

THE PLAYERS Championship

Tuesday, March 9, 2021

Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, USA

TPC Sawgrass

Bryson DeChambeau

Press Conference

AMANDA HERRINGTON: We'd like to welcome the TOUR's most recent winner, Bryson DeChambeau to the virtual interview room here at THE PLAYERS Championship. You recaptured the lead in the FedExCup with your victory on Sunday, making your third start here at THE PLAYERS Championship. Have you had a chance to reflect on everything that happened last week and headed into a big event like this?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: No, I haven't, actually. It's been a quick turnaround. Last night I was practicing quite a bit, trying to figure out some stuff in my golf swing still. Albeit, it was an incredible win and I was honored to win Mr. Palmer's event, we have THE PLAYERS Championship this week and I've got to get focused for this and figure out the best strategy this week and how I can best navigate the golf course.

Q. How did you celebrate, and how long did you celebrate?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Well, it was only for a few hours, and I went into the locker room afterwards and hung out with quite a few of the folk there. I had a chocolate milk and I had some Arnold Palmer gummies. It was like iced tea and lemonade gummies. That was kind of funny, it was kind of a tribute to him. We had a little bit of champagne, as well, and popped a bottle. That was fun.

Other than that, I went over to Amy's house and I was over there with Sam. We were having a great time, just talking about Arnold Palmer and what he meant for the game and what he did for game. It was just a pretty special little moment that we had over there at the house that they own, and I think that was a moment that I'll never forget for the rest of my life, looking at all his memorabilia up on the wall. That was pretty special.

I'll also say, when I went back, I was staying at a host family's house, they're great friends of mine and they were nice enough to host me all week in this beautiful home and I played some pinball, funnily enough. They had a pinball machine downstairs, so I was playing that for a little while.



And then 11:00 to 12:00 comes around and I'm just in bed getting ready to come up to THE PLAYERS Championship for this week.

Q. What is your take on this golf course? You've broken par seven of the eight of your rounds, T37, T20. What are your thoughts on your approach to this golf course?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Yeah, it's a very demanding golf course. You have to put the ball in play and there's a few holes where you can take advantage, from a length perspective, but for the most part, the par-4s you've got to hit it in play and you've got to have great iron play this week. So that's what I'm really focused on. If I can get my iron play down this week and my wedges down this week, I'll have a great chance to win with my putting.

Q. Todd Lewis Tweeted something yesterday saying that you told him that it was your "C" game last week. I just want to get some clarification if that was indeed your "C" game, and if it was, have you had your "A" game yet with this body? Have you had a week where you felt like everything was firing, and when was it?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Look, that was more -- I would say a little more personal, but from my perspective I just didn't feel like I had it all. I was obviously working hard trying to figure out my golf swing late Saturday night again and even Sunday. You could see, the first tee, I didn't hit one very well, but I was still able to play golf and win a golf tournament, which is great. If anything my driving didn't feel great. My putting was obviously A, I'd give it an A, but my iron play was just not where I wanted it to be, and my expectation levels are really high.

By no means am I trying to cause anything by that, other than saying that I just was not hitting my best the way I wanted to last week.

I think I haven't really won with everything firing on all cylinders, but then again, you have to have some luck occur. For example, what I did on 4 and 11 with making putts from 40, 50 feet, that's a little lucky. You have to have luck go your way in order to win tournaments, and that's what happened last week, and hopefully that can keep going on and we can keep figuring out more with the



iron play and driving and wedging.

Q. You're clearly taking a lot of pride in your putting and you're putting it beautifully. You've made so many changes with your driver. Has the putting technique been pretty consistent or are you tweaking that, as well?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: It's been pretty consistent for the most part. We changed the hosel a couple weeks ago and when I put it in place it felt incredibly stable and it was a better iteration than the previous model. From my perspective it was like, okay, it's great, let's test it. So I tested it at Concession and I putted really good and Arnold Palmer I putted really well, too. It's one of those things that's immediately made an improvement in my game.

