

Shriners Children's Open

Wednesday, October 6, 2021

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

TPC Summerlin

Brooks Koepka

Press Conference



Shriners
Children's Open™ 

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Brooks to the media center here at the Shriners Children's Open. Brooks has five starts at the event previously, including two top-5s. So Brooks if we could just get an opening comment from you ahead of your sixth start here.

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I've always liked it here. I think it's always been a good course for me. I've kind of either been right up there with a chance to win or it's just been two days and pack your bags. But I feel like my game's trending in the right direction, I like how everything went at the Ryder Cup I feel like I finally saw the turn because I thought this whole year after the injury was pretty poor. I just like the way it's trending. I like where the game's headed.

THE MODERATOR: Making your first start of the new PGA TOUR season, you picked up your 8th PGA TOUR title last season at the Waste Management Phoenix Open. Goals you're looking to accomplish this season as we start with a clean slate?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, just want to keep winning. I think that's the goal. That's what I'm out here to do is to win, to win multiple times and then probably stay healthy is probably a good goal.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

Q. With the news yesterday coming about The Match, curious how that came to be, when discussions started for that and what your thoughts are on that.

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I mean I think we're excited. So it's going to be good, you'll see it, what, the day after Thanksgiving.

Q. When did discussions for that begin, when did that sort of conversation start?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I don't know. You can ask Bryson.

Q. You said the key is staying healthy. How do you do

that? I know you're playing every season but what will the steps after what you've been through to try and stay healthy?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I'm still looking for that answer, man. I don't know. I think part of it maybe realizing -- I mean I still in my head I still think I'm young, I still think I'm like 22, 23, 24 in my head, but realizing that my body can't do the things that I used to do, tend to take it a little bit slower and just be more cautious, I think, whether it be in the gym, at home doing certain things messing around. It's just not, I'm not as mobile as I was years ago. So just be a little more cautious and watch it. Some things you can't avoid, you're always going to be a little, I don't want to say dinged up, but a little bit, you feel something. But it's just part of the game. You don't feel a hundred percent every week and you're not going to. But just really trying to minimize the big stuff.

Q. Distance has always been important on the PGA TOUR from Nicklaus to Daly to Woods to yourself and others. But now with what Bryson is doing seems like there's a new spotlight on it. What's the first thing that comes to your mind with his embracing of the long drive philosophy and what potential impact and influence do you think this will have on the TOUR?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I think it will be a big impact. I think you kind of saw it maybe coming out of COVID. I think you saw even other guys trying to hit it further. Swing a little harder, trying to maximize their distance. I think it's going to change the game of golf forever, personally. But if you're going to hit it that far and you find a couple fairways, it's tough to beat. It does get very difficult when you got wedge into hole where guys got 6-iron. Your odds are going to be in your favor. That's what he's done. It's impressive to be able to actually change a body, change the way you swing and but yet still compete out here action I think that's probably the most impressive thing. It's one thing to do it and then just kind of mess around with it at home but not bring it to an actual tournament. So the fact he's able to do that, the fact he did at the Long Drive, I don't think anybody really thought he was going to get that far, but the fact he did was quite impressive. So I think and it's one of those things you're seeing all these younger

ASAP sports . . . when all is said, we're done.®

guys, they come out of college -- and I remember hearing about Cameron Champ from Sean Foley for probably about two years before he was out here. And I think you're just going to continually see that type of distance come from the kids that are in college or high school now that will be out here in five, six years.

Q. I would think rest would help with your injury situation, so I was curious what your philosophy is about playing these fall events and how many you plan to play and if you wish there was a longer off-season.

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I mean, I always try to take my breaks. I like playing, if I can play, play a couple weeks in a row. Usually my first week out isn't very good, that's why I try to play as much as I can in between or right before a major. My second, third week out is usually the better of it and then at four it doesn't work for me, I don't play that well in the fourth week. So just trying to manage it and the fall schedule, I'll play these two and then Houston as well, helping design that golf course. So it's one of those things where I felt like I need reps so that was one of the things why I want to play. I need more competitive golf. Because I felt like, I don't know what, I can't think of the results, other than playing decent at the PGA, but I felt like I didn't play that well. I know I had the injury, but it was just, it wasn't up to my expectations. So kind of turning that corner now of all right I can starting to see some things, especially at the Ryder Cup I thought that was a big thing for me. And just stay healthy, because then I can, I don't have to worry about rest.

Q. Speaking of next week, you're playing in a course nobody's really ever seen before. What's your philosophy going into a tournament like that where it's a brand new venue?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Really doesn't matter. I'm pretty sure there's been guys that have pitched up to -- I mean, we did it all junior golf, colleague, amateur stuff, you never played the golf course and go play. So I personally don't think it's a big deal. I think sometimes it's made a little bigger deal than what it is. Done it our whole lives or especially more when we were younger, not so much when we're on TOUR. But it's fine.

Q. Do you know anything about the Summit Club?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Nothing. I know it's in Vegas, that's about it.

Q. You talked about you like where your game is trending and you saw some good things at Whistling Straits. Just curious what did you kind of see in your game there, what were the shots you were seeing that

were really encouraging?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I thought I drove it a lot better, I thought for obviously I didn't drive the ball as well this year. I didn't have, we call it, me and Rickie and everybody kind of on the team, we call it just like a little fairway finder where it's a little bit lower flighted, cuts a little bit more than a normal shot for me. And I just couldn't put, I just couldn't find the fairway with it, it just kept leaking and then I kind of had the both-way misses with the driver, but that was more swing related than anything. Just the scoring clubs too. Making quite a few bogeys with wedges in your hand where, to be honest with you, I tried to play too perfectly is I think maybe the best answer for that and tried to play perfect golf. Sometimes when you are trying to be so perfect it ends up backfiring on you. Just trying to be a little bit more patient. I think I was getting a little bit more frustrated, impatient, all those things and really kind of had to take a step back and just realize, all right, like I'm not playing as bad as I think I am and I'm just putting more internal pressure I think than anything. And then as far as putting goes, it's just been I struggled, it wasn't the fact I was lining up wrong or the stroke was bad, it was my green reading. So I've kind of gone to my putting coach, Jeff Pierce, we worked a little bit on AimPoint, I started to use that, Ryder Cup was the first time I used it and I thought that was a big thing, it's just using it kind of more as a not the answer, more of the double check or having an idea where to, this is the region where it's, this putt should be breaking, then get behind it, bend down, look at it, do my normal thing, okay, they both work, just a double check system. Plus it takes a little bit off of having to bend down all the time on the knees so it's a double added bonus.

Q. I was going to ask you, we also had Scottie Scheffler in here a couple minutes ago, I'm sure you got a different window inside looking at him through the Ryder Cup. Just curious, he went out Sunday, gave you guys a huge point. Curious what your thoughts were on him as a young player and just the way he carries himself and his game.

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, we have the same agent, Blake Smith, so it's I've known Scottie for a long time. Even when he was an amateur golfer, you knew he was going to be out here, good player, very solid, very consistent. I think he's going to be, he hasn't won yet but he will and it's going to be very quickly. I think to being apart of this Ryder Cup and winning important points and being in that atmosphere, for me it was the same way, I felt like I had the most confidence after 2016, it really kind of propelled me. I wouldn't be surprised if that happens to him. If you look at all these big events, the major, the WGC's over the last few years, that's where he plays his best, it seems, the bigger tournaments. And he's a



big-game hunter so I wouldn't be surprised if he pops off a major win very shortly, but that win will come and it's going to come pretty quick, I think.

Q. I was interested what you said about Bryson at the Long Drive. Do you think he'll ever be able to unload to that extent in a Regular Tour event and if it hadn't been for the injuries, is that a route you would have followed, looking for extra distance?

BROOKS KOEPKA: To the second part, no, I wouldn't. Look, I played the same way for, I'm 31, to probably maybe 20 years, I would say, pretty consistent of what my game is. Don't try to do anything I can't do. I don't try to press the issue. But what was the first part of that again?

Q. It was whether he could unload to that extent in a proper TOUR event or will conditions always be against that?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I mean, he could. I think if conditions are right, wide enough fairway, not that he's spraying it, but if you get something that looks like a pasture out there and it's a long hole, I mean, I'm pretty sure he could if he wanted to. I think he could, without a doubt. If he's done it out there in the Long Drive, he can do it out here, it's just a matter of how tight the fairway is, where the miss is, all those things kind of go into play.

Q. I know your little brother didn't make it through Q-School a couple weeks ago. As someone who has played on the Challenge Tour and all these different levels and you've played a lot of golf with Chase. How small is the gap between the guys who are struggling to get there and the guys you're going to be playing against this week?

BROOKS KOEPKA: There's a very minimal gap. I played with guys outside my brother, including, even including my brother, where you're trying to figure out how they're not out here. Just comes down to playing well at the right time. It's more difficult to get out here than it is to stay out here, I think. Once you get that actual -- I mean, you got to play well one week a year, Q-School and then you got to have a year on the Korn Ferry to get out here. It's not like it was back in the day where you could have one good week and then you're out on the PGA TOUR.

As far as my brother goes, he was down there with us before the Ryder Cup and I watched him play, he's plenty good enough to be out here, just needs to put it together at the right time and kind of find his way. I think he's doing a lot better job of that, just from talking to him over the last couple weeks and I think he's really kind much I don't want to say found himself, but he's doing -- I'm impressed with

what I see. I know it didn't work out for him, but he's definitely going in the right direction and I'm proud of him for that.

Q. I had one follow-up on you working with the AimPoint. I don't know if it's hard or easy to learn, but at 31 does it keep the game fresh that you guys are always kind of learning stuff and discovering nuances and different little things in this game?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, it's kind of funny. Yeah, I don't probably use the AimPoint as the AimPoint people would like it, it's just like a rough guess, I just, is it a 1, 2, 3, 4, what ever it might be, I don't try to get too specific with it and just kind of have a ballpark region. So to go with it. But, yeah, it was refreshing because we were talking about it on the course today of like growing up when I was little my dad taught me pretty much the game and we were talking about plumb bobbing it and that was always the way to read it. But it's actually the most, it doesn't work (laughing), as much as people might think it does, it all depends on where you stand. And I just learned that today, so I was kind of fascinated by that. But it's interesting with all these new, we have so much technology now, you think about it, I don't even, 10 years ago I don't know if Trackman existed, I don't really use it that much, barely ever. But there's so much technology there, where if you want information you can go get it and if you don't, I'm probably on the less information side of guys out here, and there's some things where you got to keep improving year after year. You look at it, traditionally 30 or 35 is when guys have their prime out here and I'm just kind of starting that prime at 31. So hopefully that holds up true. But you got to find a way.

I've fallen off, to be completely honest, I've fallen off of going to world No. 1, injuries, all this stuff, and I haven't been where I expect myself to be, so I think that's been the disappointing part, so it was a, kind of kicking myself and trying to figure out how to get better and that was just one of the ways. So I like where this information is coming, because it's definitely helping and I think having maybe an open mind to certain things is key out here.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports