

PGA Championship

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Rochester, New York, USA

Oak Hill Country Club

Brooks Koepka

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Two-time PGA Champion Brooks Koepka is joining us now at the 105th PGA Championship. Brooks, welcome to Oak Hill and your 11th PGA Championship. You obviously played very well at the Masters. How do you feel about your game coming into the second major of the year?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Feel good. Game is in good shape, feel healthy. It's been nice to just play some good golf, so looking forward to a good week. Good golf course, so it will be a good test.

Q. In 2019 before Bethpage you shared with us your own kind of algorithm to handicap a major championship field, and you reduced it down to about 12 guys that you needed to beat. When you're right, is that still the same thing?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I still think it is, yeah. I still think there's a lot of good players, and they should think the exact same thing. You should have a lot of confidence.

When you look at the major leaderboards over the last, I don't know, maybe five, six years, I mean, it's pretty repetitive on the guys who are at the top. So I think it's still the same.

Q. Brooks, I was actually the one that asked you that question, so I'll go with something different. Do you feel that a course like Oak Hill, the toughness of it sets up that game plan for you? Do you feel you're flying a little under the radar this week? I bet you like that.

BROOKS KOEPKA: I don't know about flying under the radar. I haven't really paid much attention. I've been pretty busy this week.

I like the golf course. I think it's good. I like the older style golf courses. I think it's very, very tough with the rough. It's kind of a mixture of a PGA and U.S. Open, I think.

You miss greens out here, you're going to make a lot of bogeys. You miss fairways, you're going to be making

quite a few bogeys if you're out of position. You have to hit fairways. The golf course can be tough, especially if this wind blows.

Q. Obviously you played so well the week of the Masters, but didn't have the Sunday that you wanted. In the days and weeks after that, how did you process that, and how do you think back on that week?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I just -- I reflected all Sunday night. I didn't sleep Sunday night just trying to figure out what exactly it was. Thought about it for a few days after and really honed in on what I was doing and what went wrong.

From there just never let it happen again. That's the whole goal, right? You're not trying to dwell on it. Yeah, it sucks to finish second, but at the same time, as long as you learn from it, you'll be fine. I think I've finished fourth in, what, four or five majors now. Just trying to learn from each one of them.

Q. Is there any part of what you learned that you would like to share with us?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Not really, no. I'll be honest. Yeah, I keep that to myself.

Q. In the Barstool podcast, you referred to that as "choking" at the Masters. I'm just wondering, are you being hard on yourself, or can you explain what you mean by that? What happened? If you felt like that was the word to describe it.

BROOKS KOEPKA: I'm just messing around with those boys. Those boys are quite fun. Part of my taste. I love those guys, Big Cat and PFT. They were thinking if I didn't say it, so you might as well get it out there right away first so they can't say anything.

Q. That's not really how you felt it went down?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Theoretically, yes, it is. It is choking, right? If you have a lead and cough it up, that's choking.

But at the same time, I'm not dwelling on it. I've been in



the lead, that position a couple of times and haven't capitalized. I can't do it every single time. I'm not perfect. As long as I can learn from it, I'll be better off from it.

Q. When is the baby due?

BROOKS KOEPKA: In a couple of months.

Q. Zach Johnson was in here, our U.S. Ryder Cup captain, and was talking specifically about you guys, the LIV guys. One of the questions was how he is going to figure out if he would pick you guys or not because it's going to be pretty hard, as you know, with points to get on the team in the top 6. The question is do you think about that? Are you interested in that? How concerned are you about trying to get on the team?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I mean, it would be awesome to represent the United States. Anytime we do it, it's always fun.

But I'm not focused on it. It's not, like, my first thought when I go play well this week. If I handle my business out here, everything will take care of itself.

If you win, go second, first, first, first, it would be kind of tough not to pick, right? If you go handle business, I feel like I should be fine. But it's not up to me. It's up to Zach and what goes on.

I just play my best and see what happens from there, but I would love to play for him.

Q. Just following on from that, Brooks, if you needed a pick, would you be confident of getting one?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Confident? Like I said, it's tough to be in Zach's mind or where he is at, but I would love to make it hard on him. I think that would be cool. The only thing I can do is go play good. If I play good, everything takes care of itself.

Q. Do you think there are factors in play here beyond what you do on the golf course? It's a different situation, right?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Like I said, it's not up to me. I'm not the one making the decisions. I can only go play golf.

Q. You're not on the PGA Tour anymore, so now you can talk openly about how bad the slow play is. How big a problem is it? How would you fix it?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I mean, yeah, it's never quick. I was

talking about it when I was on the PGA Tour too, so I'm not afraid to talk about it.

