

WM Phoenix Open

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Scottsdale, Arizona, USA

TPC Scottsdale

Scottie Scheffler

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome two-time WM Phoenix Open champion Scottie Scheffler to the interview room. Scottie, again, two-time winner, and you were right in the mix coming down the stretch last year. What do you enjoy about competing here at TPC Scottsdale on this golf course?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I think it's a lot of fun. I think it's a unique test because not only are you battling the golf course, but there can be a pretty hectic crowd out there. I think it's a lot of fun. It's something we don't see as much throughout the year, but it's really fun to come here and experience it.

It's one of my favorite tournaments of the year. Obviously I have some good memories here getting my first win in 2022, so it's fun to be back.

Q. You had your season debut last week at Pebble Beach, finishing T8. How is the hand holding up one week in, and what were some of the takeaways from last week?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I'm getting back in the swing of things, getting back to normal. Still shaking off a little bit of the rust, but I think that'll only improve as I continue to get out here and play. It was definitely good to get a week under my belt last week and did some good things. Did some things I can improve on but overall was happy with the season debut.

Q. Luke Clanton was just in here a little bit ago and he said that you're kind of one of his role models. What's your reaction to that, and maybe what have you seen from him since he's been playing in few starts here on TOUR?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: First of all, I saw Luke yesterday and I was going to ask him what his status was in terms of getting his card because I feel like I've been seeing him so much playing tournaments that I didn't know if he was still in college or not, so asked him yesterday, are you still in school, and he's like, well, yeah. I'm like, okay, good. You

passing some classes?

Q. He needs to make the cut this week to earn his card.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, that's what he said. I just told him, good playing. He's a guy that obviously has a lot of talent, and I think those were the types of guys that we aimed to get a direct path to the PGA TOUR when we came up with the PGA TOUR U thing. I think Luke Clanton is a guy that has played good enough golf in college and on TOUR to do plenty to earn his card out here. He has a bunch of runner-up finishes already.

Q. T15 at Torrey Pines a couple weeks ago.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah. He's played great golf and definitely deserves to get his card, so I hope that he plays good this week and locks it up and goes back and does his thing in school.

But as far as him thinking of me as a role model, I'm here to help with what I can, but at the end of the day I try to come out here and play golf, and if the younger guys have some questions for me, I'm more than happy to answer them.

It can be a challenging thing coming out here and navigating life on the PGA TOUR. It's a lot different than college golf. But these young guys are coming out so prepared now -- you look at a guy like Nick Dunlap winning so early, winning twice last year in his rookie year on TOUR is pretty special, and then there's a lot of young guys coming up with a lot of talent, Luke being one of them. So looking forward to getting to compete with those guys as they come out on TOUR.

Q. Scottie, to hear that you won for the first time in 2022 here just feels like kind of striking considering the past few years that you've had. When you look back on that, does it feel like a really long time ago or does it feel like yesterday?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, it's kind of a weird -- it's a weird feeling because it feels like a lifetime ago, but at the



same time it feels like I just started out here. It's kind of a weird balance.

I really don't know how to describe it because I think about, what was it, three years ago? I feel like you could have told me it was 30 years ago or three months ago, I wouldn't really know the difference. I feel like that's just how life is sometimes.

Like having a son, it's like, I can't really remember a lot of what life was like before Bennett came and it feels like he's been with us for forever but he's only nine months old.

I think that's just how life is. I'm really happy with the way things have turned out out here, and it's been a lot of fun, and I'm hoping to continue to play golf out here for a long time.

Q. Do you feel like you've changed a lot since that week three years ago, or do you feel like you've largely stayed the same and that's why things have worked for you?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I feel like I've developed more as a person over the last few years. I feel like I'm striving to always get a little bit better each day, and I definitely feel like I've learned a lot in the last few years.

I have a great support team around me with my friends and family at home and then the coaches that I have that help me play golf. I just feel like I have a great team around me that will call me out if I need to be called out, and I've talked about it a lot, those are the people's opinions of me that I respect because I'm with them all the time.

There's certain times when I need to be called out and then there's certain times when I'm doing things the right way. But overall I just think having a great support team out here has been one of the most important aspects of my journey out here on TOUR.

Q. What was it like playing with Aaron Rodgers today, being a football fan and being able to just be out there with a guy that has so many accolades and honors in the NFL?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, anytime you can be around somebody so great, you just want to pick their brains on certain stuff.

Aaron is a guy who's always looking for new ways to get better. You think of certain stuff in his health journey and how he was able to recover from his achilles injury. After my surgery, oddly enough, I did get some advice through him from another player on TOUR that was able to help me

recover from injury. He's a good guy just to be able to ask questions and pick his brain a little bit on stuff.

I try not to ask too direct a questions about football and how his mind works. I kind of just try to ask general questions and kind of learn from stuff like that. It was a lot of fun. He's a super cool guy, great to meet. He liked to have fun, had good BS, so it was a good nine holes out there.

Q. You've obviously had a lot of success at this tournament in the past, and I'm wondering when you go into the 16th hole, what's that feeling like now versus what it was when you maybe first played it?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I mean, when I first started coming and playing this tournament I would walk out on to 16 and not many people would know who I am. But I think playing the practice round yesterday, guys are -- people in the crowd are chanting my name and it's a lot of fun. It's cool to be able to get in that environment and have people cheering for you. The cheers for you immediately stop if you miss the green or don't make birdie, so that part is a little bit tough.

At the end of the day, it's a lot of fun. It's really cool to be able to play in front of our fans, and this is a week when we get to play in front of a lot of them. As a player, I think it's a special week. It's a lot of fun.

Like I said, I have great memories of this tournament, so every year getting to come back, I'm reminded of those things.

Q. Scottie, your level of favoritism week to week now when you play has only ever been rivaled by Tiger in his prime. Do you take anything from that, that by the odds makers you're expected to win close to or as much as he was in his prime?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Believe it or not, I don't bet on golf, so --

Q. You get what I'm saying, though.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I totally understand what you're saying. At the end of the day, I don't pay attention to that stuff. I couldn't care less what I'm favored to win a tournament. It doesn't mean anything. I start the tournament even par, so it doesn't really matter.

I think going out and playing the tournament and doing the best I can over the course of 72 holes is what I'm focused on. I've had some good results in the last few years, and I definitely didn't focus on what my odds were at the time



then when they were long. I'm not going to focus on them when they're short.

Q. You're a very humble man, but do you believe that when others see your name move up on a leaderboard, they react like when it was Tiger in the old days?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I can't really speculate on that. I mean, if you want to ask some of the other players, I'm sure they'd be happy to answer.

I think at the end of the day what we love out here is competing, and I think what guys relish out here is a chance to compete against the best. So going week in and week out, I think the guys at the top of the leaderboard on Sunday are the ones playing the best, and those are the ones you want to be competing with.

It's a lot of fun. I love having those battles. I've had some good battles here at this tournament over the last few years. Last year Nick Taylor won. I was close coming down the stretch. He beat me. The year before that Nick and I and Jon Rahm were close and then the year before that Patrick and I ended up in playoff and there was a ton of guys on that leaderboard.

This is a golf tournament that I think has lended some pretty exciting finishes over the years, and I think that's just because of the way the closing stretch is. There's a lot of opportunity to make birdies, and there's also some opportunities to make some numbers.

I think that is what makes a great tournament. When you think about the great golf courses that we play, Augusta always comes to mind, and the way they set up Augusta on Sunday is not necessarily the hardest test. They put some of the pins in bowls and they leave opportunities for guys to hit great shots, and that's why I think you have such exciting finishes there as you do here.

So it's fun. I'm looking forward to the week.

Q. As the world's No. 1 ranked golfer, you've had nothing but success. Just in your own words what would you describe as success throughout the TOUR here, outside of just winning at the end of it all?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I think saying I would have nothing but success out here would be quite a stretch. I think golf is a game in which you fail a lot more often than you win. I look at a year like last year where I played 20 or 22 events and I think I won nine of them. So you lose still in one of the best years we've had on TOUR in a bit. You lose more than you win.

Golf is a game where I think you're constantly failing. Sometimes it seems like as golfers we kind of love the punishment, just getting beat up every week by this game and trying to get the best out of ourselves.

That's why I focus so much on how I approach things and I focus on my attitude and how I'm approaching things mentally because that's what makes a successful week for me is if I'm prepared and if I have a good attitude. That's what I'm trying to focus on when I go out and play, and I feel like if I can do that over 72 holes and play some decent golf, then I'll have a chance.

Q. Scottie, you've won in various places. What is on your objectives and your goals for this year? You won the Olympics, you've won majors, et cetera.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, so I'm a little bit different in a sense of I don't really sit down at the beginning of the year and set goals for myself. I have for my career some dreams and aspirations that I think of, but throughout my day-to-day, I don't ever think of it.

It's just kind of what works for me. You look at a guy like JT, what works really well for him over the years has been writing down his goals at the beginning of the year and then looking and seeing how he did at the end of the year. But for me, what's worked best for me is always staying in the present and trying to get a little bit better at a time.

I try not to look too far down the road. I think if I told myself this year I want to win five times, let's just say, hypothetical, I want to win five times this year, I want to win a major, I would look at the year and be like, I've got plenty of time to win five times. It's only February; I've got until September to win those tournaments. I may get a little bit lazy, may start thinking too far ahead.

So for me, I try to do my best to focus on the task at hand, and that's this week. We've got a great golf course and a great field and some great fans, and I'm looking forward to a fun week here.

Q. Just to follow up, you don't look forward to certain tournaments or to certain venues that you'd like to win at like some people? Like Rory said winning at Pebble Beach is a great thing; it's one of the monumental courses we play.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I think winning at Pebble Beach is amazing. I think it would be really fun. I think winning at TPC Scottsdale is amazing. I think being able to win at Torrey Pines next week is amazing. I grew up watching many of the courses we play out here on TOUR, and I always dreamed of playing golf on the PGA TOUR,

and each week I have an opportunity to win on a golf course and in a tournament that I grew up dreaming of just getting the opportunity to play in.

I think when I'm practicing and preparing at home, I'm focused on getting prepared to come out here and play. I'm not thinking about certain golf courses or certain tournaments. I'm just trying to get prepared and get my mind ready to go out and play.

I think the only time your mind would ever wander is sometimes when you're at home I think the majors are always kind of in the back of your head because those are typically the hardest tests and that's when you need to be the sharpest. So I think when you're preparing for those, I think sometimes seeing the challenge of some of those major championship golf courses helps you focus more on your practice at home.

But at the end of the day, I'm just trying to get a little bit better.

Q. First off, how hard is it to be a Dallas sports fan right now?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: (Laughing) Yeah, I mean, it's a bit challenging. Losing Luka, I think this is one of the first times I've ever been genuinely sad with a move that has been made in Dallas. We were spoiled with Dirk for so long, and Dirk in my opinion is like the greatest sportsman ever. He's a great guy and great for the city of Dallas.

I think most people in Dallas imagined Luka was going to be that for us. It's very sad to see him leave. I think as fans we're all a bit confused at the moment. But hopefully they've got some sort of plan we don't know about because I think a lot of the fan base is just a bit confused right now and a bit sad.

Q. You were talking about the final stretch here. Where do you rank it, and does it help you kind of change up the way you attack the front nine, knowing that you have 15, 16, 17 and 18?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Well, not really. I think what I like about the finish here is the room for opportunity. There's punishment. I think when I think of the great golf courses and the great tests, it's not always necessarily the hardest test. I love to see opportunity for great shots and punishment for poor ones.

You look at a hole like 15 where you can step up there and hit two really good shots and make eagle, but you can easily pull it in the water off the tee. The second shot you can hit a great shot on the green or you could easily hit it in

the water and make bogey.

You never quite feel like you're out of the tournament. There's always opportunity there if you're close. I think that's what makes for the great finishes, and I think that's what makes for great golf. I think sometimes we get so obsessed with the hardest test is the best, but I think as players we want to see rewards for good shots and punishment for bad ones.

Q. You had so many wins last year, but I was curious to see what those wins did to your inner drive while you were going through it, and did you learn something more about yourself and the mental part of everything during that incredible run?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I mean, I think I learned a lot about myself, but what I think most about last year is being out here and competing is one of the great joys that I have in my life. It's so much fun. Winning tournaments is even more fun. I think sometimes you get a little taste of it and you just want more.

It's part of how the human heart is. You just want more of it. When I look back at last year, it was a lot of fun, but at the end of the day, it's in the rear view mirror and I can't sit and rest on the accomplishments that I had in the past. It's time to come out here and -- I didn't come here to celebrate my two wins from 2022 and 2023; I came here to try to win the tournament this year.

Going into this week, stick to having a good attitude and try and execute shots, and hopefully I'll be in position on Sunday.

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