Q. What kind of juice did having fans kind of surrounding you on No. 6 last week and down the stretch, just having them back out there, and with even more expected this week, could this tournament kind of be a step back to normal?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Yeah, I definitely think it's a step back to normal. This is one year removed from us not playing golf, and the world kind of shutting down. I think it's cool that one year later we're back to somewhat normal. There's obviously different things that are going on, but I would say that for the most part, it's pretty amazing to see fans back out, and there was a lot of juice on No. 6 last week, and I think that for the most part, fans are what create some of that momentum for players, and for me I know that was definitely the case last week, and will continue to do so. They've always kind of been my little edge, I guess you could say, for helping improve my performance on the golf course. There's no doubt about it. Winning in Detroit last year and then winning the U.S. Open, it was weird. It was a weird feeling to win and not have fans there.

Felt more like college events. Not to make them sound like they work college events at all, but there just wasn't the people out there that there usually are, and having fans back out last week was definitely a great momentum boost for me.

Q. I was just watching the TOUR put up a short video of you just messing around on the range with different follow-throughs and stuff, and I think that when people see how much time you spend on the range, it seems like you're usually just grinding in like a certain swing thought. I'm wondering how much time you spend just screwing around and messing around and trying out different stuff.

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: I would say 25 percent is definitely messing around, for sure. We're always -- I'm not afraid -- I'm very risk averse when it comes to trying things. It goes along the same lines as me hitting and making weird swings on the golf range and trying to figure out what is this doing, why is that doing that and why is the ball flight like that, because of this motion.

You know, 25 percent is just -- it's like free-hand painting almost. I'm just trying to figure out what's working in life and why it is the way it is. And then the other 75 percent I'm working hard on a motion that I believe is accurate.

But that's the way I do it. I have to keep it light and fun. If I just grind all the time, I'll definitely not be in the right place mentally if I'm just consistently going at it.

Q. Have you decided if you're going to try the far left line on No. 18 yet?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: I'll probably give it a try, but it's most likely not going to happen. If there's stands -- I haven't seen it yet, but if there's stands there there's really no reason to go for it, when I could just drive it 100 yards from the green if I get a good wind normally. It's not really that big of an advantage, but taking the water out of play and having an easier second shot, it may be easier, I don't know.

Q. Could I ask you more of a technical question. You just mentioned in the previous answer about ball flight. What's so special about the Bridgestone ball you're using? And when golfers like myself are playing off 15, how do you explain the worth of this ball to someone like that, an amateur?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Oh, wow. Well, the first and foremost part of it is, for me at least is the flight and stability of the golf ball. When I switched over from their last iteration to this iteration, the time they spent designing the aerodynamics of the golf ball, pretty instrumental in my performance in how the golf ball flies. For me that's the first-off thing. The second-off piece of it is that a 15 handicapper has a different compression amount and there's different golf balls that Bridgestone has. The RX ball is a great example for a 15 handicapper who has the ability to compress a little bit easier, for guys that don't hit it as hard as I do. But for a golf ball that's necessary for me, the TOUR BX works really, really well with a certain compression, certain core, certain gradient amount, mantle cover. And then also the quality control, the most important part of it is just the quality of the golf ball. There's a reason why I play the Bridgestone golf ball and the Tour BX is because of how centered the golf ball is. Every piece, every layer of that golf ball essentially is the

most quality controlled golf ball on the market today.

From my perspective there's an assurance that the golf ball is a great piece of engineering and they have built a golf ball that will last for a long time. For example, there's numerous times -- for example, at the U.S. Open, the durability of it is unbelievable. I played one golf ball the whole round at the U.S. Open. I also played one golf ball at Bay Hill and at Concession. I did it once each day, just because I was playing well, I'm like, the golf ball looks good, the line looks good, there's no reason to take it out of play. I just kept playing it.

Q. How do you go about plotting out a golf course, and what's the challenge of kind of this one with so many different nuances?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Yeah, well, a lot of it depends on how comfortable I am and what my dispersion values are that I give myself. So like, oh, I know I'm missing my driver this far to the right, missing it this far to the left. So based on those numbers personally, I kind of find where I can fit the golf ball into certain areas to give me a better advantage on this hole or on that hole or whatnot. But that's kind of how I look at it.

