

TOUR Championship

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Atlanta, Georgia, USA

East Lake Golf Club

Scottie Scheffler

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Good morning, everyone. We'd like to welcome world No. 1 and 2024 FedExCup champion, Scottie Scheffler. Scottie, another year at the TOUR Championship. How have preparations been going so far as you look to win another FedExCup here at East Lake?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Went well. Played nine holes yesterday. Came out and hit some putts on Monday. Other than that, Monday was a pretty relaxed day. Just did my recovery, gym stuff, and hit a few putts.

Yesterday I played nine holes on the front, and today I'll go out and play the back. Golf course is good. Greens are really good again. Conditions here on this course are always really good.

Rough is as healthy as I've seen it this year. It's Bermuda. Typically, when you get Bermuda rough, you can hit shots out of it, play out of it. This week seems like pretty much hack-out rough around the course. I think that's a little different than years past.

Other than that, the golf course -- everything is just really healthy. Golf course is in good shape, good rough, and should be a good week.

Q. How are you feeling compared to last week physically?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Good. I'd say I'm at like 95 percent. The only thing maybe just still a couple of sores in my throat. But other than that, I feel really good.

Q. I'm curious, would you rather have a season like you've had now where you've had two wins but you've been so consistent, so many top fives, or would you rather have a season where maybe you've won a little bit more and not as many maybe top fives?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: The hypothetical game is not something I really love playing. I think over the course of my career, I feel like one thing I'm most proud of is my consistency week in and week out. I think that's something



that I take a lot of pride in. It's not easy to show up every single week and play the way that I play and play the intensity that I play and that I bring to each and every tournament. That's something I'm really very proud of.

Like if I'm showing up for a tournament, I'm not showing up for any other reason other than to do my best and give myself a chance to win that golf tournament. This is a year where I've given myself some opportunities, but I've also battled really hard to get myself back into some reasonable finishes at tournaments.

You look at a week like last week where I came in not feeling my best. Basically, my motto is just get through the first couple days. I've won golf tournaments injured before, and I get off to a bad start, don't really get off to a good start again on Friday, but I battled and still almost got myself into the top 10 of the tournament.

Stuff like that, I take a lot of pride in. I take a lot of pride in competing my hardest week in and week out. I think that's something for me is underrated at times. It's not as simple as playing smart or playing conservatively. It's about, I think, bringing intensity to each and every week that I play, and it's something that I'm very proud of.

Q. You've been so successful over the course of your career so far. You've won majors. You won this event in 2024. I wonder what keeps you so motivated, so hungry for more when it comes to your pro golf career?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I just love competing. I think the game of golf, you're always -- there's always something to figure out. I think that's why you see a lot of athletes, when they finish their sport, they always take up golf. Because I think as an athlete, you love the preparation, you love working towards something.

It can be weird for somebody. Let's say like if you're a football player and you retire at 35 years old, or a basketball player, like you've done that sport and you've had your routine and your preparation. You've done it for basically 30 years; then all of a sudden you retire, and you're like, wait, what am I working towards? I feel like in golf it's a puzzle that you're always trying to solve.

I've always liked stuff like that. I've always liked trying to



improve. If I start something, I typically try to become really good at it. Just whatever it is, whether it's pickleball, table tennis, making coffee, whatever it is. If I start -- if I get into something, I tend to get pretty deep into it. Golf's always been that way for me, and it's like an endless puzzle that you're always trying to solve. Yeah, I just love it.

Q. I was going to ask you how you filled your need or desire to compete when you're not actually playing? Like when you were out with the ravioli injury and you couldn't compete for a couple of months, what else do you compete in? How do you fill that? Sorry for the description, but that's kind of what it is.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: No, that's a good question. I felt like before I had kids, before we had kids, I got really into like pickleball at one point. When I was in college, I played intramural. So I played intramural basketball and intramural football.

When I was in high school, I would do anything. It's funny reminiscing. My buddies I had in high school, we had so much fun doing random stuff. The summer before I went to college, it was nuts. I would wake up in the morning -- my buddies liked to play video games. They would play video games at night. At night when they would play video games, I would go home and go to sleep. I would wake up early and go practice golf. And then when they would get up, mosey out of bed, do their thing, we'd go play sand volleyball and go play pool volleyball and play tennis and play pickup at night.

We were always doing something. We were always competing, doing a sport, something like that.

Now how I fill my time, it could be anything, but with kids, it's definitely different. There's a lot less time. I wouldn't say I have too many hobbies outside of being at home and hanging out with my kids and my wife.

