

# PGA Championship

Wednesday, May 15, 2024

Louisville, Kentucky, USA

Valhalla Golf Club

## Brooks Koepka

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome back to the 106th PGA Championship where three-time PGA Champion Brooks Koepka is joining us.

Welcome to Valhalla where you'll be playing in your 12th PGA Championship. How are you feeling about your game as your title defense begins tomorrow?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I feel good. I feel like my game is in good shape right now. It will be interesting to see how the course plays. It's a little bit wet right now. I don't know if we are going to get any rain this afternoon. Looks like it.

Yeah, it's in great shape; it's just as I remember. Obviously changed the grass in the fairways. I think it's made it a little easier to chip off of, but yeah, it's a good track, big-boy golf course.

**Q. You've made a nice tradition of being the host for the Champion's Dinner. Last night you had a nice turnout, looked like. Cool venue. What does it mean for you to be able to host that dinner, and what were a couple of highlights of the evening?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, it's awesome. I'm not able to go to the one at Augusta yet. But this one is super cool. It's the only one I'm able to go to.

It was great to be at Churchill Downs. I've always wanted to go to the race. We were going to go in '20, but with COVID we didn't get to go. It was super special. We had a great time. It was a good dinner. Some cool things. My chef was able to cook up the menu, help the guys at Churchill Downs. We had a good time.

**Q. After Singapore, you said that Augusta was a bit of an embarrassment in your eyes and you looked your team in the eye and said, sorry. What have you done to reset since then, and what did you have to actually tell your team there?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: Not much. I just apologized. Everybody put in a lot of hard work. Dedicated a lot of time

and effort and then for me to go out and play like that is not what I expect of myself, I don't think what they expect of me.

So yeah, just we had a good talk and just kind of put our nose down and kept grinding. You know, had some difficult punishment workouts. It was long hours on the range. Just worked with everybody and really tried to go back to the fundamentals, and I think that was the important thing.

**Q. You mentioned, you referenced punishment workouts in Adelaide. How are those different? What do you do to yourself in those workouts and what do you have to do? What causes that? Are you upset at your approach or the way you played?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: I mean, I'm not looking for the punishment workout. I just get told.

It sucks. It's not a lot of fun. A lot more running. Very up-tempo, no rest. Ara Suppiah, basically he kind of oversees my program with Hamish and Kolby, and they talk and they figure it out. I walked in and Ara told me that you finished 45th; you're going to get penalized. I think I had like four or five days in a row of just -- I turned white, I wanted to throw up in a few of them. But yeah, got through it.

**Q. What exactly was wrong at the Masters? What happened? Was your swing off, your technique, putting? What led to the disappointing finish?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: It's kind of funny, it's been windy at Jupiter at Grove. Feels like it's blowing 20 miles an hour every time we hit balls from pretty much February on, and every time we seemed to play it was blowing 25 or 30.

Ball position just got back. Back with everything. All the way through the bag, even with the putter. So wasn't able to see the start lines. I like to see it start a little bit left of the target and then kind of fade it back, and it was kind of starting on target or a little bit right, and I had the both-way miss, which is isn't good. But just it to go back to fundamentals, so that was it.



**Q. When you look ahead to this tournament, how do you feel like this golf course plays to your strengths and the success you've had, particularly in major championships?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: It's a long golf course. So you've got to be able to hit the ball far. The fairways, I wouldn't say -- they are generous. I don't think they are overly generous, but you can take advantage of them. The rough is thick. If you're going to miss fairways, you're going to be in trouble. I think that's pretty much the MO of a major championship. Got to hit fairways. Got to hit greens.

I think it's just a great golf course. You can kind of tell by the past champions, too.

**Q. With what Scottie has done and Rory's done the last couple of weeks, are you excited at all to get a chance to go up against them?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: I mean, I'm just looking forward to a major championship. That's kind of my -- gets my excitement going. Something I look forward to all year.

So yeah, look, I always enjoy competing against these guys, and anytime you get the best, it's always good, and you just want them to play their best, too. You want to go out and win it.

**Q. When and why did you switch to the mallet putter?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: I switched, I believe it was maybe a week and a half before Augusta. Just needed a new look. That was really what I was looking for. Maybe a little bit more forgiveness. I think you can kind of -- you kind of see it, right. There's trends in golf, and everyone starts using a mallet and it's a little bit more forgiveness. I noticed that the dispersion pattern is a little tighter, and that's kind of the big thing with me.

**Q. Did the win in Singapore say to you, you know, I've got it figured out, after what happened at the Masters?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: Well, I took the week off after Augusta. I didn't touch a club.

So Adelaide was kind of the first time we were -- did a little work on it. Just went back to basics. That's kind of the thing. It's never -- my swing is never off. It's always either something with alignment and ball passion, and kind of get back to those fundamentals and that's kind of the key for me.

**Q. When you first started with LIV, obviously the**

**schedule is different, everything's different. Come to a major championship, four rounds, seeing guys you haven't seen in a while. I'm assuming now after a couple years you've kind of gotten more and more comfortable with it. I just want to know if that's true and how did you get to that comfort level?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: Comfort with what? What do you mean?

**Q. With playing out there and then coming out and playing in the majors?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: Well, I think the majors are different than everything else. The majors are -- they just have a different feel than any other golf tournament. I've always enjoyed it and they are always tougher golf courses. That's something I get up for.

But there's really -- I don't see -- it's the same thing, right. It's always the peak of our sport or the four times a year we play in majors. That's kind of the only thing. But there's no real difference.

**Q. And the other thing is a lot of times people learn maybe more from losses or poor performances than they do from wins. Do you feel that way from what you learned at Augusta?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I've said it multiple times, I think winning, you don't really look back at anything. You just kind of celebrate it and kind of move on.

But when you lose, you're kind of forced into trying to figure out why and what happened and whether that be second place or missing a cut, doesn't really matter. You've got to figure it out.

**Q. I saw you got to play a practice round with JD today, and Crew got to meet Uncle John last night. What's that relationship like with the two of you being past champions here and reuniting?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, JD is the man. I've always loved being around him. He's gotten close with my dad, as well. What was it, Bethpage? Him and my dad hung out for a while and my dad got to come out and watch me until probably about the back nine. He should be able should have stayed with JD or wouldn't have been as close.

He's been great. We text a lot. We have pretty good communication. It's always fun. Try to play with him at least once. I think played with him at the British last year and then this year, tried to get nine holes with him.

**Q. Seems like guys can go down the stretch and execute the shots they want, and then there are guys that don't have it. Do you think that's a skill or ability that can be learned?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I think you can learn it. You're always adapting to kind of your surroundings, so the more times you put yourself in that position, it's easier to learn from.

But you really have to dive in deep to the issue and really kind of look yourself in the mirror as to why, if you can't cross that line, why can't you or when you did, what was your thought process, what was your -- what were the misses. You just go down that line of what really went wrong, and I think you definitely can learn it. But I mean, some guys definitely are born with it.

**Q. When you decide after the Masters that you need a week away from the clubs, you put the clubs down, is that easy or hard for you to do?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: It was pretty easy. It was kind of always planned.

I think no matter how I play in the majors, I feel like I'm not physically exhausted, just mentally, just the grind of what I put myself through or what goes on for the previous weeks of the prep. It's just a lot more intense. I mean, I enjoy taking the week off after. It's kind of enjoyable.

**Q. When you struggle in events, is competitive mindset ever the issue?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I think so. I think sometimes you can be looking so far ahead, maybe, you know, beginning of the year, you're focusing on different things, like for Augusta or for this, whatever, that you just kind of forget where you're at. Instead you're supposed to go out and win and go compete.

It's definitely happened to me. I don't know if it happens to everybody else; don't ask them. But it's definitely been the case sometimes. But try not to let that happen.

**Q. Has that ever happened to you at a major?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: No. I'm pretty locked in once I get here.

**Q. What are the common traits among the three courses that you've won at previously on the PGA, and what do you see out here that would be common to those three?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: I would say this probably has more in common with Bethpage than it does Bellerive just for the fact of I think length is very important here.

Yeah, it's a major championship. You've got to put the ball in the fairway. I think that's the big thing, you look at those two. Here and Bethpage, if you miss a fairway, if you have a 5-iron in, I think there's a good chance you're not reaching the green. Maybe you can if you catch a great lie, but odds are you're not. That's a common trait against -- or with PGAs most recently what they have been doing.

**Q. You've won this event three times and it's the most successful major for you. Can you think of a reason why you've had success in the PGA Championship?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: No idea. I just like majors.

**Q. You talked about the mindset and the mental exhaustion you have after a major. How would you describe your mindset when you get into one of these tournaments? What kind of switch flips for you?**

BROOKS KOEPKA: I don't know. I mean, I've heard from just kind of the people around me, it's just different. Like my demeanor and focus is just different. I can't explain it. I don't really know how to or what I really do different.

But everybody on the team can kind of see it and they kind of know I can walk right past them and I don't even know that they are there sometimes. It's just it's a grinding week. You've got to be fully locked in. I feel like you can't take one shot off.

I love that. It's always, you're one shot away from making a double-bogey and that's what I love.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for your time, Brooks, we appreciate it.

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