

LIV Golf Greenbrier

Friday, 16 August, 2024

White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, USA

The Old White

Smash GC

Brooks Koepka

Talor Gooch

Jason Kokrak

John Catlin

Press Conference



GREENBRIER 2024

JASON KOKRAK: Well, I don't know if golf is ever that easy, but it was an easy day to watch Gooch play well. John was playing well. I started making a few putts. Vibing with these guys. I've played a lot of golf with Talor. It was a fun round of golf, and thankfully we got it in.

Q. John, you're joining Smash for the first time this week. You were with the Crushers previously. You're such a clutch reserve. You're always up there shooting low scores. How does it feel to be part of Team Smash this week?

JOHN CATLIN: Yeah, it's awesome. It's nice to have another opportunity to play out here. I love playing out here. These guys have been really great all week, and it was nice to play with Jason and Talor and watch them keep making birdies. I felt like I was getting lapped early on so it was nice to finish strong, and hopefully carry that into tomorrow.

Q. I read something today that if you guys win this week, then you guys will clinch the third-place spot to get the bye going into the team championship in Dallas. Knowing that, how important is it for you to really pull through and not just win individually but for the team this week?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, it's always important. I don't think we're thinking about that. I think everybody up here is thinking, go play good and go win individually, and at the end of the day if all four of us have a chance to win, we should be pretty good.

It's not anything -- at least I'm not thinking about. Yeah, it would be nice to clinch that, but also we want to finish as high as we can. I don't know if it's possible to even finish 1. I doubt that. But just finish the year strong and on a high note.

Q. Talor, how important is it to get that bye for the first day of tournament play for Dallas week?

TALOR GOOCH: Yeah, I haven't played the first two years on that first day, so I don't want to start this year.

Q. Talor, you're coming up on the end of this year. You've been carrying the trophy of the individual

THE MODERATOR: It is very rare we bring an entire team back to flash after the round, but this team is currently leading at 20-under. We have Talor Gooch, who shot 7-under; Jason Kokrak, who also shot 7-under; Brooks Koepka, the captain, who shot 6-under; and John Catlin, who shockingly his score did not count even though he shot 4-under. That's how well everybody played today.

Welcome, guys, and congratulations on a great first round. Brooks, tell us about your day.

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, it was pretty solid. It's always nice to look up there and see everybody. I think John got off to a pretty good start, and then next thing I know, next leaderboard, I think J was 5-under. It's always nice. Then the next time I see Gooch at 7. It was always fun to look at the leaderboard because you never know what was going to happen.

Just glad we played well, played really solid, and just got to continue that.

Q. Talor, obviously you had incredible success last year. You haven't found that win yet. You're at the top of the leaderboard now. How does it feel getting some of that momentum back from last year?

TALOR GOOCH: Yeah, it's a long tournament. It's not won in a day. It's always good to have a day where golf is easy. Golf hasn't been as easy this year as it was last year, so hopefully we can have a couple more easy days coming up.

Q. Jason, great to see you up here. Tell us a little bit about your round, and was today an easy day for you?



championship. Can you just reflect on this past year and looking back at last year where things were and how you're feeling right now?

TALOR GOOCH: Yeah, like I said, last year golf was really easy. It's a game that is very humbling at times, and this year it's not been as easy, like I said. There's been some good moments, but my coach Boyd and I have talked about it, through the first three or four tournaments, I think I had spent more time on the range through the first three or four tournaments than I did all of last year. Last year it was in the slot, and this year it hasn't been as easy, but we've been able to grind it out, and hopefully we've caught on to something so we can finish off these last two tournaments before the team championship in a good way.

Q. Jason, I always say you're one of the most consistent players out here. You're always up there, but you haven't closed it out yet. What needs to change for you to take home that trophy on a Sunday?

JASON KOKRAK: Yeah, as Talor said, golf is a fickle game. It's hard to be consistent all the time. This year I kind of started off pretty -- I would say solid but not great, and then kind of just fell into a little bit of a slump. I think I found something nice in my golf swing the last week or two, so looking forward to continuing to play well this week and build on that and looking forward to finishing off the year strong.

Q. For Brooks, we have had two people tell us this week that they have named their babies after you. We met somebody yesterday and apparently there's somebody here, as well. How does that feel to have people literally naming their children after you?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, it's crazy. Over the last couple years I've heard it a lot. Obviously it's pretty cool that somebody would have a kid and think about naming it after me.

