

LIV Golf Miami

Wednesday, 3 April, 2024

Miami, Florida, USA

Trump National Doral

Joaquin Niemann

Bryson Dechambeau

Brooks Koepka

Press Conference

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Look, it's a great test of golf. You have to be on your game pretty much every hole out here, and it's kind of a good start, I would say to get us in the major mindset, just with how difficult the test is, and for me that's the way I'm going to look at it this week and obviously try to do my best this week to win.

But you know, eyes are set pretty hard on next week as well, and just trying to maximize the time out here and try to do the best I can here but also prepare for next week.

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I think it's the first big boy golf course we've played this year. You know, you've got to be able to ball strike it out here on and this golf course doesn't really let you. If you miss your target by four or five yards out here, you can make bogey out here very quickly, double. It's a tough golf course, and you've got to be able to ball-strike it here and ball-strike it at Augusta, and I think that's why it's such good prepare.

JOAQUÍN NIEMANN: Yeah, like they say, it's one of the first courses we play that you've got to hit it good from everywhere in your game. You have to hit it long and you have to hit it straight, and yeah, I think it's going to be a good preparation for me as well.

It's a good place, this course, to get committed to your game and get preparation for what is coming next week, which I'm really looking forward to.

THE MODERATOR: We have 13 players participating next week. Last year, first place, second place, third place and fourth place, Jon Rahm, Brooks Koepka, Phil Mickelson, Patrick Reed, all LIV Golf players. What do you guys think the chances are of a LIV player taking home the green jacket next week?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I mean, I feel like, I don't know, obviously chances are pretty good. There's a lot of good



MIAMI 2024

players. I don't know how many guys are in the field. Usually about 90, right? Usually about 90. So you know, probably got, what, 15 percent -- you're better at math and numbers.

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Something like that. It's 15 to 20.

BROOKS KOEPKA: When you start breaking all the numbers down, no amateurs, no first-time winner, I don't know, probably goes to what, 70.

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: And people are nervous, you cut a couple out because of that, and not playing well, all that.

BROOKS KOEPKA: I can give that whole speech again but I'll save everybody the five minutes.

Yeah, I like the chances. A lot of guys playing well. Joaco playing well this year and I watch Bryson last year, and I believe, what was it, Singapore, Thailand, we played together and I started to watch what's come for the last, I don't know, eight months, I guess about eight months now. Kind of watched that progress go, so that's been cool. I can see him starting around the corner. And then, I don't know, started playing good till March. This is kind of my time.

Q. You are on a hot streak heading into Augusta. How confident are you feeling next week?

JOAQUÍN NIEMANN: It's been a good start of the year. Obviously it's different type of golf courses we are going to, the majors. Augusta, I think it's a golf course that I've been enjoying the last couple years. I haven't had a really good result yet but I'm looking forward for it.

If I keep playing the way I'm playing, I know I'm going to have a good chance to win. I'm going to be excited to get there, play good golf, and obviously these guys, also they won a few already. It's nice to be around them and to play against them. It's pretty good for me.

Q. How do you all like the team format? How is that working out? From the younger generation, they love it.



BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Our team has obviously done pretty well this year and last year. From the team aspect, I just think it's awesome how we can get together, come together and when people are struggling, when teammates are struggling, you can lift them up, pick them up. That was a big thing last year. I was struggling pretty badly and Paul, Charles and Vaughn, were like, dude, let's figure this out. Let's go. They even came to the driving range and helped me figure out my golf swing and whatnot.

It's cool to have that aspect and feels very much like college golf and that's what I like most about, it just being around a group of guys that you enjoy and can have a good time with on and off the golf course.

Man, there's too many times that I've been out here already where I'm like, I can't see this any other way. This is just the coolest thing that I've ever experienced in professional golf. Just for this long duration that we've been a part of it.

Obviously the Ryder Cup stands alone in its own right. Majors stand alone in its own right. But I would say the golf out here is a lot of fun and just a different, fresh, new perspective on the professional game of golf, and that's why I love it.

