

LIV Golf Chicago

Friday, 13 September, 2024

Chicago, Illinois, USA

Bolingbrook Golf Club

Smash GC

Brooks Koepka

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Let's welcome our clubhouse leader, the captain of Smash GC, Brooks Koepka. You shot an incredible 62, 8-under today, bogey-free round. Tell us about your day.

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, it was interesting. I didn't think I hit it that good the first seven holes. I don't know how many fairways -- the stats probably weren't good, but they were on the correct side of the hole, which helped.

Putted really good. Felt like I was finally making some putts with the correct speed, and it was the best putting day I've had in a long time.

Q. Why do you think it was so easy for you and so challenging for everyone else out there?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I don't know, a good player gets hot and they can shoot 62 pretty easy. There's a bunch of guys out here that can do that. When it's your day, it's your day.

Q. I don't know if you were aware, you have won the penultimate event of every LIV season, so Jeddah, Jeddah, and now you're on track to win here, as well. What is it about the end of the season kind of final push?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I have no idea. I have no idea. Yeah, Jeddah has treated me pretty good. No idea why. If I knew, I'd be doing it in the middle of the season from the first week in April on.

Q. We've been talking this week, there's so much at stake for a lot of players out here this week, a lot of players with a chance to get in the lock zone and get their contracts secured for next year, some players in the drop zone losing their place out here. Have you noticed a different vibe amongst your fellow players this week, and do you feel the intensity?

BROOKS KOEPKA: To be honest, I'm sure if I actually



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paid attention when I was around everybody in the dining hall or whatever, I'm sure I would notice it, but I just kind of get in my own world and I don't really -- I go do my thing.

But yeah, I remember noticing it for the past two years. You can kind of tell. It's more like after the fact; a guy goes and plays bad today and they needed a good round, you notice it more. But I haven't been in there yet, so I'm sure I'll see it in a bit.

Q. A four-shot lead, do you think that's substantial enough to hang on to? How is this course playing? Do you think it's conceivable somebody could catch up?

BROOKS KOEPKA: It just all depends on the wind. I think the pin locations if they're difficult enough, if you hit it on the wrong side -- well, I didn't hit many fairways, but if you put it in the wrong side of the rough, you can't control the golf ball. You've just got to understand where to put it, where to miss it, and I think sometimes you can miss it maybe a yard off these greens and have a terrible lie, and then you miss it 10, 15 yards off the fairway or the green and you've got an easier shot.

It all kind of depends.

Q. Obviously you've been in great form the back half the season. I know we briefly talked about it, but obviously you're playing really well. Is there anything you can attribute it to?

BROOKS KOEPKA: No, nothing. Just playing good, I guess. You go on runs, and unfortunately mine is come at the end when we're not playing much golf.

Q. Last year when you won, you slipped into third place in the season-long standings and you seemed like you were a little surprised. You weren't really sure where you were. Do you know where you're at going into this week, and are you more aware of where you're placed in the standings and what you need to do?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, last year I had no idea. I didn't even pay attention. I was just trying to go play a good round of golf and finish it off. It had been a tough year. This year, yeah, I definitely knew where I was. I knew I



basically had to win to even have a chance, so that's what I've got to go do.

Q. If you win a third time for this season and you get to third place, does that alter or adjust how you perceive the season as a whole? I know you weren't happy with the majors this year, but will you look at the season differently if you finish in third place and win again?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Not really. I think you've got to look at it as a whole. I mean, I'd have to sit here on Sunday and say that I'd have a chance to win. But yeah, I've only had two chances out here, which hasn't been -- it's not what I expect of myself. Yeah, you can look at it, it's great to win, but you want to be consistent, as well, and that's where I think I've lacked.

The majors were terrible. I put a lot of emphasis on those, and just making the cut in those wasn't -- that's how I judge my year. That's how everybody judges their year, I believe.

Q. Jon called this course "a little tricky." Would you consider it tricky, and does it remind you of any course that you've had success on previously?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I don't know if it reminds me of any course that we've played. You come up here and there's so many good golf courses in Chicago that I think people have kind of forgotten about. There's a ton of the best courses you could possibly play that are up here.

But yeah, I don't know what -- I actually didn't even see the back nine, so that was my first time seeing the back nine today. More just leaning on Rick trying to figure out what's going on with this place and figure out -- sometimes it can kind of help and you don't know where certain slopes are and kind of works to your advantage.

Q. You mentioned the putter was working pretty well for you today and I know that's kind of been something you've been struggling with for the year. Do you regret any of those switches now that you're back with your old faithful? How are you reflecting on that?

BROOKS KOEPKA: No, I think it was a good thing. I think I've learned that I never need to go away from that putter. That was a good thing.

But yeah, I just got too mechanical. I was talking with Jeff Pierce, my putting coach, and I felt like I was hitting so many lips and it was just aggravating me. But we talked about it, and it's very difficult to hit lips. You're obviously hitting good putts, sometimes they just might not go in.

We would go over rounds, and a lot of it was just because of speed. They were dying in front of the hole, catching the low side, not aggressive enough, and I think that's something we've gone back to basics, not really worrying about if the face is so many degrees open or it's rotating so many degrees through; it's more of just get up and react and go hit it.

I think that's something everybody can do. When it's not going well, just go back to basics and kind of regroup from there.

Q. You seem to have a pretty good time out there with the Pardon My Take guys. Do you think that contributes to being loose and playing well today?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I mean, I spent Tuesday and Thursday with them. I've got quite a bit of time with them over the last couple days. It's been fun. I always enjoy being around Big Cat, PFT and Hank, and going to see their offices was pretty cool. I've been to the one in New York, so to go to the one here in Chicago was cool. They always keep it light, keep it fun. That's what I want to do when I'm not playing tournament golf.

Q. How hard was it to keep it on the fairways and hit greens today? It looked like they were as hard as this table at time.

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I didn't hit many fairways so I don't really have an answer for that one. I think the greens, it was very difficult. I think from what Ricky told me they've firmed up a lot since Tuesday. I thought it was interesting. Some of them were quite soft, and then I think we got to the par-3, I don't know what it was, 12, 13 on the back, and that green seemed to be very firm, and then from then on in they seemed to be really firm. I don't know if that was from the wind drying them out. Yesterday was warm, as well.

It's definitely drying up, which is nice. I like it when golf courses get a little firm and fiery.

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