Yeah, it's wild. My dad named me after his best friend and then Brooks Robinson, so everybody has somebody that they, I guess, idolize, they love the name. It's cool, I love it. It's a unique name. I think it's awesome that a bunch of little kids are going to be running around named Brooks.

Q. Taylor and I talked about maybe starting the Brooks Baby Club where everybody that names their kids Brooks we can start a little community for them.

BROOKS KOEPKA: It was funny, I was actually talking to Taylor; I think a couple years ago, somehow I got a big group of people just started messaging me and there's a big group on Instagram where it's all these people named

Brooks and they all follow or they're all chatting, and it's quite interesting. I respond every once in a while. But it's quite funny.

Q. Which is the better name, Brooks or Blake?

BROOKS KOEPKA: It depends. It depends. They're both pretty good. I just haven't won Blake of the Year.

Q. How would you compare your season this year to last year because you still have a chance to finish inside the top 3 at the end of the season?

BROOKS KOEPKA: This year has not been great. This year has been actually very disappointing. I haven't played anywhere what I want to play. Played absolutely horrible in all the majors and only won once out here, so that's not anywhere where I want it. Yeah, it's been disappointing.

Q. What are you trying to do at the end of this season? Are you working on certain things? Is there something that you want to achieve before the end of Dallas?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I'm not trying to achieve anything. Just go out every day, just keep working. I put in the hours I feel like and do all the right things. Sometimes it pans out, sometimes it doesn't. Like these guys said, it's a crazy game, and it can frustrate you, and you can be on the highs of highs and the lows of lows pretty quickly. Just keep going, plugging along. I haven't made the putts this year. I feel like I've hit good putts, just haven't made them. So that's been usually the difference.

Q. Talor, I don't think you missed a green today. How would you rate your ball-striking?

TALOR GOOCH: Yeah, it was really good. Like I said, today the game was easy. These are the types of days you wish you could have more of. Hopefully we can have another couple easy days this weekend.

Q. What are you hoping to achieve? Is there something you're working on these last few tournaments?

TALOR GOOCH: Kind of like Brooks said, it's been a bit of a disappointing year, but you're just trying to get better. You're trying to capture the good golf and make it last as long as possible. We haven't been able to capture much good golf this year, but that's why you've got to put the work in and just know that it's going to pay off. You don't know when it's going to, but you've just got to have faith that you do the right things, you put the time in each day and know that good things are going to happen.

Q. For you three guys that played together, was there one funny moment out there? Did you guys have any big chuckles out there during the 18 holes today?

JASON KOKRAK: Not really but I felt like every hole we each said "good shot" to each other, whether it was to John, whether it was to Talor, we all hit good shots on -- I would say 15 of the holes we were within I'd say 15 feet. We all played pretty solid. Talor did hoop one from the fairway, though.

Q. Talor and Brooks, you guys are both 10 and 11 on the standings, and you still have a shot to jump into that top 3. Is that anything you're thinking about as we come down these final regular season events or just kind of hoping for the best?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Not thinking about it, just trying to think about go play good golf. It's pretty simple. Everything takes care of itself.

Like I said, I don't think I really deserve it. I haven't played very good all year.

I don't expect so ever really do anything. It's just the results haven't been there. It's hard to expect to be in the top 3 when it's not been a very good year.

TALOR GOOCH: Yeah, kind of like he said. We know the quality of golf that's needed to finish in that top 3, and neither of us have shown that this year. It feels a long way off.

But a lot can happen in a couple weeks. He's obviously good enough to win each and every week. I think I can win each and every week. Maybe we can capture something here at the end and back-door something. That would be a nice way to end the year.

Q. Jason and John, I saw you guys play a practice round earlier this week. Did that help you feel a little bit more comfortable out there, especially you, John, with being new to the team?

JOHN CATLIN: Yeah, yeah, I found it really helpful. This is my first time playing this course, and Jason has played here quite a bit. He gave me some helpful tips on some of the holes. We both play a draw, so we both kind of see the course similarly. So yeah, I found it very, very helpful and appreciate everything he was willing to share.

JASON KOKRAK: Yeah, I enjoy playing a practice round with any of these guys on our team. It was nice to have John out there. Obviously play both a draw, see the golf

course a very similar way. Just a couple tips that I've picked up over the years playing this place.

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