Q. You don't have to worry about getting fined anymore.

BROOKS KOEPKA: I never was fined for anything, so I'm all right.

Yeah, there's a lot of guys out here that take their time. I think it is a problem. Technically in the rule book it says you have 40 seconds to hit your shot. I think that's what it is. If you are taking over, technically you're breaking the rules, right? So, I don't know.

Q. How would you fix it?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Honestly, I would start stroking guys. If you are going to take that long, you have to get stroked. There are certain circumstances where the wind switches, something like that, it's understandable, but taking a while is I just think unnecessary.

Q. Just to follow up a little on that, do you think baseball and what they've done kind of shows the other sports, especially this sport, that, you know, if you do it right, it can be much -- make the sport much better?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I think so. That's why they've got the pitch clock, right? Technically I think you saw DP, they did a shot clock event. I think it was a couple of years ago, if I'm right. I can't remember if anybody got clocked for it, but it would be interesting to see.

I know if you follow guys around with a stopwatch this week, there will be plenty of guys that are over time and stuff like that, but I can't remember the last time anybody was stroked. I remember the little kid at Augusta. I don't know if anybody has been stroked since. That's kind of the most recent one I can think of.

There are some guys that probably definitely could be stroked.

Q. The players talk about patience to win a major. Rory said it's going to take discipline this week. What one word would you say?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I think discipline is pretty good. I mean, it's a grind. A major week is always tough.

It's always going to be a tough golf course. You've got to plot your way around, understand where to miss it, where not to miss it. It just comes down to discipline.



I feel like every time I've won, I've been super disciplined, where I hit it, the shots, not doing exactly maybe what -- I might want to hit driver off the tee, but it's not what the hole or pin location calls for. Just staying patient. I think that's a massive thing to win a major.

Q. Are there any holes that you see where there's risk/reward for your game?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I haven't played the back nine yet, so I haven't -- I haven't seen the changes since '13. But, I mean, I know there are some. I think, was the 14th drivable? I'll be interested to see the back nine today. I think I could probably answer that by the end of today.

Q. Do you feel your game is at the same level it was in '19 when you won at Bethpage and you were on that sort of major run there through those couple of years, or is there still something that's not quite back to that level?

BROOKS KOEPKA: No, I mean, I feel great. My body feels good. Swinging it the way I want to. Moving the way I want to.

Then from there it's just about game-planning and going out and executing. I feel like I've done a good job of that this offseason being able to kind of do everything I need to do in the gym to get my knee more flexible, stronger, and get it -- to be honest, my right knee is better than my left. We've tested it, so it's been kind of interesting.

Yeah, I feel 100%, so there's no reason why -- right? I'm 33 now, and I think, what, your prime in golf is from when you are about from 30 to 40. I haven't quite hit the middle of it. But I feel pretty good.

Q. What about from where you were a year ago at this time at Southern Hills? Was that a particularly difficult week for you physically or even just where your game was?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I think there's a lot of stuff that went into that. I was spending maybe five, six hours on just trying to get everything with my body the way I wanted it to. My knee was a lot worse, but it's fine now. So, you know, I can't look back, and I'm not looking back in the past. It is what it is. That happened, but I feel good now, so I'm just trying to focus on this week.

Q. Another thing that Zach mentioned was that he has approached all the possible team members with the idea of going to Rome two, two and a half weeks before the actual event. Wondered if you talked to him

about that, what your reaction would be, what you think it would do for the team?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Two and a half weeks. Wouldn't that be right before the U.S. Open?

Q. No, no. Before the actual -- before the Ryder Cup.

BROOKS KOEPKA: I don't think a lot of the guys have played that golf course, so that could be good going in there to go see it, see what you're into. I think it's pretty hilly from what I understand.

Look, anytime you see a golf course and you can kind of scout it early, I think you see it -- major championships, guys will come look at the place a little early if they can, scout it out, see what's going on so you don't have to do as much work and you can kind of focus on what you need to that week. I don't think it's a bad thing any time to go scout it out early.

Q. Just to clarify, has he taken your temperature on that? Has he spoken to you about...

BROOKS KOEPKA: I just saw Zach for the first time maybe 30 minutes ago. I was just talking to him for a little bit.

Q. Just curious, with everyone layered up today, what's the coldest round you ever remember playing?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Bay Hill 2018 maybe. It was brutal. Honestly it was -- I think even Henrik said it was the coldest he thinks he's ever been. I just remember I think I had, like, five layers on, six layers on trying to hit balls. Just making sure you don't thin it off the first.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for your time, Brooks.

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