost on the golf course, but overall I think when you're hitting into the trees you're still going to be in a good amount of trouble. There's only a few trees that are gone that are really noticeable, ones that are in play. It's more looking in between the holes, I think you see a big difference in the amount of stuff you can see at this golf course, where before there were so many trees it was hard at times to see from hole to hole.

But overall the golf course is in great shape. The greens are really good. I think we're in store for another great tournament.

THE MODERATOR: Scottie, thank you for your time and best of luck this week.

