

# THE PLAYERS Championship

Tuesday, March 7, 2023

Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, USA

TPC Sawgrass

## Jordan Spieth

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Jordan Spieth to the interview room here at THE PLAYERS Championship, 2023. Jordan, you're in here coming off a really good competitive week last week at the Arnold Palmer where you tied for fourth but you were in contention coming down the stretch. You must feel comfortable coming in here with some good vibes in your game. Just speak to us a little bit about that.

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah I feel the last month or so I would say since Phoenix I feel really confident. Been pushing what I've been working on and pushing the same thing, and my ball striking and driving has been really nice. I got a little off last weekend on that front and then made some strides on the greens.

Felt like last week was kind of the first week after an off week where I really got into kind of a different setup position and felt really pretty confident about hitting my start lines, and each round I got progressively better last week on the greens that are typically get more difficult as the week goes on.

So all in all, I feel good. I don't have a great track record here at this event. It doesn't take much research to figure that out. But I feel like when striking it well, having some momentum and feeling like a little bit of freedom as far as being able to play aggressively here, that's going to kind of be my strategy this week to try and take advantage. I mean, be patient, but when you get a couple opportunities, make sure you go ahead and fire away. So it's weird to come to the TPC Sawgrass and feel like it's a less stressful week than the week before, but that's just a heavy stress golf course last week. It feels like you get one or two breaks the entire round, and you might get a couple more this week. But it feels like quite a bit. It's a lot greener here this week than it was last week.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take some questions.

**Q. From being in the meeting at Delaware to what was presented last week, where do you think the biggest gain was made?**



JORDAN SPIETH: I think the idea that I can confidently say that it's not two separate tours as much as that might be perceived that way. In Delaware that was the first presentation was essentially two separate tours. To get to a place where every single full card holder can play in every single PGA TOUR event that season meant there had to be some give from then.

I think it was the right thing to do. You still have elevated events with the overall from Delaware until now, the idea being getting the top-ranked players in the world playing as often together on the PGA TOUR as possible. I think that that's been done, while providing an opportunity for any guys who are future stars to be able to still get into those top events within a week as well as any other card holder that may not start in the elevated events to starts the season.

So I think I'm pleased with the work the PGA TOUR has done in regards to feedback from players. I've felt like in the last six months, maybe four months, the communication has been fantastic, and hopefully this is a product that doesn't need to be changed much. Once the nicks are kind of figured out over the next six months or so, the little details, hopefully it can be a situation where there doesn't have to be a lot of change over the next 20 plus years, and that was really the outlook that we all had on it.

**Q. You mentioned your track record here at THE PLAYERS and you have several missed cuts over the years --**

JORDAN SPIETH: I said it didn't take much research. I didn't need you to actually research it.

**Q. What has been the biggest challenge for you playing this golf course?**

JORDAN SPIETH: It's a good question. I think when I mentioned it to Michael, I think I mentioned I don't play it with enough patience, and that kind of goes against what I just talked about being aggressive.

But there's such a balance there to being confident and swinging aggressively to the right targets versus visually I've had a hard time on this golf course because I like to



see a lot of feel shots, and out here there's not a lot of stuff to work it off of. It seems like if a ball is moving away from a hole, it's just going to move further away from a hole. I have a hard time visually with that, versus say Kapalua or Augusta where it's just -- you're working a ball off a slope or wind and greens feed in and out, and I think that's been my toughest -- it's been more in the approach game and even some tee balls, just feeling confident that when the ball lands it's going to stay versus feeling like it kind of gets rolling off the sides. That's the only thing I can think of right now.

**Q. A number of your peers have grown up fast on the TOUR and a lot of you are now parents and dads. Could you tell me how that changes you as a person and how it changes your attitude to golf, whether it helps or hinders you as a player?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I'm not someone to say, man, my perspective on everything has changed because I don't feel very different at all. It really hasn't changed my outlook on golf. I would say certainly there are times where I probably go home sooner than I would because I'm excited to go home and hang out with the little man at home. But that time is more valuable than any other time I could spend doing anything else, and I would prioritize that as best I can, while still trying to be the best player in the world.

So it's somewhat of a balancing act in that regard, but it's been incredible.

First part of your question was just how it's changed as a person? I still feel like I'm 21 and shouldn't have a kid sometimes, and then sometimes I feel like 50 and I could have a grandkid. I talk with Annie, and we're just, we're like, man, it's just kind of crazy that he's our kid. That just happened so fast. I know everyone says that. So we're trying to soak it in, and it's just a lot of joy.

It's really a lot of fun. He's a really happy kid, and that's really fun to be around. He's always smiling and laughing, and I like messing with him. Now he's kind of stable enough to be able to kind of wrestle around with, and it's a blast.

**Q. Does it change your perspective and make golf easier? If golf's sort of less important, does that maybe enhance your performance?**

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I didn't mean to -- I didn't mean to infer that it would be less important. More so that there's just nothing more important than that to me. I don't think -- if you find any way to make golf easier, I'm all ears. I think that it certainly makes the off days, days like Sunday where

I was pretty disappointed when I finished and then he's walking to me and giggling because he saw me. You know, it changes your mood pretty quickly. And the good days are just as good or better. So in that regard, yeah, it makes life itself more enjoyable. Which was already pretty good.

