

# Charles Schwab Challenge

Tuesday, May 25, 2021

Fort Worth, Texas, USA

Colonial CC

## Jordan Spieth

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'll go and get things started. We'd like to welcome Jordan Spieth, the 2016 winner here at the Charles Schwab challenge. Jordan, it's obviously been a couple years since that win, but how is it to be back? This is going to be your ninth start here back at Charles Schwab.

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I love Colonial. I've had a lot of success here, won once, like you mentioned, and then finished runner-up a couple times. I had chances to win a number of years. I love this golf course, Hogan's Alley, you've got to hit a lot of different golf shots. I get a lot of great support in this DFW area and have for those last nine years.

So I very much look forward to this week. It's one on the calendar that has been very special to me. Coming off of the last two weeks, I feel good about kind of knocking a little bit of some rust off and feel good about kind of where things are at. Just need to see a couple putts go in, and the lid comes off, and hopefully we get off and running.

THE MODERATOR: And being a Dallas native, just even in this year, you have three top tens here in Texas, including a win at Valero. Can you speak upon what is it about playing here in your home state?

JORDAN SPIETH: Texans are proud of Texas, and I'm no different. I love being here. I think you obviously have to play in wind. It's kind of got its own identity, golf in the state of Texas. So I think, when you're used to it, I think it's a little bit of an advantage. But at the same time, all the golf courses we play in the state are very different from each other. The one constant is you're going to get a couple different wind directions. You're going to have to really kind of control the ball with your short irons into greens, and Colonial is no different on that front.

Yeah, it's nice to be able to sleep in my own bed. That's always great for tournament week. Kind of don't use quite as much energy up. You're able to recover a little bit better. Like I mentioned, Colonial, I've probably been the most successful at this one out of any of them.



So coming in feeling in pretty good form. Just need to tighten things up and let kind of the tournament settle into the rounds.

THE MODERATOR: With that, we'll open it up to the media.

**Q. What is it about Colonial, right from the very beginning, you seem to have always had success there?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I'm not really sure because I look at -- there's a few tournaments where I kind of, I guess, have the most opportunities to win out of any. I think of like Kapalua, as far as when I've been there, Augusta, and they're very different from Colonial, and those two courses are similar in a way with kind of how much feel you have and slopes.

Colonial, it's a Hogan's Alley -- fit it into tight windows, trying to hit fairways, and control the ball on the green. I've putted these greens historically very well, that's number one. I've had a knack for reading and dialing in the speed out here.

Play it kind of the smart way. There's always -- there's a place you can get into big trouble around the greens here, and there's a place where you can kind of end up being able to make an easy par. I just feel like I do a really good job of staying committed and not making those mistakes. It's normally -- it doesn't yield 25 under. It's normally anywhere from 12 to 18. So you don't really have to take too many chances.

You're going to get enough wedge opportunities, I think that, if you just kind of play patient golf and, again, don't make those mistakes. And like I mentioned before, just kind of let the round start to get settled versus having to force things, I think I've done a good job of that here.

To be honest, I wouldn't say -- it's just been kind of one from 2013 I just really love being out here. I like the shape of the holes, and I like kind of the mixture of the wedge opportunities with some of those par-3s in that horrible horseshoe, all those three holes, where you really just kind of hold on for a little bit in the beginning of the round and you can go take advantage.



**Q. Last week was not a good putting week for you. We talked about it a little bit last week. How come you've always been able, it seems like statistically, whenever you do have a negative strokes game putting week, the very next week you're fantastic?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I don't know. I haven't looked at that. Sometimes it's a mechanical thing. Sometimes it's just putts didn't go in. Sometimes it's a speed thing. For me last week, it was a little combination of things. I've got quite a bit of work to do, but I know what it is. I just have to put in the work to get it dialed in.

Hopefully, just being on greens that I've seen putts go in before, having similar putts and just being confident in the reads will be something that will really be helpful this week.

I haven't looked up bounce-back tournaments off of not so good putting performances. It's more for me, hey, do I -- when I'm over it, do I feel comfortable on my stroke feel starting this ball online? Probably my greatest strength in the game of golf is green reading and speed control. A lot of times it's just kind of picking that right line and then starting the ball, feeling confident through the stroke on just being able to be outwardly focused versus focused on the stroke. I think that's obviously very important for any professional golfer. They'll say, when they can be reactive versus thinking about their stroke, they're going to be a lot more successful.

So I've got a little bit of kind of extra work to do this week. I'm looking forward to it, and hopefully just being on surfaces that I've had success on in the past, that can kind of speed up the process of being right where I want to be.

**Q. You felt that Phil could close the deal on Sunday. What was your reaction to how he did that? Also, just can you speak a little bit about his longevity in the game?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I thought it would be very, very difficult. He hadn't been in contention in quite a while on the PGA TOUR against the guys he was in contention with, right? I know he's won many times on the Champions Tour, and I think he might -- I haven't heard anything he said afterwards, but I think that might have been something that had been helpful for him as he's coming down the stretch, just having won golf tournaments the last couple of years, regardless of where it is.

I think that helped, but it's just so difficult to be in contention for the first time in a while and be able to tap into that confidence that you're supposed to be there and you're supposed to win. It seems like all the great ones

have that one left at the end, and I know he'll probably tell you. Maybe he thinks he's got more than one left. I don't think anybody will doubt him after this one, but I think it's just wild. I think it's incredible.

His streak of not being outside the top 50 in the world for however long that was is going to be a very difficult task for anybody going forward to match. And then to win a tournament, let alone a major championship, at 50 with how young and stacked the game has gotten is just an incredible feat. I think the way he handled Saturday and Sunday, when he did make mistakes, to -- especially on the back nine on Saturday, to then close that back out and remain in the lead, it was typical Phil.

There was going to be some excitement, and when he got in trouble, he got out of it. All in all, it was a very difficult golf course in the wind, where you've got to drive the ball very well and then control iron shots. I think that he automobile did it better than anybody else, but the one thing out there, if you do get into trouble, there's no one else you'd rather have hitting that shot from a tough spot around the greens, and I think that kind of scrambling and making some putts early in that tournament was a difference maker for him.

**Q. Coming off a major week with how much energy and effort you put into those, how tough is it to bounce back? Or is this week kind of easy because of what you talked about, your success here at Colonial?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I think it comes easier being in my own bed more than anything. Yeah, major weeks take a lot out. Like I was out there on Monday afternoon, when I would normally take a Monday off in a four-week stretch, and you're trying to learn a new golf course, and then their normally more difficult tracks, where it just requires a more mental and physical energy.

So I tried to do a good job of finding a way to really get recovered that Monday, Tuesday, to really feel like you get recovered, but then you also stay sharp between the ears and physically and step back into it. I think being able to sleep in my own bed is a huge advantage when doing that.

**Q. This is not going to happen, I guess, for a couple of years down the road, but Colonial is going to try to renovate some of the course and get it back to its original state somewhat. Just wanted to see if you had any thoughts on that early on.**

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, actually, I saw all the plans. I had a packet of it that I traveled with for a little while and was kind of looking at it because I'm kind of a nerd for architecture, and I saw some of the proposed changes and

stuff like that. Obviously, the first reaction was, man, Colonial is so great. Why would you change anything when it's already a shorter track that still tests players and anybody can win on it? It's one of those unique tests we get, like a Hilton Head and a few others throughout the year.

Then you look at the changes, and you're like, man, it's still going to keep its roots. It's going to be -- it's still going to be Colonial, and then a couple shots are going to change here and there, a couple complexes. So I don't really, I guess, have much of an opinion on it, given I'm not a member here or a voting member or anything like that, like quite a few of my friends are out here.

It seems like you've got a little bit of a mixed review, and we'll just see what happens. From what I saw, it doesn't change the DNA of this golf course, which is already fantastic.

**Q. Jordan, you talked a minute ago about being able to read the greens and you're familiar with it. What does all this wetness do to this course? Because it's obviously gotten a ton of rain the last few weeks and is getting more now.**

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I think it lowers the scores here. Typically in the rain, you'd say the shots into the greens become easier because of how soft they are, but it makes the course longer. At Colonial, you don't have a lot of driver in your hand anyway. You're still playing in the same spots. You might hit one more club off some tees, but you normally have that club in the bag to get to where you want to. So it looks like it could yield lower scores.

I think in an ideal world the TOUR and the players would want the golf course to be playing very firm and be that kind of test where you've got to be a little more precise off the tee to be able to -- because if you're not in the fairway, it's very tough to get to any pins out here. When you're in this Bermuda rough, just judging that with corner pins, that's the defense of the golf course, but that's not the reality of springtime in Texas very often.

When we played the ball up through the green one year here, we would lift, clean, and place in the rough. I don't think it's going to be that severe, but I think it lowers the scores.

**Q. You mentioned coming off of majors week, it was a couple years ago where there was a major put between the Colonial and Nelson, and then you've got the U.S. Open here in a few weeks. Talk about the adjustment to that schedule. I know last year threw everything out of whack, but how different does it make the dynamics**

**of the schedule for you?**

JORDAN SPIETH: Again, I don't mind it because I'm home for two of them. If they're back to back versus two weeks apart, I actually don't feel much of a difference there. I don't mind it the way it is now, and I didn't mind it before. It's nice because I'm able to play in TOUR events, try to win PGA TOUR events, but also be at home and almost like I kind of get that ability to have your own -- just it takes less out of you when you're not traveling.

So having a couple majors mixed in there, and then obviously next week is a big event as well. I actually really like this part of the season for major prep and for ability to play well in these hometown events. It's a stretch that I very much enjoyed. I've had pretty good success with this part of the schedule, and just looking to try and build on that this year.

**Q. Jordan, I'm just curious, did you ever try to get Phil's autograph or follow him back in the day as a kid? And then also, do you remember the first time -- is there a good story from the first time you met him?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I did, yeah. I did. I actually -- I still have it. I actually know where it is now that I mention it. I have the Sports Illustrated when he -- the jump when he won the Masters, when he was in mid-air six feet off the ground, with his signature on it.

I won it in an auction at like my sister's school when I was really young. I must have been like 12 or 13 or 14 or something. But I remember going out and following him because he would come to the Byron Nelson and play. I came to the Colonial a couple times in grade school as well, and he's always been good at this tournament.

First time meeting Phil, I remember the first time I was paired with him was 2013 in the playoffs, and it was the final round of the Deutsche bank, and I played really well. Then he went out and called Freddy Couples to help get me on to the President's Cup team. So my first kind of playing with him encounter couldn't have gone any better.

But I mean, over the years, just being in rooms with him at those team events is probably the most memorable times with him, but also any round that you play, just how he treats everybody. Obviously, the thrill of watching his rounds of golf, where he could go shoot -- he could have six birdies in a row. He could also hit a drive onto a different hole and still make birdie, and he could look like he's -- I mean, it's Phil the thrill, right?

It's just so much fun talking to him. He's got a wealth of knowledge. He's always been really helpful to the younger

guys on getting us pumps up, inspired, somebody you could bounce ideas off of, whatever you want to call him, a 10, a 5, wherever he's going to be, a place in the game in history, to have that person be so welcoming and be so good to the younger generation out here too and then set the example he has, I think we're really lucky with that.

I don't think, in life or in other sport, you necessarily get that kind of opportunity to open up. I was fortunate to kind of have that just by watching him.

**Q. Do you feel the same way about the greens at Colonial as you do about the greens at Augusta?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I think just like a confidence level coming in, probably, but they putt so differently. They're both bentgrass. That's about the only similarities. These are really small, subtle slopes, and Augusta's obviously the big massive ridges and slopes with a lot more pace and feel. Yeah, I think just from a confidence level, but, again, I've got to get to where I'm stroking it well or else it doesn't really matter. So I've got work to do on that front.

Coming in, like I mentioned, it's just a place where I feel, as you start to get into the tournament, you make a couple putts, having good memories of making big putts here the year I won and other years where I had chances to win, I think you can kind of draw back on that and that kind of confidence, and I think it could just speed the process up of just being right where I want to be.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Jordan. Appreciate you taking the time to join us. Best of luck this week.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports