

# PGA Championship

Sunday, May 21, 2023  
Rochester, New York, USA  
Oak Hill Country Club

## Brooks Koepka

### Quick Quotes

THE MODERATOR: All right. 2023 and three-time PGA Champion, Brooks Koepka joins us.

Brooks, first off, congratulations, and how does it feel to have your third Wannamaker Trophy?

BROOKS KOEPKA: It feels damned good. Yeah, this one is definitely special. I think this one is probably the most meaningful of them all with everything that's gone on, all the crazy stuff over the last few years.

But it feels good to be back and to get No. 5.

**Q. How much did that win in Orlando and now the runner-up position at the Masters set you up for this? Were those instrumental in the process, or is it when you're back, you're back?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: I don't know, I've been playing good for a while. I felt like I knew I was back kind of in January, just needed a little bit of some reps I think at the beginning of the year to get things going and feel a bit more comfortable.

But when I've been playing good, I feel like I've been in contention every week probably since Orlando. So I've just been playing good and very pleased with the way I'm playing and just need to continue it.

**Q. Only 19 guys have ever won five. You're 20 now. It means a lot more history. I know you at times have said, "I don't care about history, I just care about the next one." But I wonder perspective-wise, it's a pretty big deal that you're one of the great golfers of all time in a lot of ways. How does it feel to know that rare air that you're in?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, it's crazy. I try not to think of it right now. I mean, I do care about it. It's just tough to really grasp the situation kind of while you're still in it, I think.

I mean, probably when I'm retired and I can look back with



Jena and my son and kind of reflect on all that stuff, that will be truly special, but right now I'm trying to collect as many of these things as I can. We'll see how it goes.

**Q. You seemed so calm and in control out there today, even smiling down No. 12 fairway. What was your mental game plan? What was your mindset going into today's round?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: Just keep doing what I've been doing the last three days. Just be aggressive and just go make a bunch of birdies, and I knew you're going to make some mistakes today, but I made sure they were on the correct side of the hole.

Made some clutch putts coming down the back nine again, which I did yesterday, as well. So very, very pleased with the way the putter is rolling and just excited to win.

**Q. What is it about that back nine? I think you were 7-under for the last three rounds, and all the birdies on the back side today, what is it about the nine that makes you feel so comfortable?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: Well, the front nine is definitely a lot harder. That 6 tee shot -- or 6, 7, 8, 9 are definitely tough holes. Maybe not so much 8, but 6, 7, 9 are definitely tough holes.

You know, even 4 is a tough driving hole because you can put it through the fairway, and if you do put it in the left side, it's difficult. I definitely think there's more chances on the back.

**Q. Would you please share now what it was you learned after the Masters, and how did it contribute to the victory today?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I definitely wouldn't have, I don't think, won today if that didn't happen; right?

Definitely take it and keep using it going forward for each event, each major, any time I'm in contention, but I'm not going to share. I can't give away all the secrets.



**Q. Have you heard from Greg Norman yet?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: I called my wife, and that's it. That's the only person I'm really interested in talking to. I texted -- my boys are here, and I'm just hanging with them and talking to my wife, and I can feel my phone buzzing even as we're talking right now. Last I looked, I think there was 600 text messages. I'll go through them.

**Q. Without prying and trying to reveal, to follow up on that question, how big was it for you to use something that was -- that some might consider a failure, to turn it into a positive? How important was that for you in this?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: I've always learned more from the four times I finished second than, I guess, the five times I've won now.

I think failure is how you learn. You get better from it. You realize what mistakes you've made. Each time I've kind of made an adjustment. It's more mentality than it is anything. It's not really golf swing or anything like that. You're going to play how you play, but mentally you can kind of figure things out, and I'm always trying to get better. Just trying to find that different little edge just to poke and try inside my head.

Really, I think the big key is just being open and honest with yourself, and if you can do that, you'll be miles ahead of everybody else.

**Q. Bryson was talking about how this not validates the LIV Tour but was an important moment for your tour. Can you appreciate that with your victory here?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I definitely think it helps LIV, but I'm more interested in my own self right now, to be honest with you.

Yeah, it's a huge thing for LIV, but at the same time I'm out here competing as an individual at the PGA Championship. I'm just happy to take this home for the third time.

**Q. That was actually pretty much my question. Obviously the first-ever and will always be the first-ever representative from the LIV Tour to win a major. Is there any pride with that? Obviously you're playing individually, but is there any pride as a representative of the organization?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I think so. Look at it, I think I was the first guy to win two LIV events. To win a major is always a big deal no matter where you're playing.

All it does, I just think, I guess, validates it for myself. I guess maybe if anybody doubted it from Augusta or whatever, any doubts anybody on TV might have or whatever, I'm back, I'm here.

**Q. I guess Blake is officially running as a baby name now? Is that official?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I've caught to call PFT guys. I'll call Big Cat and PFT when I get a chance, maybe on the plane. It will be a little later, though.

**Q. Wonder what your celebration plans might look like tonight?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: Probably pretty chill tonight. Just want to get home. Get back home, chill. I would say tomorrow with the Panthers game, it will probably be a large tailgate. A large, long afternoon.

**Q. And Claude Harmon was talking earlier this week that during that final round of the Masters, you might have been letting a couple shots affect you a little bit too much more than they normally would. Is that kind of what was going on in your head?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: No, that wasn't what was going on. It was something completely different. It was something I took to the first tee.

I think, look, I learned from it. I'm very pleased with what I took from it, and I'm pleased with the honesty I was able to dive into. My best friend, actually, my brother's caddie, my best friend, I think we stayed up probably most of the night just chatting about it, and he kind of ripped into me pretty good about it, so made sure.

He was texting me all last night about it and making sure that I wouldn't fall in the same trap.

**Q. 16 was obviously a pretty pivotal moment in today's round. What was your perspective on what Viktor was going through? And you hit your shot maybe 10 seconds after he hit his. What was going through your mind in that moment?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: I couldn't see what was going on, but I had a pretty good idea. It was buried under the lip, which was unfortunate. Took a couple minutes to figure out the drop and just figure out what was going on.

I don't know, I'm a pretty fast player. We had probably, what -- probably took three minutes in total from the moment he, I guess, was preparing for the original shot in the bunker and the drop situation. We already knew the

yardage and knew everything going into it, and the wind stayed pretty much the same. We talked about it for a good minute.

**Q. When you hit it close, did you feel like, I've done it, this hole, this moment, I've made a huge momentum swing?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I thought so, for sure. Honestly it was a tougher put. It was so downhill, and it was kind of burnt out. I even told Rick before I hit it I was going to dive it and pick the high line. If it didn't hit the hole, it was definitely going three or four feet by.

I'm just happy that one went in. I think it was a little momentum boost. Gave me a little ease going into 17, 18.

**Q. I don't know how much you were able to follow what was going on with Michael Block today, the hole-in-one, this whole weekend. Just to share this weekend with him, having him alongside the trophy ceremony, your thoughts on that?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, it's been super cool. He is a great dude. He's been fun. I didn't really get to hang out with him until after the last round and just kind of chat with him.

But, yeah, I was walking up the par-5, 13, and we heard the roar. It sounded like a hole-in-one roar. We weren't sure, maybe someone holed out on 14. It was kind of coming from the same area. I asked one of the camera guys, and they told me that it was Mike. I thought that was special. Me and Rick were laughing about it.

Yeah, drinks are on him, so run the tab up.

**Q. And then you obviously start the major season second and first. How do you try and carry this momentum into what could be a pretty historic year perhaps?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: Keep doing what I'm doing. It's working so far. Back to having a chance pretty much every time I tee it up. So I'm very pleased with the way I'm playing. I like the way I've worked with everybody. It's been a lot of fun.

**Q. I wonder if moments like this are a good time to reflect on the injuries, all those years in Asia and Europe, how tough the journey is?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I don't -- it's tough to kind of reflect in the moment. I think probably the best reflection comes like a day, a couple days later. Well, definitely not

tomorrow. I won't be sober.

Yeah, I'd probably give it a week on this one. This one will probably taste a little better, but I'm excited. It's so cool to look back at where I've come, traveling. I remember back to The Challenge Tour days, going to Kenya, Kazakhstan, and all those cool places and getting to see the world.

Yeah, to be out here now and win five major championships is pretty incredible.

**Q. Can you comment a little bit about Ricky Elliot and how he's helped you get back to this place?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, Rick, it's kind of funny because Rick, I forced him to come out when Dr. ElAttrache was doing surgery. No one wanted to come with me. My brother was playing The Honda Classic. My parents were staying there. Jena just had surgery on her ankle, so she couldn't fly out there. So I made Rick come, and Rick spent probably 2, 2 1/2 weeks with me out in L.A.

Yeah, I feel bad for him that he was stuck with me there for awhile. He was tired of me; I was tired of him. I don't know if he gets enough credit for being as good of a caddie as he is. Caddying is a lot about reading the people, reading your player, knowing what they are going to do before they even do it and kind of sense the moment of what to say, what not to say.

Honestly, I thought he's one of the best for a long time, and I don't think he gets enough credit, maybe even from me.

**Q. Obviously we got a peek of you at bottom because of the show, and I just kind of wondered, at those times how much were you doubting, questioning, whatever, yourself physically versus yourself, like can I go do that again, like, me, the player?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: It's tough. It's very hard to explain. It's just, like, you can't fathom how difficult it is just to get going. I mean, it was a lot worse than I let on to you guys, let on to everybody.

Like I said, I think maybe only five, six people really know the extent of it, and it's just -- it was hard. Cold weather, it was achy. The swelling didn't go down until maybe a couple months ago.

I mean, so that's almost, what, two years? It's been a long road. But look, that's who I am. I'm open and honest. I know I seem like this big, bad, tough guy on the golf course that doesn't smile, doesn't do anything, but if you catch me off the golf course, I'll let you know what's going on.

Like, I'm happy they got that side; right? That's truly me, and some people might hate it, some people might dog it, but at the end of the day, it's just me.

**Q. Just to be clear, did you ever consider retirement?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: I don't know if I considered retiring, but I knew I wasn't -- if I couldn't play the way I wanted to play, then I was definitely going to give it up. I mean, the thought definitely kind of crossed my mind.

**Q. For those of us who have never felt the pressure of a major championship, what does it do to your body specifically? When you feel nervous, does your heart race? Do your hands do anything? Do you have to slow down, or is it not that different than just a normal round?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: I don't know. To me, it's excitement; right? I've got to slow down, for me. I've got to start walking slower because my stride just wants to keep going. Want to be the first one to the ball and hit it and just play the quickest round of golf ever.

Yeah, I've got to slow down. I've got to take my time and really just kind of assess things, but it's difficult to say. I don't think my hands or my heart rate gets up. I don't think about the next shot. I always just think about what's going on. Like, if you walk down 16, I'm not thinking, oh, I've got to do this on 17 or 18. I'm just thinking, whatever the next shot might be and then until I run out of shots.

**Q. Is that something that you've learned from over time of how to take that one shot at a time, or is that something that's just kind of come naturally to you?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: A bit of both. I think I've definitely learned. I probably learned the most the last time I was here in 2013 when I played with Tiger on Sunday. That was interesting. I spent nine holes watching him. I've done that my entire life. Grew up watching the guy, and didn't -- took me until 10 -- Ricky's first week caddying for me, he told me to stop watching him.

But it just natural what you do; right? I grew up in the Tiger era. I loved watching the guy. It's just naturally what I did for the first nine holes and then it got better.

**Q. Is there a moment that sticks in your mind when you thought having that trophy again or another major wouldn't happen?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: Oh, for sure. Yeah, a couple years ago. Just lost. Didn't know where any golf swing was; didn't know physically if I was capable of getting back to

where I was.

But, I mean, a lot's transpired, working with Pete, working with Claude, working with Pierce on putting, and then A.C. has done a phenomenal job in the gym. Ara, Mike they are all behind the scenes and don't get enough credit but they have definitely revived my career. A lot of credit to those guys.

I think Ara said it best a couple months ago, that if we couldn't get the swelling out of my knee, everybody was fired. They did a great job and I wouldn't be here without them.

**Q. What's the shot you're going to remember most from this week?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: That's a good one.

I don't know, I'll have to get back to you on that one. Right now, I still have to think. I'm trying to think. Probably, you know what, probably that chip-in for par on 11, I think the first day.

**Q. Why that one?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: I mean, I could have made double. Saved me. Usually when you make double, you don't win a major championship.

**Q. It's kind of impossible not to hear certain things that get yelled in a round. Ricky might throw a fan a little stare down and things like that. Does any of that get to you? Do you hear any of it?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: Oh, I hear it all. I just don't care. I mean, that's sports, right. You've got to be mentally tough not to, I guess some lady was chanting some stuff and another guy was shouting out some stuff. But you've got to be mentally tough not to deal with it. It happens in every sport.

I'm pretty sure when Tom Brady was playing, I'm pretty sure when he walked into -- when he was playing the Jets or the Dolphins, he wasn't exactly cheered upon when he ran in the stadium.

**Q. You seemed to get a little emotional as you were walking from the 18th green to the scoring tent. Was that relief? Was that suddenly realizing what you had accomplished? Just curious?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I think it was definitely what I accomplished. Pardon my language, but it's all the fucking shit I had to go through. No one knows. No one knows, I

think, all the pain. There's a lot of times where I just couldn't even bend my knee.

Yeah, it felt good. It felt really good.

**Q. What do you think about being a dad soon?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: It's going to be wild. Yeah, it's crazy. I feel like these last, I don't know, five, six months, have flown by. Our life's even started to change already, and I can only imagine when he gets here.

But I'm super excited. I've kind of wanted to be a dad for the last few years. This will be an exciting time for our life, and I can't wait for it.

**Q. Would you want to see the PGA Championship coming back to Oak Hill and you playing in it one day?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: Like I said, I love New York. It's treated me pretty well. But three of the five have been in New York, so I'll come back any time (smiling).

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Brooks, congrats again.

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