

THE PLAYERS Championship

Tuesday, March 11, 2025

Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, USA

TPC Sawgrass

Scottie Scheffler

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome the 2023 and 2024 winner, Scottie Scheffler, to the interview room here at the 2025 PLAYERS. Scottie, last year you became the first player to successfully defend a title here at THE PLAYERS. How are tournament preparations going this week?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: They're going well. Played the back nine today with a few of my buddies, had fun. Golf course reacted pretty well to the rain, so hopefully it will firm up as the week goes on. Made a few changes to the course. I noticed on the back nine a little bit of lengthening on some holes, and yeah, it should play well.

THE MODERATOR: Great, we'll open it up to questions.

Q. Two years ago you won this thing pretty comfortably. Last year had you to come from behind, and I'm not sure how many saw you coming on that last day. Is one harder than the other, one situation harder or easier than the other?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I mean, statistically I would say it's a bit easier playing ahead than it playing from way behind. But as far as the feeling goes, no.

Q. Well, I mean being hunted maybe is a better way to put it. Is it tough when you're out there and everybody's coming after you?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I mean, I think there's challenging aspects to both of them. I think anytime you get in contention and it's a challenge, and that's what I like so much about the game is always kind of being tested.

I feel like every time you're playing golf you're kind of looking into a mirror and learning more and more about yourself.

I mean, which one's harder, I really don't know. I like both of them. I like trying to win golf tournaments. That's what I'm trying to do out here, and that's what I enjoy the most about competition is trying to go out and win and have



chances to win. It's not as much fun finishing 20th.

So anytime you can put yourself in position to win a golf tournament, I think there's a challenging aspect to it, but that's why we put in the long hours and practice as hard as we do is to put ourselves in those positions.

Q. Somewhat a question along the same lines. You've been in so many, played so well in so many different tournaments and won tough finishes. Where does what you did on Sunday last year rank for you as far as being closest to being in top form in a big moment?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I would say last year this whole tournament was one of the best performances I've had in my career, for sure. I think the way I played injured Friday and Saturday to just keep myself in the tournament took a lot of fight, a lot of heart. Definitely did not play golf the way I normally would, but I was so comfortable with my swing at the time that I was able to chip it around and play weird shots and somehow make pars and make some key birdies when I needed to.

I think about late on Saturday birdieing the last three holes to give myself just an outside chance and getting off to a good start the front nine the next day to put myself up near the lead, I fought really hard all week to have a chance and was fortunate at the end of the week to get it done.

Q. Are you still using the same Spiderman model putter that you were on fire with last year?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Spiderman putter, that's right. (Laughing.)

Q. I believe in 2003 two weeks you will have the longest consecutive run at No. 1 of anyone outside of Tiger. I guess what's the biggest challenge of not getting to No. 1 but actually staying there when everyone's kind of chasing you?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I mean, it's like what's harder, playing in the lead or playing from behind? I mean golf is hard. I think it's a challenging game. But like I said, every time you go out and play, you're almost looking in a mirror. You're trying to manage your emotions, manage your skill set, manage your way around the golf course.



I don't think about being No. 1. I didn't go out to the range today feeling like the best player in the world. I showed up feeling like myself, and I went out to try and prepare to play in the golf tournament. Being No. 1 doesn't give you any starting strokes unless we're talking about East Lake. There's only one tournament a year where you get some strokes, and you've got to earn those strokes just like you earn whatever your World Ranking is.

So as far as it goes, yeah, that will be a nice accolade if I make it there, but what does it mean going into the Houston Open or the next tournament? It's not very much.

Q. What's the secret to this course?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Playing good. I mean, you can't fake it around this place. I think there's a lot of genius in the way the golf course is designed.

There is some volatility in terms of the hazards. That provides a lot of volatility for how the golf course can play, especially in high winds.

But at the end of the day, I think there's a lot of genius in the golf course. Like you look at a hole like No. 1, to fade off the tee is a draw into the green. You look at No. 2, it's a draw off the tee. 4 is a fade off the tee. 5 is a fade. 6 is a draw. 7 is a draw.

It calls for different shots on each hole. You have to work the ball both ways. You have to play shots. If there's no conditions, you can play a little bit of robot golf, but at the end of the day, I think you got to show up, play shots, do things differently.

I mean, the golf course provides different challenges each year. On a soft year, if it's soft and windy, you got to really control your golf ball, hit a lot of chippy shots, control your spin around the greens, and then if it's firm and windy, you also got control your spin but a different way at a different height. And then if it's not windy and firm, you know you got to work the ball into the pins because the greens are firm, and I mean, the golf course can just challenge you in a variety of ways, and I think that's what makes it a great test.