**Q. You just mentioned the fact that getting the best players together more often was the impetus behind these elevated events. That being said and all the players buying into that idea, did you have to raise purses that high to get there?**

JORDAN SPIETH: No, but I think that why would you not maximize what sponsors, networks and the TOUR itself can maximize. I don't remember that being like, hey, these have to be at a set number to get there, but if a tournament sponsor wants to have essentially a major championship at their tournament, we probably -- the TOUR felt that they would be able to charge a certain premium for that. That's kind of where we've gotten to this year and hopefully for future years. I don't see why you wouldn't try and maximize the value that you can from our perspective at all.

**Q. Can you talk more about your mindset about bouncing back from disappointing losses. I know it's a big part of the game for everybody, but how do you mentally deal with major disappointments, and does it get easier as you get older?**

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I wouldn't call it a major disappointment. I mean, I started the day four back, and I didn't look at a board. I knew I was probably -- you could feel it in the crowd, and you know how you're playing, you know how the course is. This was a -- last week was a great week. I actually felt that I hit my lines on every putt. I didn't hit my driver well on the weekend. I've been driving the ball really nicely, and I didn't put the ball in the fairway enough on Saturday and Sunday, or else it would have been a breeze to the finish line, I think.

That's how I look at it is I want to improve there and I want to continue to press my foot on the pedal on what I've been doing on the greens. The rest of it was really solid, so a lot of maintenance, but certainly kind of getting back to some of the stuff I was doing early last week, even Pebble and Riviera with my longer clubs where I lost a little bit of -- mechanically lost a little bit of the soundness that I had then. I know what it was, and it just takes sometimes a couple days with eyes on it with my coach, and that's what I've been trying to do yesterday, today and tomorrow.

So I look at it as a lot of positives. I hit every putt where I wanted to. I missed a few late. I look back at the greens

books afterwards where you can plug them in and see, and I just misread them. That's a lot easier to swallow than scared bad strokes. This was different.

I felt really confident going into every shot and every putt and had a really good week and I'll try and get back into contention this week, and especially as we head into the majors, you just -- you can't be in contention enough. You just get more and more comfortable each time. That was the first time really Sunday on a back nine I've had a chance to win in quite a while, so I need to do that more often so it becomes easier and easier.

**Q. You actually answered part of my question, which was you said that you had not had a lead late on a Sunday in quite a while. What did that feel like? Also, you mentioned that you did not look at a leaderboard. Is that typical for you?**

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, it's not -- I don't -- especially on really challenging golf courses, I'm not going to play a hole a different way or take a different club regardless of the position I would be in. So I didn't feel that it made any -- it wasn't useful at all because I was playing against myself and the golf course trying to shoot the lowest score I could. So the other guys didn't matter on a place like that. That's why I felt I didn't need to, especially coming from four back where people win on that golf course from four back. I mean, it's possible.

It is here too. It's not everywhere. It's difficult in other places. You need some help other places. But you can go out and get it from within three or four shots of the lead.

I felt really good, to answer your question. It felt awesome. Actually a couple times I felt grateful, and I was sitting here saying this is what I love to do. There were times where I never -- times where I didn't think I would get back in this situation in big tournaments. So I felt pretty confident.

I wanted to kind of walk tall and feel confident stepping into every shot. I wanted to be grateful and just embrace like, hey, the way my heart is racing right now and the way -- and these difficult holes coming up, I mean, this is why I got into this game. If you don't like it, then you're not going to be here very long. So learn to embrace it and enjoy it and I did.

**Q. You mentioned at Kapalua to the No Laying Up guys that your body doesn't allow you to swing the way that you used to swing. Wondering as you adapt to your new swing and your new body, do you have a primary swing thought, and if you do, what is it?**

JORDAN SPIETH: So, I think where I was referencing that was like my early couple years on TOUR, where I had a lot less mobility and flexibility. Some of that just came from being in the gym, but some of it is just natural.

When you're 19, you're not at your prime level of what you can be at in strength and stability and mobility, flexibility, all that, pliability. So I would say like if I look at a timeframe, the 2017 timeframe, it was a pretty similar situation to where I'm at now. So that's easier to look at to try and map.

A lot of it for me has to do with like the how the connectivity of my body to my arm swing. So being really stable, as if I set the club in the backswing appropriately, I typically strike the ball really well. But I have a difficult time in the last however many years of really setting it where I wanted to. A lot of it has to do with -- a lot of it had to do with injury and weak grip and a bunch of stuff I could talk to you for an hour about. But more recently it's just trying to, on my rehearsals or practice swings, it's just very, very connected and around me where my arms don't feel like they get away from my body at all. When I do that correctly it seems pretty simple to hit the ball, hit my start lines. When I hit my start lines well, I typically play well.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Jordan, we appreciate your time. Enjoy the challenge this week.

JORDAN SPIETH: Appreciate it.

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