

The American Express

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La Quinta, California, USA

PGA WEST Pete Dye Stadium Course

Scottie Scheffler

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome world No. 1, Scottie Scheffler to the interview room. Scottie, thanks for joining us for a few minutes prior to the start of the 2024 The American Express. I think I heard you say you're starting out over on this way today, practice.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Practicing over here, but playing La Quinta tomorrow, I think.

THE MODERATOR: Just a few thoughts on being back here kind of getting the things underway.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, it's good. Nice to be here this week. Obviously, the weather's really good. It's a great place to get some work in, kind of get the season started. Kapalua is a great, fun event, but you don't really get a good feel for where your game's at. You're playing on the side of a volcano, basically, and the wind's blowing hard, and it's a different type of golf course. Come here to the desert, there's not many conditions, you get a really good gauge of where my game's at going into the rest of the year.

THE MODERATOR: In the three-course rotation, how do you adjust your mindset and your game to play accordingly to those courses each day?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I just have a strategy going playing each course. It's not a really complicated, just trying to hit fairways and greens and get a lot of looks. Most of it is just adjusting to the speeds of the greens. Outside of that, maybe a little bit of bunker sand-type stuff. For the most part, speed of the greens, getting adjusted to it, and just being prepared to go out and play.

THE MODERATOR: We'll jump in with questions.

Q. Kapalua's a place where you got to go low. This is traditionally a place where you've got to go low. Is that something you're comfortable with early in the year having to go out and make birdies and a few eagles?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, usually at the beginning of

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the year I'm excited to go out and make birdies and not bogeys, so it's nice coming into tournaments where you got to make birdies. But, no, just like any golf course, you got to be precise. I feel like on the easier courses on TOUR you can't really get behind, just because it's so much harder to catch up. If you look at a U.S. Open golf course, you can still shoot really low scores, but if you start falling behind there's, you can only shoot so low on a golf course, and if guys are shooting 64s every day, you can only shoot so much lower than that. Whereas, if the average scores is low 70's, you can still get those crazy low numbers every now and then, so there's always hope. Here, you can't get caught too far behind, so you got to hit the ground running tomorrow and start making birdies early.

Q. You can make birdies on those greens at La Quinta, right?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Supposed to (Smiling.)

Q. This is the fifth straight year you've been here. You've had a couple of pretty good finishes, is it just that the weather's good the courses are in great shape or is there something about these courses that fits you?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Well, I played here my rookie year. I started here instead of Sony. I wasn't in Kapalua my rookie year, so I decided to start here. I really enjoyed coming here and just playing some golf. It's a great place to practice and prepare. The event's fun. The pro-am aspect is fun. I've had some good partners over the years that I've enjoyed playing with. It's just a fun event for us to come play and compete. The golf courses are always in great shape. The weather's typically pretty good. It's a fun week to start the year.

Q. The three guaranteed rounds is kind of a help, too?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, definitely. I think it was, maybe two years ago here, I think this tournament kind of helped jump start me for the rest of the season. I think I was outside the cut line by maybe three shots with three holes to go over on Stadium Course, and I chipped in for eagle on 16, and made a 30-footer for birdie on 18 to make the cut on the number. Then I went out on Sunday and had a really good round, I finished 20th or 25th, something

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like that. Then, after that, it kind of jump started the rest of my year. I think I played Torrey Pines the next week, and won in Phoenix a couple weeks after that, and kind of started my run there in 2022. So, it's a good gauge, it's a good practice week, it's a fun event to come play and compete. It's like 10 degrees where I live right now, so it's kind of nice being out here.

Q. You always make a push to come out here to the desert. Some people don't. Is it something special here? Is the environment different as well just out here being in the desert, three different golf courses? And then, you're playing with amateurs as well, but you're still able to focus, I mean, is it just, do you like the environment out here in the desert, is what I'm trying to ask?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I think it's a really relaxed event. I think the crowds are actually pretty good size for being spread around three courses. It's a fun event to play for that reason. I've had some amateur partners over the years that I enjoyed spending time with on the golf course. I think it's a little bit different than Pebble, where you're not playing with one amateur each. Like, you don't have that set amateur partner. So, kind of mixing makes it a little bit less serious for the amateurs. Because, when you're just two partners, you know, it feels like more of a team thing, but then you kind of trade each day, and so the amateurs here really just are trying to hang out and have fun and, yeah, I think it's just a little bit of a different aspect to it. It's not that there's anything wrong with the other way, but this way is fun, too. It's a relaxed tournament, the crowds are really nice, and, yeah, it's fun to play.

Q. Coming into the year, you're the No. 1 player in the world. Everybody knows you're the No. 1 player in the world. Everybody wants to talk to you like we do. Thanks for coming in, by the way. Do you think about that, or do you just think about the regular kind of goals that you would have for a year coming in whether you were 1st or 5th in the world, or 25th?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, wherever I sit at in the World Rankings doesn't really affect how I'm going to play this week. Still going out and trying to play good and win the tournament. I feel like I harp on preparation a lot, and so when I show up to tournaments I want to be as prepared as possible. Then, when I step up on the first tee, I have a little conversation with myself, that I did everything that I could do to play good this week, I'm prepared, I'm going to have a good attitude, and then I'm just going to go out there and have fun and compete. For me, it's all about the preparation, because then I can let go of the results. If I show up to a tournament ready to play, and I don't play as I hope to, that's okay, I did what I was

supposed to do in order to play well, it just didn't happen that week. Then, some weeks you show up prepared and you play great. For me, it's all about preparation and I don't really pay attention to the World Rankings too much, doesn't really give me any extra strokes or anything like that this week.

Q. There's so much noise around the game these days. Is it hard to prepare? Is it hard to get ready to play or focus on playing, or is, once you get on the first tee, all that stuff disappears?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I think, once I get out to the golf course, especially when I'm at home, I play with the same guys every week at home, and so it's not really a big topic of discussion for us in our day-to-day lives. I think, at night, sometimes, going out to dinner and stuff like that with the guys out here, conversations are a bit different than they have been in the past, but that's just because we got some stuff we need to figure out. But as far as the preparation goes, no, it's not overly difficult. When I go out there to practice I'm trying to get my work in, and I wouldn't say it's a distraction for me.

THE MODERATOR: All right, well, Scottie, thank you for your time, we always do appreciate it.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: All right. Thanks, y'all.

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