Q. How much did your performance at Augusta last year validate in your mind that you were back and allowed you to do what you did at the PGA and also for you? And Bryson, Rory yesterday said he didn't think golf could be sustainable in its current form. How much do you think that the sides need to come together?

BROOKS KOEPKA: As far as what Rory said, I don't know, I don't -- it's tough to tell the future. I have no control over anything. I'm just kind of, just keep going wherever they tell me to go.

Same with the PGA TOUR guys. I just don't think anybody knows the future. Nobody knows on this side. Nobody knows on that side. It's up to people that are more important than me and more important than a bunch of the players to decide.

We'll let them figure it out and go from there.

And when was the first part? I mean, I already knew that. I think it was more, I mean, I kept telling everybody, but nobody believed me. I think it was more validation for everybody else.

Q. Have you been back to Augusta since last year, and

do you feel like between 2019 and last year that it's kind of only a matter of time for you to take that one off?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I always thought I was going to win. Like I said I said, I can run down those numbers. Statistically, it's your best chance to win a major. But no, I haven't been back.

Q. Just to follow up on a question for Bryson and Joaquín, how important, whether you know what's going on or not between the sides talking, how important is it for golf that something is resolved, and is the best result of that for you guys to come together or do you think LIV will be just as well standing on its own?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Well there's multiple ways that you can solve this problem. I think that from a player's perspective, it needs to come back together for the fans, No. 1.

The fans are what drive this sport. If we don't have fans, we don't have golf. We are not up here entertaining. That's the most important thing as of right now, the low-hanging fruit. There's got to be a way to come together. How that comes together, that's above all of us out here.

We can give input. We can have little moments where we say, hey, we think this would be a good idea or that would be a good idea, but ultimately, it's up to the guys up top to figure it out and figure it out quickly because we can't keep going this direction. It's not sustainable for sure, and we all respect that and recognize that and want the best for the game of golf. We all love this game and we want to keep playing it and we want to keep competing.

The only answer is for us to somehow come together in some sort of terms where it makes sense and for us to be playing all again in somewhat of the same boat. It's great to have the majors where we come together, but we want to be competing, at least I want to be competing every week, with all of the best players in the world for sure.

JOAQUÍN NIEMANN: I'm the same way. I feel like right now, the game of golf is kind of divided a little bit and I feel like that you've got to do it for the fans and for everybody getting more entertainment. I feel like, yeah, they have got to, it's not between us. I mean, I feel like the players, we are just here and we need to make birdies to make everything better. It's up to other people to come into an agreement and know what is going to be the best for the game and have all of those guys working into the same direction and not thinking against each other.

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: And it needs to happen fast. It's not a two-year thing. Like it needs to happen quicker rather than later just for the good of the sport. Too many people are losing interest.

Q. Looking back to last year, how strange was that whole setting for you Saturday, Sunday, and having, I think it was a four-shot lead, ending Saturday on hole 7 or something, and then the weather on Sunday, having to play all those extra holes. What was your -- when you look back at that, what's your take way from that day, from Sunday, especially?

BROOKS KOEPKA: That's what happens when you play an outdoor sport. Like it's part of golf. It's not the first time it's happened. Not going to be the last time. I don't think it's anything different. I mean, I had a seven shot lead at Bethpage. So it's not something that's uncomfortable, playing with a lead.

Yeah, we had to play a few extra holes but I think everybody doesn't mind playing a few extra holes at Augusta on Sunday.

Q. Are there specific shots or holes out here that will be reminiscent of what you'll face next week?

BROOKS KOEPKA: That's too much thinking for me.

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Yeah.

BROOKS KOEPKA: I've already done my prep, man. Just trying to figure out and make any last-second tweaks I can.

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: I'd second that. Every hole is demanding out here. Whether it's going to relate to next week, great. If it doesn't, so be it. We are still playing golf on a golf course, there's grass, a hole, wind, same stuff. We just have to execute the shots under the pretty sure.

JOAQUÍN NIEMANN: I feel like you've got to hit the shot and here, this course is asking you to be a hundred percent committed to every shot, and hit that shot. So I think looking at it that way, I feel like it's a good preparation into next week.

Q. Obviously we've got this regular season where it's a three-stroke round event, instead of match play and stroke play the final day. How does that change the dynamic this week?

JOAQUÍN NIEMANN: I mean, it's a tough course. You're going to see some high scores and whoever is playing good is going to definitely take advantage. I feel like last

year, being match play, especially out here, there's holes that are tough, and last year you could win holes with bogey.

Here, it's going to count every shot that you've got to be in play, and I think you've got to be probably a little more smarter on the golf course.

Q. You joked, too much thinking about next week, but how often, I'm just curious, does your mind go there when it's the tournament the week before the Masters, how you have to line your game up at this moment one week before the first major?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: You want to make sure that -- you want to make sure that you're focused and ready for the next week, obviously. It's a major. Still want to win this week.

To be honest, as much as I'd like to try and elevate it, I try to, you know, control those emotions and whatnot. Realize and respect what the Masters is but focus on each and every day what you're doing to be the best you possibly can that day and hopefully it accumulates to playing really good golf over the next couple weeks. That's just the mindset I have of that.

BROOKS KOEPKA: I've already done our stuff since December, and then it just amplifies. Usually March 1st is kind of my go for Augusta, and then I crank things up. This whole week is just to see what I've done the past two, three weeks, whatever, how many weeks we've had off and see where everything is at. Make sure you're not so focused on the results, just on the process of doing what I wanted to do out there and making sure that certain things are fine and just kind of checking things off. That's all it is. It's not a result thing.

Q. Mostly for Bryson, I wanted to shift gears a little bit to your YouTube channel. Obviously you kind of get a lot of enjoyment out of it. Seems like you're able to really flex creative muscle. Do you want to talk about that a little and how much of that you sort of shared with some of your fellow players as well?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Yeah, I think LIV has afforded me that opportunity to expand outside my Scottish Open, just with the three-day events, compared to, you know, four days, and then we have 14 events compared to us playing a lot more out on the other side. So it's allowed me the opportunity to grow the YouTube side of the coin.

Personally for me, my whole reason in doing so is growing the game from 100 million golfers currently as it is today, chose to that, to 150 in the next decade, and I want to help

be a little bit of a part of that.

I think YouTube is the next generation, where every kid is watching their entertainment and certainly Mr. Beast has shown that there's a huge following and base over there, and just capture a little bit of that and bring them over to the game of golf is something I want to do. Shows a bit of the creative side that I have, too. I'm super analytical and love understanding numbers but it's also fun to create and create an entertaining product for kids to watch and hopefully get inspired by and hopefully want to go play golf from it. That's one of the reasons why I have the YouTube channel and will continue to grow that, and if everybody wants to like and subscribe and follow that, too.

In all honesty I think it's a great platform to help grow the game of golf.

Q. What did it mean to you to get that invitation, and what does that say about somebody who went out to earn that invitation from the Masters and played -- went around the world playing, it was your -- it was your goal when you achieved that?

JOAQUÍN NIEMANN: Yeah, obviously it was frustrating at the start not being into the majors. Because of World Ranking, I'm not a past champion before I joined LIV, so the only way to get into the majors was World Ranking. We didn't have any of that here.

So I have to give myself a chance at the end of the year to be inside the Top-50 and that's why I went to Australia and kind of had that challenge of feeling that extra pressure of doing -- needed to do something, and I feel like that pressure, I like it, and playing golf with that kind of motivates me a lot to play better.

Also, I didn't play my best game during the season last year and I ended up playing good golf. I wanted to go there and kind of see more results. The way I was playing, I knew I was going to give myself a chance. That's why I went there and played in Australia. It was pretty cool to see the Masters gave me an invite. Because I was trying hard but at the end of the day, I was -- I know I should be inside the majors and I feel like it was kind of the results that you need to do that.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports