

THE PLAYERS Championship

Monday, March 17, 2025

Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, USA

TPC Sawgrass

J.J. Spaun

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: J.J., incredibly impressive showing this week at THE PLAYERS Championship, putting yourself in contention to win. If you could start off with some thoughts on how you're feeling right now after a great week.

J.J. SPAUN: Yeah, a little disappointed. It was just a tough morning to play golf in general. It would probably be one of the harder days that we'd have if it was this wind direction.

Yeah, committed to every shot I hit. The one on 17 was exactly what I was trying to do, just didn't work out. A lot of positives this week to take from and proud to give myself a chance today, and maybe next time it'll go in my favor.

Q. It looked standing on 17 tee that maybe you were deciding between clubs or had a convo there. Can you take us through what you were thinking of hitting on 17 and your thought process there?

J.J. SPAUN: Yeah, I was never thinking anything other than 8-iron. We were warming up on the TrackMan this morning in a similar direction and getting kind of dialed in with what kind of shot I'd have to hit to fight the wind and carry the number that we were needing. It was just kind of like a nice chip 8-iron.

Pulled an 8-iron, and even after Rory hit 9, he's easily a club longer than me. I don't know if I flighted it too well, but it just went through the wind. I couldn't even tell where it was going to be. I didn't know what to tell it, like sit, go. If anything I was leaning more towards go.

But it was a great shot. It was probably six, seven feet left of the pin, just perfect if it was the right distance. I couldn't believe it was long. It just wasn't my luck of the gust, I guess.

Q. You talked the other day about what you have proven to yourself since last year in Detroit and the

way you've played since then. Do you feel even more strongly now despite this loss that you're on a great track right now?

J.J. SPAUN: Yeah, totally. This is probably the best golf I've played maybe in my career consistently. I had a chance to win at Sony, had a pretty good chance to win at Cognizant, had a chance to win this week.

But to go from where I was a year ago today or to start the week, yeah, I'm pretty proud of where I've been able to dig deep and kind of get some self-belief and get some confidence to play some good golf.

Yeah, a year ago this was the first cut I made all season. Now I lost in a playoff. Kind of a big flip there.

Q. Going into the morning like this, are you nervous? Are you excited? Can you talk about how you were feeling this morning when you got to the course?

J.J. SPAUN: Yeah, it just felt like a never-ending week, honestly. I was hoping to get home last night to see my wife and kids. Even before the delay and all that happened, I had a flight ready to go. I didn't feel nervous. I felt really good last night. I slept better than I did Saturday night. Slept better than I did Friday night.

But then when I got to the tee, I was like, ooh, it kind of hit me. Whereas when I played with Rory Saturday, I was pretty nervous, especially being one back, and I was nervous all night, or anxious. But then when I got on the tee, I was just like, ready to go.

Same way with the round yesterday. I was super nervous the night before and the morning. But then once I got into my routine and then got to the tee, it was like, I was ready to go.

I don't know what the difference was. Maybe because I knew it's do or die maybe. But yeah, I think it was my first TOUR playoff, so nothing but positives to take from it.

Q. What are the reasons why you're playing the best golf of your life in 2025?

J.J. SPAUN: I think we talked about this earlier this week.



I kind of have a different perspective on things as far as, like, golf has been my life ever since maybe college and stuff, and turning pro and climbing the ranks and trying to make a living at this, I have like a four-year old now and 20 month old, two girls.

Golf isn't everything anymore, and it's easy to kind of just let golf be golf. It's not the end of the world if I play bad. It's not the end of the world if I play great. It's just golf.

I've heard people talk about that, and I never really grasped it. Even when I had my children, it was still like, oh, now I've got to really play well because I've got to provide for them, I've got to make sure everything is good.

I think that's where I kind of flipped the switch on my attitude last year where I was playing really poorly and I was thinking to myself, well, this is my eighth year on TOUR; if this is how I'm going to go out, then this is it.

Kind of in the mid-point of the season, I said, just go out and grind your butt off, dig deep, and if it's meant to be, you can keep playing out here, it'll happen. That's kind of when it happened, when I started playing better. I didn't really care so much.

I was kind of content if things were to end, this is how it'll be, and I'll be happy with it. I've got my family and had a successful career, and that kind of helped me flip a switch mentally.

Q. On 16, what were you trying to do on the second shot? Were you trying to carry it to the green or to the front? Also, if you could just comment on you're back in the Masters after this.

J.J. SPAUN: Yeah. We were definitely just trying to run something up to kind of where I hit it yesterday, kind of left of the green, and I kind of pushed it a little bit. I was kind of scared there for a second. I didn't think it was going to cover.

But we had a really good lie. I just kind of thinned it and it came out a hair right of where we were trying to get it. But it ended up fine in the bunker. Didn't hit a great bunker shot. Kind of just slid the club right under the ball and hit a poor shot to 30 feet.

I think if I would have made that, things obviously would have been a little different.

Yeah, it was just not meant to be on that hole.

Yeah, Augusta. Kind of going into today, I was thinking about the Masters and how exciting that's going to be. It's

definitely a good consolation to the week.

Q. What was the process like last night of having to bounce back from seeing a putt that came so close to winning the tournament and having to turn around and get ready for this this morning?

J.J. SPAUN: Yeah. I was super -- I was excited to still have a chance, but it was also kind of -- I don't know. It was disappointing that that putt didn't go in. I really thought I made it. Reading it and doing my routine, I was telling myself, this is going in.

Even when you watch the replay, it just looks like it's going in, going in, and just dies.

Yeah, it's hard to go from you think you won to, okay, now you've got to go against one of the best players in the world in a three-hole stretch on a really tough finish in a completely opposite wind that we've had all week, and kind of game on.

I knew what to expect, but it just wasn't my time.

Q. You said you've had times in your career when you were scared of the moment or shied away from it. Just curious, how did you realize that, and how do you think you've overcome that now?

J.J. SPAUN: I just remember, like, I think even Sony -- well, Memphis I had a lot of scar tissue from Memphis in 2022 where I had the lead going into Sunday and I played awful. I think I shot 8-over or something like that. I think that's kind of what caused a little bit of that scar tissue mentally where I'm just like, I didn't want to have that feeling of -- not defeat, but just like crawl into a hole and die kind of a feeling because it was just so embarrassing. I was just afraid to feel embarrassed again.

Then when I went to Sony this year, I had the lead again on a course that I've historically not played well and was super uncomfortable from tee to green, even though I was playing well and holding the lead.

I gave myself a shot there to win it with two holes to go and didn't play well enough. I ended up finishing third; missed the playoff by a shot. That was when I knew, I was like, okay, don't be afraid of the moment. Enjoy it.

This is what everyone talks about, every great athlete talks about being in the moment and having the opportunity to win and wanting the ball, to shoot the final shot, the final three or have the last pitch to win the World Series. Those guys want the ball.

I'm like, well, I'm going to -- I want the ball. Even though I didn't win, I took a lot from that, and it's kind of carried myself through this first part of the season.

Q. On 17 you're trailing by one and Rory has put it on the green. Did the situation affect the shot you played, either target or club at all, or would you have played the same shot regardless of the situation?

J.J. SPAUN: Same shot. I knew he wasn't going to make worse than par, even though he did. But I think if it boiled down to it, he probably would have made par.

But yeah, I hit the exact shot that I wanted to. I had no idea that that ball was even long. I thought if anything it was short, maybe plugged in the bunker or stuck on top of the hill, and Rory hit 9 -- can I just watch it? I haven't seen it.

Look how high it is. It's floating. I almost wanted to say "get up" because it just looked like it was going to be short. Anyways, I was stunned. I couldn't believe it was long.

I'm happy with the swing I put on it. I am. The wind must have just laid down just a little too much, and it just went through the wind. Wasn't my time.

Q. Along those lines, at what point, because you didn't know whether to say "go" or "hold up," at what point did you realize, oh, no, this is too strong?

J.J. SPAUN: On the shot?

Q. Yeah, as it was coming down, when did you realize --

J.J. SPAUN: I never thought it was long. I never thought it was long. For some reason, like I had no doubt in my mind that that was going to be long. Just based off what we were doing on the range.

I was hitting a couple of them 110 yards into the same wind direction. I don't know if adrenaline -- I know to expect something like that, but the window I hit it at especially, it was a lot higher than actually the window I was trying to hit it so that's what made me think it was floating and staying in the air and possibly short.

From the angle I was on, it looked like it was going to land just right on that little spine and spin back to a foot, honestly. Just went through the wind.

Q. Obviously you've got to flip the switch and all of that, get ready for the next shot from the drop zone. How long did it take you to put that shot away and get

ready for the next?

J.J. SPAUN: Pretty quickly. I knew I was having to make this wedge shot to have any sort of pressure on Rory and a chance to win the tournament.

It was weird; the wind ended up being straight in on my wedge shot. It was a perfect wedge shot if it was kind of the direction it should be, kind of just left to right on that angle, maybe a touch of hurt.

But then when I got on there, it was like straight into me. I'm like, this is what I needed on the first shot here. Now I have like another tweener; what am I going to try to flight another one and rinse it long again? It was such a bad number to have with that amount of wind.

I just had to hit the shot that I knew wouldn't go long but then unfortunately it spun down to that little weird fringe, and a tough up-and-down from there, too. Couldn't putt it, had to chip it, and made a 6. One, two, three, four, five, six.

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