It doesn't suit one type of player. I think some of the results you see here over time for guys where it's not a horses-for-courses-type place, it's just the guys that are playing the best are going to be on the leaderboard on Sunday. That's plain and simple.

Q. The new overhanging tree on the 6th hole, I don't know if you've played that hole yet in practice -- you

haven't seen it yet?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I heard some rumors. Is it technically an old hanging tree, because there used to be a hanging tree there years ago.

Q. New.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: It's a new old hanging tree, right? It was something that used to be on the hole. I'm interested to see how it is. I think that's another hole that they lengthened. That's something we got to go figure out what club it is off the tee. But yeah, sadly I've only heard the rumors. I'll find out tomorrow.

Q. Let me follow-up then. Strategically when you look at this golf course with so much trouble around there, how much is game management here more emphasized than maybe other courses on the PGA TOUR?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I mean, it's a tough question because there's certain holes where you just got to get up and hit a great shot.

You think of a hole like 17. You think of an approach shot like 16. You think of the tee shot on 18. Like there's certain holes out here where you just got to step up and hit really good shots.

So there is an aspect to game management, but at the end of the day, out here if you're playing good, the golf course can open up for you, and if you're struggling off the tee or struggling with your irons, there's not going to feel like there's much opportunity out there. It's just a really hard course when you're not on top of your game.

I think that's one of the things I love about it is, like, if you get a guy that shows up and plays the right shots and hits it well and hits it solid and controls their ball flight, they can perform really well out here, and the minute you start getting off line, the golf course will punish you really fast.

Q. How often do you get in situations where you're faced with a shot that you don't practice that much?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Not that often. I think practicing at home I sometimes will get a little bit bored hitting the same shot over and over, so one of the things that we like to do is work on different things, and especially when the kids come out on the range, that brings a new aspect to the practice and we're always doing different kinds of stuff.

I try to not hit shots very often that I don't practice. I try to practice a variety of shots. I think if you're under the gun



trying to do something you haven't prepared for, that's when it can get a bit challenging, so I try to be as prepared as possible to hit the shots that I need to.

Q. Can you think of the last time you were in a moment like in the hunt and you were called to hit a shot that you don't either prefer to play or like to play? I don't care if it was like a high cut or just a weird lie. Try and make something up, will you?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I'm trying. The only shot I can think of this year so far was I hit like a -- I was in the lip of the bunker at Torrey on like the fourth hole, and I was in the rough standing in the -- either in the bunker or on the edge of the bunker, and I was choking down to like the shaft of the club, and that was definitely one that I don't usually practice very often. I was standing in the bunker with a 5-wood, which was actually a new club for me that week, so that's a pretty good example.

Q. How did it turn out?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I hit it really good actually, just went over the green and I got up-and-down for par. It worked out really well, actually. Yeah, I was surprised.

Q. I know you're very good at handling distractions, but in particular is there anything you do to downplay the fanfare of perhaps playing with Rory and Xander?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: No, I don't think it would be smart to downplay the fanfare. I think the fans are a part of the experience when you come out and play tournaments, and I believe that I've gotten great support from the fans over the years and I try to embrace that when we're out there.

They want to see good golf. They're not out there rooting against us. There might be a few naysayers out there, but that's just part of it.

I think at the end of the day, most of the fans are rooting for some good golf and they want to see some great shots, so I think as players I think we enjoy being in front of as many fans as possible, and we should have a good crowd this week with my pairing.

Q. Not too long ago you talked about getting beat by a B-player, one of your buddies?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: B would be generous, yeah.

Q. Could you speak a little bit about your relationship to the game? I mean I know there's a technical aspect and you are one of the best in the world to ever play the game, but there has to be a relationship with the

game itself. Can you speak to that, what it means to you?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I can speak about it a little bit. I think golf is definitely a huge part of my life. It has been for a long time. I met some of my best friends in the world playing golf. I have some great trends out here on TOUR.

One of the things I love doing at home with my friends is going out and playing golf. It's pretty rare for you to be able to spend that much uninterrupted time with somebody, and I feel like when you're gambling or having fun with your buddies, it's just one of the most joyful things you can do.

It's things I love. I love being able to compete. I love being able to joke around, laugh at ourselves and go out and have fun and compete a little bit. Golf's great for that. You get plenty of time to hang out with your friends, and very fortunate that I get to do it for a living, so I'm technically working when I'm out there having fun with my buddies, you know, so it's definitely a big part of my life.

Q. How much of a role does your faith continue to be in your life but also golf?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I mean, in terms of golf, I feel like I've been given a skill set that I try to use for God's glory, and what I'm called to do is prepare as hard as possible for the challenge of coming out here and playing, and the results aren't up to me. My goal is to be as prepared as I possibly can be when I step up on to the first tee, and from there I just can go out and enjoy competing and not worry about the results because they're already set. All I can do is just go out there and try my hardest on each and every shot and kind of go from there.

Q. One thing of getting back to the No. 1 ranking thing. Different players have handled it differently over the years. You obviously handle it very well. When you became No. 1, is there anybody that was No. 1 that you consulted like a Tiger or anything like that about how to handle it or anything like that?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Not really. I think I've learned from watching guys over the years. Like you said, guys definitely handle it differently. Like you think about you can compare to Tiger or Phil or Dustin or whoever it is, Vijay Singh, like guys went about it their own way, and that's the way I tried to approach it.

The No. 1 ranking is a great thing. It's a nice accolade to get from some of the results that I've had the last few years in tournaments, but at the end of the day, I'm not resting on it. Like when I go home I don't think about being the best



player in the world. My life at home isn't any different. I practice at the same golf courses. I have the same friends. I have the same coach. Things for me at home don't really change based upon good or bad golf, and I kind of like that stability.

So I'm definitely not going to sit there and rest or view myself as any different because I accomplished some things in the game. At the end of the day, I love being able to come out here and compete, and that's what brings me the most joy.

I'm just going to try and soak that up for as long as I can. In a perfect world, the results would continue to be the way that they are and I could be No. 1 for the rest of my life, but life doesn't always go that way so I'm going to enjoy it while I can, continue to prepare the way that I do, and approach each tournament in a way that like when I think about success, I don't think about being the best player in the world. I think about my attitude on the golf course and my preparation. Those are the two things that I focus on the most. If I can be prepared when I step on the first tee and if I can have a good attitude over each and every shot, that for me is a successful week.

Some weeks I do a great job of that and some weeks I don't do such a good job of it. I think it's always managing a little bit of my expectations of myself and just trying to go out and compete.

Q. When you are coming off a year like you had last year, I know you're very much a kind of head-down and just do-what's-in-front-of-you kind of guy, but with you're in the off-season looking at this year, what kind of encore you may have, for lack of a better word, are you a goal setter? What are you thinking about backing up last year with this year, or do you really just literally look at today?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I mean what does last year's tournament have to do with this year? You tell me.

Q. No, just the year itself, not just this tournament?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, and in terms of that, what does that have to do with what I'm trying to do this week? I mean, not much, right? Like do I start 1-under? Do I start at 2-under? I mean, it's even par. It's a new tournament.

It's great to have won this tournament the last two years, but can I rely on some of those experiences when I step up on the first tee and give myself a little bit of confidence? Yes. If I missed the cut here last year, am I going to be like stepping on to the first tee and be like, man, I duck-hooked that one last year, I better not duck-hook it again, you

know?

Last year is last year. I'm not trying to replicate it. I'm not trying to look back on it. At the end of the day, it's in the past. It was a great year. I'm tremendously thankful. I lived a full lifetime in a year. A lot of great things happened, and I'm very thankful for that.

But when it comes to this year I've never been a guy that sets long-term goals. Like in terms of a season, I have what I would think of as dreams and aspirations, but my goal is to be as prepared as possible when I step up on the first tee and then I want to have a good attitude when I go out and play over each shot. And that's how I view success.

Q. When you're playing on a windy day, do you modify your ball position?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Slightly. Depending upon the shot, if I'm going to try to hit it higher I'll move it up in my stance a little bit, and then if I'm going to hit some flighted shots, the ball will move back a little bit. But playing until the wind can be really challenging and guys approach it different ways.

Then it also depends a lot on the firmness of the greens, too, on how low I'm going to try to hit it. But yeah, the ball position will definitely move significantly throughout the round, especially on a windy day.

Q. Based then on what you were saying how you define success for yourself, has this year been a successful year yet?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: At times. Yeah. I think of a week like last week, last week was a week in which I struggled on the greens. I drove it really well. I hit some good iron shots. Some iron shots I wasn't as pleased with.

But I felt like if the ball would have gone in the hole a little bit more, I would have had a chance to win, which is always a nice thing.

But I would say for about 60 holes of the tournament I had a pretty good attitude. I think I let Bay Hill maybe get to me a touch more than I should have in terms of not really having a lot of friction on the greens, sometimes the ball has a life of its own. Hit the fairway, get a mud ball, and I'm like, how the heck can you get a mud ball when the greens are dead, and then now I'm standing there hitting over a pond and I have mud on my ball and I have absolutely no idea where it's going to go.

I think sometimes those things can kind of grind you down



a little bit when you think you should get a positive reward from a good shot and you're not rewarded, but that's what happens in the game. So I would say roughly for about 60 holes I did a really good job, and the other 12 are some things mentally maybe where I wish I could have had some stuff back.

THE MODERATOR: All right, Scottie, thanks so much for your time.

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