

PGA Championship

Thursday, May 16, 2024

Louisville, Kentucky, USA

Valhalla Golf Club

Brooks Koepka

Flash Quotes

THE MODERATOR: Brooks Koepka is with us now. Brooks, 4-under today.

What are your thoughts on your opening round.

BROOKS KOEPKA: I thought it was solid. Felt like I just kind of stayed patient through the whole thing. It was pretty ho-hum. Hit one bad drive, made bogey there on 17. Drew a pretty brutal lie in the right rough.

But I felt like the only time I really made birdies, they were five-footers. Wasn't putting bad, but just wasn't hitting it exceptionally close.

Yeah, just felt lucky to finish the way I did.

Q. You're out there trying to get something going, and all of a sudden you make the eagle and the birdie. Can you take us through those and what kind of lift does that give you at the tail end of a round?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I said to Ricky, I think, walking up 5, if we can get to 3 or 4, that would be nice.

Yeah, just stay patient. That's what majors are all about, I think. You can't win it today, but you just try to hang around and give yourself a chance or in a good spot come Sunday.

Q. What did you hit in at 7, and what did you hit at 8?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I actually got kind of lucky. I was standing on a sprinkler head. I was in the first cut but I was able to move it back to the fairway, which kind of helped. I was either going to hit 5-iron from the first cut or move it back two yards and hit 6-iron. Obviously not aiming there, so it's pulled.

But that's why you take that line, you know what I mean. You're hitting to the center of the green and just trying to make 4 and get out of there.

It was nice to see the one on 8 go in. I thought it was



short, but I'll take it. Really happy with the way I finished.

Q. Obviously it's the first round. There's a long way to go. But when you're looking at the board and you see somebody like Xander who kind of posts the course record, do you get a little antsy, or is there so long to go in this thing?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I mean, I definitely saw -- thought it was out there. Soft conditions, especially with the grass change, instead of having the bent, that zoysia make it a little bit easier I think, a little wet.

But it was definitely out there. I just stayed patient. Ricky kept me telling all day just stay patient, wait your turn, and I think that's one of the things I'm exceptionally well at. Sometimes you're in a round of golf, you've just got to wait your turn and catch that run like I did with an eagle-birdie.

Q. Do you think you've always been a patient person, or is that something you had to learn, and how would you learn it?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Oh, God no. I'm not a patient person.

Yeah, I think it started maybe back in 2014 just when I was trying to study guys. I studied DJ, G-Mac. Those guys were big influences on me and the way I approach it.

And just even kind of -- I played a good bit with Rory I think in '14, '15, too, watching how he did things. I was still on the Challenge Tour. My first year on the PGA TOUR was 2015. So just trying to figure out how to adjust to getting out there.

Q. As a guy who's obviously had a lot of success in majors, have you found that it's easier to take risks knowing that you have had success in majors, as opposed to maybe somebody who is still looking for their first win in a tournament like this?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I don't think I take risks in a major. That's kind of the problem.

I think in regular events I take more pins on or maybe a



... when all is said, we're done.®

little bit more aggressive off the tee hitting driver into a place maybe where I wouldn't necessarily hit it here.

But yeah, I've just got to figure out where the miss is in a major. That's what I've always done and what I feel like I'm very good at.

Q. Going back to the patience question, what did you pick up from those guys when you were watching them, and what did you learn specifically?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I was very impatient. I couldn't understand I'm trying to hit a 7-iron to 15 feet. It would drive me nuts, I just was striving for perfection.

I said it earlier this year. I watched DJ, it was at the WGC down at Doral, Trump's place. He hit it right into the trees, and I'll never forget it. He kind of punched it out and it hit the curve of the cart path, and it came back to where I was and he just laughed at it. And I couldn't understand that. I was talking to my agent about it.

And then getting to know DJ over the years, just kind of how he thinks and how he approaches things, I think that's his biggest attribute is kind being able to just kind of, something bad happens, just kind of let it go; and if something good happens, you don't want to get too high, too low, just kind of stay and ride the wave a little bit.

And then G-Mac. G-Mac, I thought he's always been a gritty player and somebody that's gotten the most out of his game, and he's super talented. He's always fighting and always trying, and just the way they play and the way they see shots and how they go about it.

Q. To keep the theme on patience, is there a moment where you flip the switch and patience gets turned off? Is it a certain number of holes left? Down by a certain number of shots? When do you stop being patient?

BROOKS KOEPKA: On Sunday, if you're four back with four to play or something like that, then you've got to take some risks.

But pretty much for the first three days, I'm just trying to hit the center of the greens and get out of there. If you pull one, like I did on 7 and hit it close, it's great.

The way I see it is, I'm pretty sure all my misses today were on the correct side of the hole, and that's something that I notice. I don't know if anybody else besides Ricky is noticing that, but it felt that way. A lot of them were on the correct side.

Q. Do you think earlier in your major career you might

have been tempted to chase after Xander, and is that part of the maturation process of playing majors?

BROOKS KOEPKA: No, I don't think so. Yeah, I guess there is a little bit of maturity that you've got to have as you develop over the years. I think now it's very obvious to me, where it wasn't as obvious in the beginning, but it's just something that I've just tried to -- I mean, I didn't really start playing majors until, what, the end of '13? I think the PGA at Oak Hill was my first one, or first true one, or the way I think about it.

But then I followed it up in '14 at Pinehurst. I think I finished like fifth or fourth or something, got me in, and yeah.

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