

John Deere Classic

Tuesday, June 30, 2026

TPC Deere Run

Silvis, Illinois, USA

Jordan Spieth

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome two-time winner of the John Deere Classic Jordan Spieth to the interview room. Jordan, you're making your 6th start here. What's it like being back in the Quad Cities, a place where you have so many fond memories?

JORDAN SPIETH: It's great. I have a lot of great memories from early in my career, and then now coming back with kids, it's even better. The red carpet is rolled out essentially for our kids, and this afternoon will be really fun. Also, my wife will bring them out, you know, to the course more than other tournaments just to walk along No. 9 and check out the tractors.

People are amazing. The course is great. I have very fond memories here, as you mentioned. So being back, I'm very much embracing it this week and looking for a really solid week.

I mean, as we head into this 4th of July weekend, get some great crowds. Hopefully the weather holds off, and hopefully I can step in and work my way up the leaderboard and having a chance.

THE MODERATOR: Have you had a chance to go out and play the course yet, and have you seen the renovations on 4? What are your thoughts?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I just played the front nine this morning, and it's a completely different hole as far as the difficulty. It's a much harder hole.

It used to be kind of cut the corner and hit a wedge into that green. Now it's you have to hit a really nice drive to be in the fairway. Then from there you're looking at some kind of a mid-iron into that skinny green.

It certainly changed the way the hole will be played for the week, I think, for scoring average, but it's also a phone nominal-looking second shot. It's still built to be able to have that kind of distant shot in.

You know, it's not unfair by any means. It just is a lot



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harder, which the course is in unbelievable shape. Maybe the best -- again, I haven't played it 15 years, but it's as good as I can ever remember seeing it.

Again, hopefully the wind stays up and the conditions continue to firm out, and you'll see maybe potentially a less deep, you know, total score, which and the course play a little bit quite a bit more challenging if it stays like this with the fairways this firm.

THE MODERATOR: You have eight top-25 finishes so far this season. Can you talk about the state of your game heading into this week?

JORDAN SPIETH: It all depends how you point it out. I haven't really had a chance to win coming down on Sunday, which is kind of the disappointing side. There's been a consistency level that was better than years past.

The last month I felt like I played kind of the same level of golf and didn't get a whole lot out of it. I had some opportunities in some big events to obviously maintain kind of the trajectory I was on.

I'm not letting it get to me. I feel like my game is in a really good state. I'm more consistent and an all-around better player than I've been in a long time. If I stay the course, the results will come.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up to questions.

Q. Both your wins here came with big charges, Sunday charges, down that back side on Sunday. Does that give you a good feeling as you approach those holes, and do you feel a little energized by coming back here and feeling the vibes?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, definitely. I mean, some events I've had some scar tissue, and this one I feel like I've played well most every time I've played it. I've got good feelings all around this place.

I think the two wins felt quite different, right? I was in the last group in '15, but I didn't get off to a great start, and it was a race. It's typically a race on Sunday. Then I turned it around.

But '13 was kind of unexpected. I was 6 back, and 6 back



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out here, you assume even guys that are leading, even if they're leading by a couple, they're going to shoot a few under. It's hard. You have to shoot 9 or 10, and it didn't take that Sunday. Everyone kind of came back.

I think that's the thing. It's hard to win out here. You're talking about the guys that are winning consistently, and when you are on that run, I've been that person, everything feels more patient, less gripping the wheel. But when you're not winning a lot, you have to still feel that way even though it's very hard.

I think to answer your question, coming down the stretch here, although the course can yield some birdies, when you are trying to win a golf tournament, it can be very difficult. Comebacks can happen on a course like this, because if you get tentative at all, you know, it's a good enough golf course that if you are out of position, you can make bogeys. But when you are really dialed in out here, it gives you opportunities to shoot 4- or 5-under on the back nine.

Q. In the past you've referred to the galleries here, the people here, the reception you receive in the Quad Cities, you've referred to the people as some of the nicest people around. Is that a contrast now? Are galleries on the PGA TOUR getting a little rougher, thinking of what Matt Fitzpatrick encountered THE PLAYERS Championship even and also at the RBC and obviously what Wyndham ran into? Is the nature of golf galleries changing? Do we need more tournaments with nice people?

JORDAN SPIETH: I think if you could figure that out, I think we'd rather have it running each country around the world versus worried about golf tournaments. Yeah, I'm not sure that's controllable.

When you are in the Midwest, you know you're in the Midwest. It's always felt that way here.

I think you had some unique circumstances there. I don't know. I mean, I think the one thing that I'll point out is I do think that betting in golf is something that's going to have to be tackled here soon, because I don't know how much of, say, the Wyndham scenario was the fact that it was enticing to bet the field verse Wyndham on Sunday in a legalized betting state, and you could have had people out there that are essentially, you know, have \$100 to \$10,000, depending on who it is, on the field versus somebody else.

In golf it's tricky because you could actually impact the outcome if you wanted to. It may not last very long, but you could impact a shot if you wanted to. I don't know of another sport that you could impact as a fan like you can

golf. So I don't know how much that's having to do with it, if it's different than it used to be.

I've also played rounds with guys who were not treated well 10, 15 years ago. I don't think it's a crazy new thing. I do think the Bethpage Ryder Cup was, from what I understand, maybe a lingering effect from that with an American verse European. You know, Cam Young, Fitzpatrick, THE PLAYERS. I'm trying to single them out for you, but I wasn't a part of either one of them, but I will say that from what I've seen, a lot of times it has to do with betting, and that is in the last five years.

We'll see what happens with that.

Q. Jordan, a lot of us were here for your early career success. Can you contrast that to getting to Miami this year, clawing your way back into the top 50 in the Official World Golf Rankings? Were you always a grinder, or you have learned to become a grinder as you've been on this journey?

JORDAN SPIETH: I would say that the way I've played golf was always a little less, you know, pretty even at my best. You know, it looked very pretty sometimes, but I felt like my ability to get out of trouble or hit certain shots that other guys didn't want to try or something like that has always been something that has been a strength of my game.

So I don't know if that's a grinder or if you mean by, like, go find it in the dirt when you lose it or something like that. I spent the first -- you know, if I say I started playing golf every day when I was 13, I spent the next ten years actually getting better at golf pretty much every year, which is a very weird -- even at No. 1 in the world at 21, I still felt like I was pretty much the same and sneaky even got better in 2017. That was probably the best I ever was at golf.

Everyone looks at how many wins, and they think that's when you were the best. It's not. If you actually dive into the stats, had I made, you know, the amount of mid-rangers I did, I would have won seven times that year.

Then at some point, you know, if you are not able to maintain it, then you have to figure out why and how to get it back and whatever. You know, between my own struggles on what was going on just mental struggles to physical injuries to whatever, you know, it took me a little while to get back on the right path.

I felt like I got back on the right path back in '21. Then I ran into where I had to have surgery a couple of years ago.



As I mentioned a few minutes ago, I feel like right now I feel like I'm the best I've been in ten years or seven, eight years, whatever it is. It's not quite showing in results, and I'm certainly still making some mistakes and don't quite have all the tools, but I know what I need to do, how to do it.

So when I go out to work, the grind, there's different levels of grind. There's grind when you are trying to search for something. There's grind when you know what you're trying to do, and you're getting better each day, and that part is, like, as fun as anything. It's as fun as winning a golf tournament. That's what I've learned. That's where I'm at now.

It's like getting rewarded on the other side would be nice. I'm human. I'd really like the reward. I'd like the results. But if I know that I'm working the right direction and I'm gaining freedom from that and I'm enjoying going out and doing what I'm doing, there was a time where that wasn't the case, and all I hoped for was to be in that position again, whether I won another tournament or not.

So I'm very pleased to be there. Now I'm just frustrated at the lack of results for what I feel like I should be getting out of it based on how I feel my game is.

Q. You were one of the first players out here, my recollection, to refer to your team. My team did this, when we would talk to you about your accomplishments. At the end of the day, you're the man in the arena, and it's all on you when you are out there. What does that feel like?

JORDAN SPIETH: Well, golf -- I mean, if you choose to do what I do for a living, you're choosing to have the ball in your hands for the last shot from the get-go. That obviously can bring you -- that risk can defeat you, and it can also bring you to the highest of highs in sport.

We chose to be there. We choose to do this. If you want to do it at the highest level, you choose to have failure, heart break, and on the other side you get so much more reward from the good, and that risk is worth it to me.

Q. Last question from me: As the PGA TOUR has defined its future with the announcements last week, what are your thoughts about the whole relegation concept being brought to professional golf at its highest level?

JORDAN SPIETH: I think that we kind of are in it to an extent right now anyways. I think there's always been that. It's just where is the number and how clean can you make it for essentially everybody to understand, but we had a

125. Now we have different ones. We have 100. We have 70. We have 50. They all mean something different.

So it obviously -- I'm not saying that this next move is the same as it is now just clear-cut, but it is a way to try to make it a consistent, easy to recognize for players, media, fans going forward.

It's not to say it's the last iteration of it either. I mean, most changes on the PGA TOUR, you know, get modified within a few years, and you get your sample size and go from there.

Seems to be a really clean situation where if you are knocked down, you can still earn it back through the fall. You go with the guys that are playing really well. Some of those guys are already in from their season. You add some spice to the fall with a pretty meaningful difference of what can come out of those events, the cumulative results of those events.

Yeah, I mean, I guess my easy answer is time will tell and things get adjusted, but it does on paper look like it's just a cleaner version of what's been happening.

Q. I got to ask about the putter. A lot of talk online last week about you testing out new flat sticks. What's the thought process there? Are you doing that again this week?

JORDAN SPIETH: Well, I've used a different putter the last two seasons than I used for the rest of my career, and I did switch to a Mallet back in 2017 for a couple of weeks, but it's unusual for me to change.

Last week I -- I feel like I've been hitting my lines a lot, and especially the last month I just haven't seen them go in. I've actually been hitting my lines well, and I was just, like, well, maybe if I just grab one off the shelf and it goes in on a practice green -- you know, so much of putting is mental.

Just kind of hitting, like, man, I don't know how I can get this to go in versus sometimes I'm, like, I don't see how this is going to miss from 30 feet. I've been there, too. It's a pretty awesome spot to be. I don't know how many people really live that. It's pretty amazing.

Trying to get somewhere in the middle is where you are probably going to live most of your life, but I was just looking for, you know, possibly a change, what options are out there. I haven't tested a ton in the past. Looking at what could be most stable essentially, like something that I could sit down that lines up better than anything and is super stable.

Then you have to take it on the course and understand, like, all right, I hit that putt. That went where I thought it was going to go, right, speed control and stuff like that. That's where I did some testing on the practice green, was pretty good with everything.

Then I went on the course, and I hit some putts with a couple of putters that were quite a different look than I was used to. I hit some, like, center-balanced, some LAB and some Scotty Camerons. I hit some -- I'd have a midrange breaker. The feel was so different off the face that I just didn't think that my speed control was going to be good enough to be able to put that in in a day.

So I kept what I was doing, and frankly, I got better as the week went on last week. My plan this week is just to stay with where I'm at. I made some putts on Sunday, and I plan on taking that momentum into this week.

Q. How excited are you to return to Royal Birkdale in a few weeks?

JORDAN SPIETH: Very. I'm excited to see the new holes. A lot of my most fond memories of that, especially final round. Those holes don't exist. I've heard really, really good things.

It's a great golf course, an aerial golf course. One of the hardest venues we play in an Open. Yeah, I'm very interested to see what it's like there.

I joked with Scottie. I saw him in the locker room before he went out for his final round. I said, well, are you the defending champ, or am I the defending champ next week?

He was like, No, it's you.

I was like, no, no, no, you don't get to do that. It's you.

Yeah, try to get over there a couple of days early and get to earn leadership the course before the official practice rounds start.

Q. You mentioned a couple of minutes ago that you are an overall better player than maybe you were seven years ago or in the last seven years. What do you mean by that? How did you get there?

JORDAN SPIETH: We don't have enough time. I mean that statistically I feel like I could lead every category on a given week, and I have this year. It means that each part of my game can be at the highest level. I just haven't put it together and put it together consistently enough yet.

But my mechanics are mainly what's significantly better. Then build-up of confidence, trusting in my wrist, simple things. That wasn't always something that was an issue, but when it was, it was.

So a lot of factors, but I mean, all this last offseason I probably worked as hard as I had since I was 13 or 14 years old on mechanics. I feel like I don't have to -- I played a lot of the season feeling like I had to exaggerate a lot, but I would get it to the right place. It's hard to be consistent feeling a super exaggerated move. I like to feel something, but I don't want it to be crazy.

I feel like as the year has progressed, I've actually been able to -- it's been tighter and tighter and tighter, but whether it's some decisions I've made or just, you know, a bad putting round or a bad putting tournament or maybe I hit two drives left on the wrong hole. It's been a different thing certain tournaments that prevented me from having a chance on Sunday. Instead I was starting in 18th and I finished 13th.

To me it's, like, okay, well maybe one week I'll get away with that drive or something like that. When you win, a lot of times you kind of -- you get away with something or a ball carries a bunker, and you made eagle versus, you know, going in it and making par. Just little things that happen throughout the first few days that I just have not been quite consistent enough, even though my overall game is way more consistent and the tools are all there at each area. That's what I mean.

Q. What are you most proud of in all that work that you've done to feel that consistency?

JORDAN SPIETH: I think just what I was saying earlier. It's just clarity that, like, I'm not practicing just to practice to find something. I feel like I'm performance practicing again. I'm playing games. I'm having more fun. Literally, like, you're doing actual games like on the Trackman on the range that are useful.

But just that I'm going out, and certainly within the last couple of weeks I was frustrated as I go practice trying to get the ball in the hole, right, putting. A lot of it most of the time comes down to putting.

I've won tournaments without having -- whatever, but I'm just most proud of I'm very much enjoying the work. I'm assuming it's going to pay off as far as results go, but if it doesn't, I'm a better player than I was. I'm only going to be a better player as I go forward for a while now until you hit whatever age that is that it's hard to be better again.

I like being on this trajectory, and I know that I'm on it. The



only thing stopping me is myself at this point. I've got better tools at how to handle that now.

Q. Talk about coming in as a past champ. Do you feel more pressure at events where you have won in the past?

JORDAN SPIETH: No, I just get better parking (smiling). I'm serious. U.S. Open, some of these majors, it's fantastic. Yeah, I don't at all, no.

Q. With the talk about the tour moving forward and with The Champions and Challengers Tours now, the way it's setting up, there's a possibility that this tournament specifically may not have past champions in the field moving forward. You win. You stay on the Champions side of it. If this becomes a Challenger Series event, chances are defending champs, past champs aren't back here. Does that factor? How does that sit with you knowing that as a past champ, you may not have an opportunity to cross over and come back here and play in this event in the future?

JORDAN SPIETH: Well, frankly, it doesn't really help what you are saying, but I didn't actually come back in '16 after winning in '15, but that was because of the Olympics, and I had skipped the Olympics, and it was the same week, and that wouldn't have looked good. It was a different scenario, but it's happened.

Yeah, I don't -- I'm not sure. That is probably one of the stranger parts of the whole situation because most of the time guys go back to try to defend their titles. It's definitely something that it's almost like an unofficial job that you have in a way.

You're right, I would say for the most part if you do win, you're most likely not going to be back at a track 2 event. If it was a track 2 event the year before, you probably earned your way, maybe, on a track 1.

I don't know what events are going to fall where. You know, I think they're still working on that. That would be probably the strangest part of the whole deal. But I think the idea is, like, how do they make it the cleanest, best product going forward for the longest amount of time, that's the most understandable for fans, players, media, and gets the best players playing as often as possible together in the same events. I think whatever you come up with from that outweighs anything else.

Q. Would you be okay with no crossover possibilities?

JORDAN SPIETH: I mean, I think that I was a proponent when stuff was being thrown out years ago of one FedEx

Cup still. I don't know if my opinion of if I'm okay with it or not matters at all, but I understand that that's probably going to be what happens.

So, yeah, I'm okay with, and you try to work and stay in track 1. For me, I'd love for this to be a track 1 event obviously, but again, there's nothing I can do about that either, so...

But, yeah, I love this place. I like coming back here. The times I haven't were almost always in a scheduling situation. We had a great time a couple of years ago. We're going to have a great time this week.

I think the golf course is fantastic. We might see the best version of it that we've seen in a long time this week.

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