

# WM Phoenix Open

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Scottsdale, Arizona, USA

TPC Scottsdale

## Scottie Scheffler

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'll get started with Scottie Scheffler, two-time defending champion of the WM Phoenix Open. Just finished nine holes of your pro-am. Just some comments on being back here and how the game is feeling heading into the week.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, it's good to be back. I have some good memories here. My first win was here in '22, and then to be able to win again last year was a lot of fun. Good to be back. Weather is a bit different than we're used to here in Phoenix, but it looks like the forecast is shaping up a little bit better for the weekend, and should be another fun week.

**Q. As someone who's participated and been successful in this event in the past, what aspects of this course do you think are challenging, and do you think your experience kind of presents some benefits for you?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I think ball-striking around this golf course is important, dealing with the fans I think is also important. It's a little bit different than a lot of the tournaments that we play. That provides some fun stuff but some challenges, as well, with the noise and all that. It's just stuff that you've got to deal with out there on the course, but it's definitely, definitely a lot of fun playing in this event.

It's fun getting -- it's not as fun getting booed, but it's fun getting the loud cheers out there when you do something good, but you pay the price when you hit a bad shot, too. It's definitely fun being playable to play in front of this many people.

**Q. You've played 16 a couple times now. What is the best way to keep your composure and focus on No. 15 knowing you're headed to the stadium right afterwards?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Well, No. 15 is a hole that you've really got to take advantage of out here. So it's pretty easy to stay focused on that one because at that point in the

round you're usually looking for a couple birdies. I feel like when I've been coming down the stretch, 15 is an important hole to be able to steal one on, make a birdie or eagle.

But you always hear the noise from 16 pretty much when you're anywhere on the course. You kind of know what's happening over there.

Just try and focus on the task at hand, I guess.

**Q. What's the best way to play that hole do you think in the conditions expected for this weekend?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: 15? I'm trying to remember where the wind is going to be. It might be into the wind. So it could be pretty tough to get there in two. Typically it's a very gettable par-5, but if it's going to be blowing pretty hard into the wind, I don't think many guys are going to be able to get home.

**Q. Is there a way to prepare for the atmosphere that you face here? Obviously there's a way to prepare for each hole and the drives and the putts, but what do you do on the mental side when it comes to dealing with hecklers, people shouting and trying to grind your gears?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I was about to say, I'm fairly used to the heckling. Where I practice at home, I've got a good group of guys that we play golf with and I get heckled pretty often, and when I'm practicing on the range there's usually a group of 10- to 15-year-old kids that are trashing me all the time, so the heckling is something I'm pretty used to.

**Q. We've seen adrenaline get the best of some guys down the stretch, especially on a hole like 17 where it's kind of easy to find the water. How do you keep that under control when the pressure is on?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I think 17 is one of those holes where you want to try and hit a great shot. The green is actually pretty good sized for a drivable hole, but that water really sneaks in on the left side. I just try to stay



committed to my line off the tee, try not to force things there and try to hit just a quality shot.

**Q. How is your putter feeling?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Good.

**Q. What are you working on right now in your putting?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I'm still doing a little bit of the technical stuff. Improving the setup, improving the stroke mechanics. The ball coming off my blade right now feels really good. It's nice seeing greens like this. The poa last week can be challenging to figure out where you're at with your putting, and getting on the pure greens like this this week, it's a bit different but good.

**Q. How important is pre-shot routine for you on the greens compared to the actual stroke mechanics?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I would say I try to be as natural as possible, whether I'm hitting a full shot or a putt. A lot of that is just having the same routine that I do over and over again.

I would say that's a big part of it. I'm definitely not thinking about my stroke when I'm on the course. I'm just trying to be as athletic as possible and just hit good putts.

**Q. As you've been working on your putting over the last year or so, have you changed that pre-shot routine at all?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I'd say a decent amount. I've fiddled around with it a little bit, just trying to be reactive and athletic. I think at times last year I could have probably overthought things a little bit, trying to force the ball into the hole.

Right now, I'm treating it more like I would my full swing where I'm trying to hit good putts and not really worrying about whether or not the ball is going to go in the hole.

**Q. Last year the narrative going into the final round was you and Jon Rahm were in the final group, but Nick Taylor was in the final group, but it was Nick that actually challenged you and pushed you the most. Wonder if you can revisit that battle that ultimately it was between you and Nick coming down the stretch and what you saw from his game.**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I think that's a good example of the depth that we have out here on TOUR. Nick played a great final round last year, and fortunately I was able to edge him out a little bit, but I think that's just

some of the talent you see out here on TOUR. Nick is a guy that's won out here a couple times and he's a proven winner and I think he proved that last year, as well, with his final round.

It's not the easiest position I would say to be paired in the final round with Jon and me, I think that would be kind of the story that people are wanting to tell, definitely going into the final round, but then he made himself a big part of the story as the round played out. It was a good battle.

**Q. After the tennis player Jannik Sinner won the Australian Open, videos surfaced of him putting his trophy through the X-ray machine in the Dubai airport, which got me to thinking, you guys get some pretty big hardware. How does that work? Do they send you the trophies? Have you ever had any weird trophy mishaps getting it home?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Getting it home, not really. Usually after the tournament you take a bunch of pictures and sign a bunch of stuff and do a bunch of media. You kind of lose the trophy usually.

**Q. You lose it?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, it's like at HERO this year, I think we were leaving to the airport to go home, and I was like, huh, I wonder where the trophy is. They ended up sending it a couple weeks later in the mail.

I think this tournament is the same way where I don't ever really leave tournaments with the trophy. I think maybe the only one I actually left with was -- maybe PLAYERS, but I don't even know if I did there. Masters you leave with the jacket, which is nice. That one -- I wasn't going to give that back.

**Q. Do they make it through the mail in shipping in one piece? Especially that HERO trophy is humongous.**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I was about to say, the HERO one they didn't send the whole big thing. I just got like the top part. If any of them have been sent broken, my manager would probably know the answer to that. I don't know if I would ever receive one that was broken. I don't think I have. I may have broken one, but I don't think they would send me a broken --

**Q. Were you familiar with the legend of this tournament at all when you were a kid, the Tiger ace on 17 or anything like that? What comes to your mind about what you thought this tournament was like?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: That's a good question. I might

have to go back a few years. I think this is one of the tournaments you always paid attention to, just I think because of the way No. 16 is, and that's really kind of what everybody thinks about when it comes to this tournament. But the golf course is actually really good, as well. It's a fun golf course to play, and every year we come back, there's more and more stuff being built, so there's just more and more arena type holes and big crowds.

Like I said, it's a lot of fun to hole a 15-footer and have that huge roar. There's definitely -- this tournament maxes out the amount of people they can have out every day, and Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday are a bit busier here than they are at a lot of other stops.

Growing up I always wanted to play on the PGA Tour, and this is definitely one of the events I wanted to be a part of and really feel what 16 has been like, and it's been really fun getting to play that hole a few times.

**Q. When you think of electric sporting events you've been to outside of golf, are there any that would come to mind that energy was super crazy and locks into your mind?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Any other sporting events? I think Texas-OU, the football game every year is pretty special, when you have half the stadium rooting for the Sooners and half rooting for the Longhorns. No matter what happens, it seems like one side is really loud and the other side is really quiet, and the energy is a lot of fun. Yeah, I'd say that one sticks out.

**Q. Do you yell as a fan? Are you pretty boisterous?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Sometimes. I think usually when I watch games, if I'm watching by myself, I think I usually will yell at the TV a little bit, but if we're with people, they're usually yelling at the TV, and if I watch a game with my dad, he's usually yelling at the TV and I'm quiet. I think in my head, somebody has to be yelling always at some point. So if I'm by myself, it's got to be me, but if I'm with other people, they're usually yelling for me.

**Q. What would you say makes this tournament special?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I just think the crowds. I think getting to play the back nine here is really special. There's a lot of excitement always. Like I said, getting to play the pro-am here is always fun. You get paired with fun people. It's just a good time. It's a nice change of pace for us as players.

I think sometimes we can get a little bit too serious with

ourselves, and so it's fun coming out here -- this morning you come to warm up on the driving range and the music is so loud I can barely even hear myself think out on the driving range. I'm like, what is this place. It's crazy. It's a lot different than the stuff we play throughout the year, but it's a lot of fun.

**Q. It seems like every week you tee it up you kind of have a chance to win. Obviously it's very hard to win out here. I'm wondering internally what that trade-off is between maybe frustration coming up short versus a sense of accomplishment playing so well the entire week.**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I was about to say, there's always frustration I think when you don't win tournaments. Whether I finish 50th or second, I'm going to be frustrated that I didn't win.

But I've definitely been proud of how I've put myself in position over the last couple years, and I've been able to win a decent amount of tournaments, as well.

Those are the memories I try and hold on to. Like I said, I'm definitely very proud of always putting myself in position. That's always the goal at the beginning of the week is to have a chance to win. So being able to play in the last group in final rounds and compete in arenas like this with everything on the line is very special, and it's a lot of fun for me.

**Q. You're looking to three-peat this year; is there another place on TOUR or a place that you've played where you walk into the week and it just kind of suits your eye, suits your game, and you feel really comfortable in a place like this?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I think when I'm swinging well and I'm playing good golf, I can get comfortable on a lot of different courses. Usually I think it depends on how I'm feeling kind of going into the week, but it is nice coming to a place like this where I've had a lot of success and a lot of great memories. The last two years here have been really special. The first year being able to win in a playoff and then last year being able to kind of just have a great final round and separate myself from everybody else and being able to walk up 18 kind of knowing I had it in hand was a lot of fun, too.

**Q. I was wondering if you have any advice on how to stay optimistic and calm during the round.**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, that's a good question. I think for me, it's all about my preparation. So when I go out on to the first tee, I just remind myself that I've done



everything I could to play well. What that means is when I'm at home, I practice as hard as I can, I remain focused, and then when I step up on the first tee, it's all about controlling what I can control.

All I can do on the first tee is have a shot in mind and do my best to hit that shot, and the rest isn't up to me. I may get a bad bounce in the fairway. The ball may run into a divot. I may get a gust of wind. But all I can do is focus on controlling what I do versus everything else.

I'd say that's probably the best way to try and stay calm out there.

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