You know, Tim, my caddie, Tim Tucker, he works really, really hard at finding lines for me to make sure that this is the best place for me to gain the most off the tee or to gain the most, just having a better approach to the green or whatever certain pin location. Those are kind of the things we look at.

One practice round is really all we need, especially if we've played the golf course before. I do have a different body, so it's going to be a little different this year figuring out where to hit it and what to hit, but for the most part that's kind of what we do.

Q. Do you have a strategy yet, and how many times are you going to hit driver, I guess? People always are wondering that.

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Yeah, yeah, I don't know how many times yet. Probably not as many. There's a lot of cross bunkers and water that crosses the fairway and places where you kind of just have to hit it into a certain specific area. I would say, for the most part, driver will be taken out of play a numerous amount of times, but on the par-5s I'll definitely be able to hit driver for the most part. Maybe not on 2, but definitely on 11, and I would say 16 I'll be hitting driver for sure.

And then a lot of the par-4s I will be, too, but I can't just bomb it out there yet. There's a lot of, again, cross

bunkers that are in the way.

Q. Following on that, 12 is going to play like 370. Does it change your strategy, given you can still reach?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Oh, on 12? It's playing longer this year? Oh, I didn't know that.

Q. For a few rounds at least they've got the tee back, like today for example at 370.

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Oh, wow, that's cool. Yeah, I mean, hey, if they want to do that, that's great. I mean, we're all going to play it. Again, hopefully the length should still be an advantage. I think it's a really cool hole that should be a drivable hole. Putting it all the way back there is going to take a lot of people out of the equation from trying to drive it and it may make the hole easier for some people because then they aren't going for it and taking that risk-reward on and making a mistake. Now they're hitting 3-wood or whatever down the right center and then hitting a wedge on the green and making birdie one or two days, where they would be going for it every single day and maybe they make a mistake.

I think personally from my perspective, us trying to keep making golf holes longer is not the answer, nor will it ever be, and I hope people realize that length will always be a tremendous advantage, no matter what way you look at it and golf courses are not becoming obsolete. The goal of the game of golf is to get the golf ball into the hole in the least amount of strokes possible. Whatever way you can do that, so be it. I think that's the cool part about it. If you had a linebacker out here that could hit it 400 yards every single time, farther than me even, par on the golf course would not be 72 for him.

Par is all relative. I think golf holes are all relative. I think what's unique about a golf hole is the way it's designed and set up, per a strategy and a risk-reward opportunity.

Q. Do you think you'll still have a crack, 370?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Oh, if it's downwind, yeah, I'm sure I will. Even if I can hit it up next to the green and chip it on.

Q. Do you happen to find the walk from the 16th green to the 17th tee somewhat daunting given its length? And if there are less people, does it make it any easier? In other words, people not cheering and yelling as you're walking by.

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Yeah, I think if there's less

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

people, it definitely will be a little bit easier because there's not that -- for example, I'll give you No. 6 last week, they were all egging me on to go for it on No. 6 and hit it over the water, go for the green. So there was a little bit of pressure, added pressure there for sure. I know that that's a reality and it's a fact.

But if there's a little less people -- I still think people will be saying, Come on, come on, or whatever they say, egging us on to hit it close or whatnot on 17. But yeah, having less people will I think certainly be a benefit to some.

Q. Even though it's a short iron, probably just a sand wedge or a pitching wedge, is it a tough shot? Is it an intimidating shot?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: If there's wind at play, 100 percent it's a very difficult shot. If there's no wind, it's relatively simple. But yes, the windier it gets, the more diabolical that hole gets because there's not really room for error if you're going for a flag, because they tuck the flag. You can miss it one way, but the other way it's gone.

You've got to be very cautious and, for the most part, err to the center of the green.

Q. I know you said you didn't play your best at Bay Hill, but when you play the way you did at Troy and at Winged Foot, why do you think you always keep experimenting instead of maintaining what appears to be a sizable advantage and just seeing what you can accomplish?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Well, I'm trying to do that. That's exactly what I'm trying to do. Sometimes the golf swing gets a little more sensitive in regards to error, and it's like, whoa, I really don't feel like I did that, why did that happen. So I'll go down the rabbit hole of trying to figure out why that big error occurred.

For example, No. 2 at the U.S. Open, the third round I hit one 50, 60 yards left. I'm like, whoa, I didn't feel like I did that. So I'm always trying to get a better response out of my body to feel that motion, so like, okay, that's -- I'm not going to do that again. So when I'm hitting a shot, I want to be able to feel like it's a good motion, have the golf ball go in the right area. Not make a good motion and have it go in a weird area, cut or slice, draw, whatever. I'm trying to always make my perception true reality, and when those two don't match, my brain kind of gets a little different and try and figure it out. My brain just goes into solving the problem.

Q. What are the positives and the negatives of having the wedge setup that you do in terms of having a

longer length shaft?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Well, the positives are that I feel like I'm making the same motion with any iron shaft. The negatives are we don't know what happens, truly, with -- to the fullest extent, what happens when the clubs are that length, with the weighting and the CG. We don't know what's truly going on. We're still working on it and still trying to figure it out, but I would say, for the most part, for amateurs it's great. I think it's an awesome way to do it. There won't be any issues. But for a TOUR player that's looking to be the best wedge player on TOUR, there's still some stuff we need to improve on.

Q. You have talked about holes you might consider driving or getting very close to the green on. Have you thought about how far you might be able to get on 10? Could you go over trees at 15?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: 10, if it's downwind, yeah, you could. But there's bunkers that kind of wrap the green and cut the fairway in half a little bit. You know, whether it's worth it, I don't know. It gets tighter up there, as well.

Yeah, it's something we're going to have to experience and sense off the tee when the wind is at play. We just don't know. If there's no wind, probably not many holes that we can get close to. I'd have to be hitting -- having over 200 miles an hour ball speed for these greens to be feasible to reach. I'm just not there with the setup that I have right now.

But again, you never know. It's downwind and it's worth it, why not. We'll see.

Q. Can you hit beyond trouble at 14?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: 14, yes, definitely.

Q. So that hole could become easier for you?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: A hundred percent, absolutely.

Q. Have you ever thought about getting an additional wedge that hits it shorter?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Well, I can hit all my wedges whatever distance I need, it's just about when I miss it a little bit, it doesn't react normal, like a normal mis-hit with another wedge. Yeah, we've definitely thought about going shorter. We've definitely thought about that. I've tried it. I've had a bunch of iterations of clubs to help me improve my wedging, but nothing has really shown itself to be prominent help. We don't really know what the answer is yet, and we're still trying to figure it out.

Q. In your two previous rounds here, what's the shortest club you hit into 12 and hit the green with?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: I think I hit 3-wood in was my shortest club on 12. That was last year.

Q. And given where you've progressed between now and then, if they gave you like a 315-yard tee at some point this week, what do you think you could hit the green with, given the right wind?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Well, the 315-yard, I could hit my 5-wood on the green. If it's the right conditions, a little downwind, front edge would probably be 300, maybe a little less than that, and I could fly it 10 yards short, run it up with 5-wood.

Q. And then given the right wind conditions again, on No. 9, do you think you could get over that cross water?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: If it was -- maybe. I don't know. It would have to be downwind quite a bit to do it, but yeah, I think I could if I really went at one. Again, it just comes into how much am I really gaining off the tee by doing that. Where I could hit 3-wood off the tee and 5-iron in, compared to like 7-iron in, something like that. Maybe, maybe it's a big deal, I don't know. We'll have to check it out.

Q. How much fun is it to think of these unconventional ways to approach holes?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: I love it. I think it's a cool aspect of the game that not many people have the opportunity to do, other than some of the long drive guys that are in the world today. For me it's an intriguing aspect that I'm always trying to find a little advantage on. It's pretty fun to do.

AMANDA HERRINGTON: Bryson, thanks so much for your time today. Good luck this week.

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