

BMW Championship

Wednesday, August 13, 2025

Owings Mills, Maryland, USA

Caves Valley Golf Club

Keegan Bradley

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome Keegan Bradley into the interview room, our two-time champion of the BMW Championship, 2018 and 2024, last year at Castle Pines. Keegan, welcome back to a tournament that means a lot to you. If you could take us back to 2024 winning this tournament, and also the state of your game coming into the week.

KEEGAN BRADLEY: It was a special win because I got here in the 50th spot, and there was a time at Memphis I didn't think I was -- it was horrible. Getting here, I felt just such relief.

This has become a major milestone in our PGA TOUR of getting to here so we're in the Signature Events. Winning that, it was incredible. It was the first time my dad had seen me win. Being a two-time winner at a tournament like this is really special.

Q. Quickly on the golf course, just last time we were here, the 18th hole played as the hardest hole on the course. Just wondering what makes that hole particularly challenging?

KEEGAN BRADLEY: It's very long. It's got water all up the right. It's uphill. Any sort of shot into the green that's going left to right has a good chance of going in the water. It's extreme. You've got to hit two perfect shots to get it on the green. You have to hit the fairway.

There's a lot of really challenging holes on this golf course, and that's certainly one of them.

Q. Everyone's still talking about whether you may play the Ryder Cup along with captaining it. I'm just wondering, as Captain Keegan Bradley looking at player Keegan Bradley, is there still more that you feel like you need to do to earn a spot on that team the next two weeks?

KEEGAN BRADLEY: I've been saying all year you can't expect to be on the team unless you're in the top six. My goal is to go out there, whether I was Ryder Cup captain or



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not this week, and play well and play well next week at the TOUR Championship as well.

There's definitely a lot more on my plate here these next couple of weeks. The Ryder Cup has always been so far away, and now it's right there. Things are definitely amping up. I still have a lot to prove just as well as everyone around me on the list.

Q. You mentioned more coming onto your plate now. How have you kind of felt the difference and kind of wear the player hat and wear the captain hat differently earlier in the year compared to now? How has the process changed for you in finding that balance between player and captain?

KEEGAN BRADLEY: Thinking a lot more about it now. I'm laying in bed thinking about golf balls that the guys play, thinking about pairings, certainly amped up. I think I've done -- I'm really proud of the way I've been able to get inside the ropes and be a player this year. I didn't know how this was going to go. No one knew how this was going to go. I think most people thought I was going to have a horrible year.

But that's one of the things I'm most proud of. I'm proud that I won Hartford, but I'm also really proud to have been able to perform inside the ropes with everything going on. There's no reason why I can't continue to do that these next two weeks. We've got a lot on the line, and I hope to continue.

Q. What would you say about your game the last couple of weeks? Where is it right now even compared to the Travelers? Have you found there to be any extra burden at this point? Has it made it harder to play well?

KEEGAN BRADLEY: I think for whatever reason, I've never played well at Memphis. My best finish there since 2011 is T45. It's always a tough week for me. But things are definitely getting more difficult, but it is for everybody on the list of the Ryder Cup. This is when you really start to -- you know, when you're trying to get a pick or trying to play your way on the team, you feel like every round's Q-School. It's not just difficult for me; it's difficult for everybody that's trying to make this team.



I feel for them. I know what it's like. I know people try to act like they're okay, but they're nervous every round, and that's the way it should be.

Q. Aside from the Ryder Cup, obviously there's been a fairly significant change in the FedExCup format this year, they've spread out the bonus money. Next week is sort of on its own. You get there and you start over. How do you look at the new way that they're doing it? Are you good with it? Do you think it needs to be tweaked at all?

KEEGAN BRADLEY: I think it's great. I really like rewarding the regular season because it's such a big sample size. Scottie Scheffler should be No. 1 and make more than all of us, it's because he played the best, and I think this system here really shows that.

The TOUR Championship has changed so much since I've been on TOUR, and this is certainly going to be pretty wild because someone is going to go in there and win the FedExCup in one week. I was talking to my caddie, this is the last week we're going to talk about FedExCup because we're truly going there at zero.

It's really interesting. I don't know how it's going to go, but I think it will be really exciting. Chances are the best players always seem to pop up in the biggest events. My guess is you'll see those guys again.

Q. A couple things, Keegan. First of all, a little bit off topic-ish. How often have you played Bethpage? Did you get out there much when you were at St. John's, and did you ever have to schlep around and wait for a tee time, or did you have certain privileges?

KEEGAN BRADLEY: At St. John's, Craig Curry was the superintendent, and the Black is closed on Mondays. He would let us play the Black when it was closed. We would start on the 3rd tee, there's a maintenance shack there, and we'd play inside the ropes. We'd play 3 through 14. We'd be the only people on the golf course, and sometimes there would be no flags in. That was every Monday. It was the day we looked forward to the most. We'd do a couple loops. We'd play eight, all of us.

My senior year I with my Buddy George, we just said screw it, and we went over the road and played 15, 16, 17, 18 and got in so much trouble. Try being a college kid and looking at 15 and not wanting to go play it.

Also, our home tournament was on the Red, which is just to the left or right of the 18th at the Black, which is another incredible course. I also played the New York State Open there, one of my first pro events.

Q. There's been a lot of talk, and you brought up these points yourself, but Rory was outlining a case why a guy can't play and captain at the same time in terms of press conferences, speeches, time consuming, and flexibility in terms of how many matches you can play, et cetera. How much of that have you considered? Is your list longer than mine?

KEEGAN BRADLEY: He might be right. We don't know. No one knows. Yeah, like everybody's telling me to start the year that a player can't be captain and have a good year. For me, I feel like this is one of my best years that I've ever had.

One of the strangest things, what I've done throughout my entire career is really lean on other people for advice and calling people and asking them, how do you prepare for a major? What do you do with the last tee time? How do you deal with the media? How do you deal with corporate obligations? In this instance, there's no one to call. So nobody knows how this could work.

I certainly have a lot of concerns, as well as everybody else, but I have the most incredible vice captains, including Jim Furyk, who's been on these teams and been captain a bunch of times. Quite frankly, I've been leaning on them more than any other captain ever anyways, even if I'm not playing.

We're ready for this if it happens. I'm not sure it's going to. I can truly sit here right now and say I don't know what's going to happen. I have to look at myself just like any other player trying to make the team. I'm 10th in points right now, and that's not 6th.

Q. No tee markers at Bethpage either, right?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: No tee markers, no.

Q. Have you thought about -- I'm sure you thought about it. Do you plan on getting the 12 guys on the team together for either at Bethpage or somewhere along the way ahead of the Ryder Cup?

KEEGAN BRADLEY: Yeah, the guys are -- I can't tell you just how proud I am of this group. They're such a different breed than my era of Ryder Cups. They really want to hang out with each other. So any sort of extra thing that comes with the Ryder Cup, they're all in. We're still working everything out, but we're definitely going to get together before the Ryder Cup.

Q. Will it be at Bethpage?

KEEGAN BRADLEY: I don't know if it will be at Bethpage, but one of the great things about the Ryder Cup, it starts on Friday. So we get in there nice and early, get prepared, and we'll learn the course that way. We have some ideas of what we're going to do.

Q. Just want your consideration. I just played Bethpage Black last week and shot even par. Have you ever considered an amateur to play on the Ryder Cup team as a captain's pick?

KEEGAN BRADLEY: Definitely not. (Laughter).

Q. You've played in both the home and away and much talk about the crowd in New York and kind of the atmosphere that brings. I'm just wondering kind of the psychology of playing in both home and away, like in an away Ryder Cup, obviously that feels antagonistic. Does that bleed into how you're playing and your psyche or vice versa when you're at home?

KEEGAN BRADLEY: I think when you're at home there's big momentum swings where you can ride a session or ride a pairing that can alter the Ryder Cup completely. The crowd at Bethpage is going to be unlike anything this sport has ever seen. I think this Ryder Cup has the potential to be one of the best sporting events in North America.

The people of New York really truly care about Bethpage Black. They have Winged Foot, they have Shinnecock, they have these unbelievable prestigious clubs, but you ask a real New Yorker or person on Long Island, and Bethpage is their home track. They're extremely proud of that. They're extremely proud of the public, how it's really a public course. They can play for \$40. They like playing not only the Black, but the Green. They have stories of sleeping in the car with their dad, their dad with their grandfather, learning how to play there.

It's an extremely special place to a lot of people there. We're going to hear that at Bethpage. They're going to be proud of their course.

Q. Keegan, when you hear Rickie and Patrick and even Rory say Keegan is one of the 12 best American golfers and should be on the team, how much does that factor into the equation?

KEEGAN BRADLEY: I can tell you, honestly, it means the world to me to hear that. I haven't ever really felt that in my career. It's really touching. It really means a lot. I really have -- the thing I've enjoyed most is getting to know these guys better. I was really a closed off player for most of my career.

Getting to know the guys more and getting to learn who they are, and then I think as a golfer, or as an athlete or a businessman, whatever it is, when you feel the respect of your peers, that's the ultimate. To hear that from two players of that caliber really means a lot.

Q. You talked about like trying to talk to past major winners and stuff. Are there some past captains of the U.S. Team that you've talked to, and anything specific that's really made an impression on you?

KEEGAN BRADLEY: I've been speaking to a lot of captains. I've been speaking to a lot of coaches in all different sports. Tiger did it at Presidents Cup, so talking to him. Ryder Cup is certainly much different than Presidents Cup in terms of obligations, but also two sessions in one day, less people play, you've got to sit more people. He's been extremely helpful.

I think the more information I can get about successful coaches, especially on national teams in any sport and how to bring together really alpha athletes that are used to being on their own and coming together quickly, I think that's been really valuable. Certainly I can learn a lot from them.

Q. Belichick?

KEEGAN BRADLEY: Yeah. I really have been leaning more on the national team coaches that -- you know, where these teams come together quick and they are superstar athletes and they're used to being top dog wherever they go. I really think that's a little bit more applicable than -- we don't have any role players on our team. There's no guy out there just getting rebounds or just playing defense.

Every guy on our team is one of the best players in the world that competes to win majors and tries to win tournaments every single week. It's a much different vibe than a team or Belichick with the Patriots, where you have Tom Brady and then you have the guy on special teams where they have two hugely different roles. I think that's the best way to compare the two.

Q. Scottie said earlier today that you've exceeded his expectations as captain and he's really valued what you've done in the locker room and being there, and that's such a unique thing as a captain. What was your approach to that, and understanding that you have a unique opportunity being in the locker room and being in player dining every day with these guys, to see and build those relationships, like you said?

KEEGAN BRADLEY: For me, I'm treating the Ryder Cup



as a real team. We're not going off past Ryder Cups or what they did. I'm trying to act like this is a team that plays all year round.

I think an advantage that I've had as captain is I'm around the guys. I'm around the guys in practice rounds, in locker rooms, waiting in rain delays. I saw J.J. Spaun at the U.S. Open in this rain delay, and I'm looking at him, and I just like -- it didn't seem like he was in this position to win the U.S. Open. Seemed like we were there in a practice round. He's joking around. I remember thinking, this guy, he's a killer. It's crazy. I'd be pacing around outside or whatever, so just seeing that.

More importantly, getting to know the guys, it's really forced me to really get to know them. They've impacted my career, and I think one of the reasons why I've had a better last couple years is just getting to know them and getting to learn how they go about their career. It's just so much different than mine.

Certainly getting to know Scottie, who I didn't know really at all, and to learn what a great family man he is, what a great friend he is, what a great teammate he is, but then what an absolute savage he is inside the ropes. He's a different guy in there, and I love that about him.

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