

TOUR Championship

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Atlanta, Georgia, USA

East Lake Golf Club

Chris Kirk

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome Chris Kirk into the interview room here at the TOUR Championship. We were just talking on the way in here, it's been 10 years since your last appearance at the TOUR Championship.

You had the win this season at the Sentry and made a nice move at the BMW Championship in the final round last week to qualify for the second time. How does it feel to be back here at East Lake Golf Club?

CHRIS KIRK: Yeah, being here in Atlanta, in my hometown, growing up the north side of the city, is amazing. Lots of ticket requests, but that's a good thing.

It feels very comfortable for me to be in my home state and in my hometown, and obviously making the TOUR Championship is a goal for each and every one of us when we start our year. I'm sure y'all have heard that a lot. But especially after finishing 31st last year and being so close and not making it, to have that final round on Sunday last week to make that push and move up into the top 30 was an incredible feeling for sure.

Q. Being from here in Woodstock, did you come to the TOUR Championship at all growing up?

CHRIS KIRK: No, I don't think so. If I did and I don't remember, my dad is going to be really mad.

I remember going to the old Callaway Gardens event, watching Davis and Fred Couples; got Hal Sutton's autograph. I remember that and those guys.

Yeah, I think as a kid, obviously I was watching some golf on TV, but I think going -- I was worried about playing my own game. If I went to a -- I think going to a PGA TOUR event, I would have just been mad that I didn't get to play that day.

Q. How much are you looking at this week as also kind of a bonus opportunity to audition, try out for Captain Furyk and the Presidents Cup team?

CHRIS KIRK: I'd say it's somewhat in the back of my mind. Yeah, that's something that I would absolutely love to be a part of. I'm not going to lie to you about that.

But I think that it's pretty easy for me to just realize that that kind of stuff is so uncontrollable. All I can really do is just go and compete to the best of my ability and just see what happens.

But yeah, I'm excited just to be here and have the opportunity. I know that I'm playing good golf, and so I'm excited to have the chance to work my way up that leaderboard.

Q. Obviously we're focusing on golf this week, but I wanted to ask a fun question because I know you're a former Georgia Bulldog. Georgia and Clemson play on Saturday; do you have a score prediction, and will you keep up with the game at all?

CHRIS KIRK: I'll definitely be checking some scores every few holes, I'm sure, while I'm playing. I'm not going to go with a set prediction, but I think it's going to be a lot to a little. Oh, yeah. Big win for the Dawgs to start the year.

Q. As you know, the format is a little different this week with the staggered strokes. I'm curious personally, do you have a handicap index at your home club?

CHRIS KIRK: I do not.

Yeah, this is my first time playing with this format. I think that mentally it kind of works nice for the guys that are towards the bottom like myself. You kind of go out feeling like you have nothing to lose.

Q. When you play at home, are you accustomed to ever giving shots to people? Do you have a system for how you do that if it's players who are not pros?

CHRIS KIRK: Not a whole lot. My friends that I play with at home are really high-level amateur golfers, and then Brendon Todd and I play the same club at home, so we'll play a lot. More often than not we'll play two-on-two matches. Brendon and I obviously can't be on a team together, and then somebody else with us to make it fair.



But my buddies at home that I play golf with shoot in the mid to upper 60s a lot, so it's not that unfair.

If we're playing a one-on-one, I'll say, all right, on the first tee, you're 2-up or 3-up or something like that.

Q. So they're not begging you for shots?

CHRIS KIRK: No, no. I am planning on -- I haven't started it yet, but I know it's been talked about a little bit how much I love playing golf left-handed.

I have approval from a lot of my fellow members at Athens Country Club to start a left-handed handicap so that I can play in some club events as a left-handed amateur, I guess. I'm not really sure how that really works with the rules.

I think I'm probably about a 12, 10 to 12 right now.

Q. You do realize how unfair that is, right?

CHRIS KIRK: My left-handed golf, it's just so fun. But obviously I have a huge advantage over a normal beginner golfer. I kind of already know all the answers to the test. It's just a matter of how long it takes me to figure out how to do it.

Q. What's your low score?

CHRIS KIRK: 82 at the moment. I've got 84 a couple weeks ago. So that's one of my goals this off-season. I won't be playing a whole lot of right-handed golf, but one of my goals is to break 80 this year.

Q. Are you a good putter?

CHRIS KIRK: I mean, pretty good. Not as good as I am right-handed, but pretty good.

Q. I didn't know if you'd try a Notah Begay thing and go bull's eye and try both ways out here.

CHRIS KIRK: No, I'm not that good.

Q. I'm curious about 18 and what you think about the internal OB.

CHRIS KIRK: I think it's very necessary. I talked to Steve Rintoul and a few of the officials yesterday while I was playing a practice round. I hadn't played the hole yet, but just kind of -- not that they're looking for advice from me necessarily, but I encouraged them to do something just because obviously that's not the way the hole is designed.

I told them that for us as players, we're going to do whatever we feel like is going to give us the best score, and it sounded like to me that was a no-brainer to go down No. 10.

But I really like protecting the integrity of the design of the golf course, and I think that it would have been a pretty bad look on TV if you're finishing a golf tournament and everybody is hitting it down the wrong fairway. It would have distracted for sure from how -- the renovation of the golf course is fantastic. The green complexes are so fun, so unique, such a great variety.

I think that the course is really, really great, and so that would have certainly distracted from that if we were all playing a hole down the wrong fairway.

Q. Do you think or would you expect there would be some change to the 18th fairway next year to not canter so much to the right?

CHRIS KIRK: I don't think that would be a terrible idea. I don't think that it's awful the way it is right now. It certainly makes it play very, very narrow. Yeah, they may want to soften that a teeny bit.

But like I said, if you do a full-blown renovation like this and there's only one small little nit-picky thing that people can find, that means you did a pretty damned good job.

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