Q. One other thing I wanted to ask you, when everyone talks about consistency, which is kind of your hallmark, and there's a lot of players that talk about that all the time, "I just want to be more consistent," how do you get there? Everyone's got skill, I get that, but how do you become consistent? What does it take?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I think for me one thing I've learned over the course of my career is just bringing a certain type of intensity to each round. I think that's something that's a lot easier said than done. I was born being competitive, and I love being able to compete and play out here, and it's something I don't take for granted.

That's why I say, if I show up at a tournament, I'm not showing up for any other reason. It's not a warm-up. It's not an obligation. I'm showing up to try to compete and do my best. And I feel like I have that obligation not only to myself but to the sponsors and the fans and everybody. If I show up, I want to try to do my best.

That's my goal going into each week. When it comes to competing and playing, it's something that I love to do. I don't want to look back at the course of my career and feel like I could -- when I'm retired and older, I don't want to look back and feel like I could have done more. I want to feel like I did everything I could and got the most out of my time here.

Q. A bit of a local question. You've obviously had a lot of success at East Lake, and with the new TOUR Championship Series, next year might be the last year here, at least for a while. I just wondered about your thoughts of the course and what it's meant to your career.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: This golf course is -- I think it's played an interesting role in my career. I've had a win here. This tournament always -- especially with the starting strokes format for a couple years there, it really -- it felt a bit year-defining because you had the whole season kind of built up to this tournament.

Then with the starting strokes, I came in No. 1 a few different times and always felt like I had a chance to win. I felt like at times -- I had a really tough loss here in 2022, and then to come back in 2024, like it's hard playing with a lead at golf tournaments. This is how Teddy described it to me. It's hard playing with a lead at golf tournaments. It's hard playing with a lead for like six months.

When I came here in 2024, I had the lead in the FedExCup for like six months. In order to win the FedExCup, you have to play good at a golf course that I hadn't really played my best golf at yet. So to come here in '24 the way I did and play well and win the tournament, that was a big moment for me in my career because it was a place I had a tough loss and hadn't played my best golf yet.

I had been the best golfer the whole year, and I really wanted to be able to win the FedExCup. And for me that was a big moment to finish off the year the right way, a year in which I won a bunch of times, to be able to finish off with a win and be the season-long winner on TOUR was really important to me.

Q. Speaking of all those wins, you and Rory are going to pass Tiger on the PGA TOUR's career earnings list

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this week. Obviously it's not apple for apple on wins, but given it's Tiger's accomplishment, will that mean anything at all to you?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I mean, you're kind of comparing apples and oranges, but I think a lot of success we've had out here, especially when you look at it from a financial perspective, Tiger has a lot to do with that. Like I said, it's apples and oranges. The reason our purses are so large today is because of the influence and impact that Tiger had on the game.

I wouldn't really consider that a Tiger record being broken. I think it's more -- I think just shows one of the many effects he had on the game of golf in a positive way. Like the TOUR is only getting more competitive as it goes forward, and I think that's part of kind of how he played the game.

When I talk about competitive instincts and talk about intensity each week, that's stuff that I learned just by watching Tiger. I've only played with him once in competition. It was at the Masters -- I think it was the COVID year, but it was the year he made the 10 on No. 12 and birdied 5 of the last 6 holes. We were in 20th place going into the day, me, him, and Shane Lowry. I hadn't played with Tiger in competition yet, and I was like, gosh, I wonder what this is going to be like.

We're in 20th place. He doesn't have a ton to play for. He's won like five green jackets, and we don't have a chance of winning. Dustin was pretty far ahead that year. I just remember walking up onto the 1st green and watching him read his putt, and I was like, holy smokes, this guy is into it.

That's the intensity he brought into each and every shot, and that's something I've tried to model in my game. Like I said, I think it's easier said than done. I've learned a lot by watching him play. He's had tremendous impacts on the game, and that's one of them.

Q. I know you've had a love-hate relationship with some of the formats we've had at the TOUR Championship. Just curious on your thoughts on the two-week match play that will be rolled out in 2028.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I think this tournament specifically is something we fiddled around with. When you look at the playoffs for golf, it's a bit of a different sport. It's not like the other sports.

Yeah, starting strokes, points, I think I was in a unique position of being in favor of the points, but I can definitely see how that was confusing for the casual fan at the end of the year. If you want an exciting finish to the year, points is

probably not the best way to do it.

Looking at match play, I think it's interesting. It's something new and fun. I think it's something that people have been craving, especially our fans. The match play tournament didn't have a ton of success, and I think when you look at it from that point of view, I think part of the problem was showing only two guys -- I guess only four guys on the golf course at one time for your final day can be a bit boring. It can be hard, I think, for TV to fill the space.

So to change it to the format we have now where you're going to have more matches on the course, I think could be interesting and fun. I think the first week is -- it's a little bit hard for me to kind of wrap my head around the group play. Like I said, when I show up at a tournament, I love to be able to compete and give myself a chance to win. To have a full week tournament where there's not a winner, I think, is a bit unusual for me.

But like I said, the match play, I think it's going to be really good. It's fun. It's an interesting, new way to finish the year. I think that's something our fans have been craving for a long time. To finish off the year the right way is something exciting that our fans and partners can get behind, I think is really important.

Like you said, maybe moving away from East Lake and seeing different golf courses and maybe seeing a different tournament environment too, depending how many fans we decide to have out and depending what golf courses we're at, I think it leaves a lot of opportunity for the TOUR. Right now it's just a framework, and that's why I talk about the opportunity. I think it could be a really fun, interesting way to end the year.

Q. (No microphone)?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I think one of the desires we had with looking at the TOUR Championship and the FedExCup was having an exciting finish to the year while also crowning a season-long champion. I think that's a really hard balance to strike.

With golf, especially looking over the course of the year, that could be -- there's some years where I've had a large lead on the points list going into the final event. If it was a true season-long race from a points perspective, it may not have been that interesting.

I think when you look historically, I think that's pretty common in golf. If you want an exciting finish, you can't really reward season-long excellence. So striking the balance there was always difficult. So I think it's important



to separate the regular season and then have a fun, interesting way to finish off the season, and in a different format too.

Being match play, I think it leaves a lot of opportunity for us to do something cool and finish off the year the right way, especially as we lead into the match play portion with team events going forward.

Q. Do you have an opinion when it comes to money?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: (Laughter.)

Q. Let me finish if you don't mind.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Good start, though.

Q. When you reward the first big chunk of the season, through BMW, for example, and whatever you play for at the end, do you have an opinion on how it should be weighted, distributed, allocated?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I think if you're going to give -- like I don't know how to put it. If you're going to reward people financially for season-long success, I think the best way to do it is reward them throughout the course of the entire season.

When you look at the match play format, I think part of what makes it interesting is it can be a bit flukey at times. It's not like team sports where you're playing against each other. It's both of us playing against the golf course and adding up our scores. Does the best player always win at match play? Not necessarily. I think it's far less often when you look at a 72-hole stroke play format.

If you're going to look at financial compensation for guys and trying to reward them for that over the course of the season, accumulating points or whatever it's going to be over the course of 20 events is probably a better way to do it than it is in a match play tournament.

So separating the season and the postseason, I think, was a smart move by the TOUR, especially when you look at financial rewards for players.

Q. You're the top-ranked golfer in the world, and you're still not immune from toddler-borne illnesses. Is that humbling to have that kind of part of your home life brought onto the course like it was last week? If you could just speak about how you personally balance like you're in an intense part of parenthood right now and also competing in the playoffs, like how do you balance that personally?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Those are good questions. I probably should have longer time to answer them, but humbling is probably not -- not exactly how I felt. I feel like I've talked a lot about like I don't -- like I have -- it's almost like a double life essentially.

I have a life out here where I play and compete. When we're inside the ropes, it's definitely different than my home life. There's a lot of eyes on you. There's cameras like pretty much, let's say, six hours a day when I'm out here traveling. Every single thing that I do is being recorded and taken down, and everything's being dissected. You've got guys writing about basically every single thing I do. Every little thing, every last shot I hit is something of note.

So when it comes to going home, I just go home, and I don't feel any different. I have my life out here where I play and compete, and I have my life at home where I don't really do a whole lot to be honest with you. It's not that exciting.

We have a great group of friends at home that I love to see. I've got great family. When I think about the fall and our off-season, we don't really do a whole lot. Like you said, striking the balance between competing out here while also traveling with my family is something that I'm always trying to strike the balance because I work really hard at my sport and I'm trying to be the best husband, father that I can be.

I think it's always a balancing act. I'm at a point in my life where, yeah, it's really hard having two young kids and taking care of them. I think anyone with young kids can relate, you're just tired literally all the time.

I think you want to enjoy the season because eventually my kids aren't going to be able to be out here. It's something that I talked about with -- Harman is somebody I talk a lot about this with. He's like, man, I'm jealous of you guys who get to travel every week with your kids. You take the good with the bad. Part of it is hard, but part of it is you've got to also enjoy it because it doesn't last.

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