

# WM Phoenix Open

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Scottsdale, Arizona, USA

TPC Scottsdale

## Scottie Scheffler

### Press Conference



**THE MODERATOR:** All right, like to welcome to the media center the two-time winner of the WM Phoenix Open, Scottie Scheffler.

Scottie, you recently got your 20th win on TOUR. Your first one came here back in 2022. What were some of the memories that come when you think about win No. 1 that came for you here?

**SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER:** Yeah, it doesn't feel all that long ago, but at the same time, it feels like quite a bit of time has passed since then. Yeah, lots of good memories. It's nice to come back to this tournament. This tournament is a lot of fun for me to play in and it's fun to be able to play in front of this crowd.

It's a cool experience, and, yeah, I am looking forward to getting back out there and competing in front of these people and some great fans. It's shaping up to what looks like to be another really fun week.

**Q. Last year during your pre-conference you said that your mind wasn't on winning your next major. Since then you've won two majors. Has that mindset shifted going into 2026?**

**SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER:** Not really. I've always been a guy that does my best when I'm staying present and focusing on the things that I can focus on at the time.

And so I been preparing hard to get the season started. I got off to a nice start there at the American Express. We had a hectic week at home with a lot of ice and snow last week, but we got a little bit of work in and now we're here ready to compete again this week and the next couple out here on TOUR.

So it's exciting, but I've always been at my best when I'm trying to stay present and focusing to get a little bit better each day.

**Q. Compared to last year where you had that delay to start the season, what's it like to see your preparation**

**pay off with a win to start the season?**

**SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER:** Yeah, it's really nice. Definitely a lot easier starting off that way instead of missing the first few tournaments due to hand surgery.

Did a bit less cooking in the offseason this year. Stuck to plastic silverware instead of metal stuff. Nah, I'm only kidding.

It's nice to get off to that kind of start. It's nice to feel very prepared going into the season. I feel like my body is in a good spot, my head is in a good spot. We had a really nice break to kind of get ready to come back out here and compete.

I mean, it's great to be able to see results to start the year, but we're here playing another tournament. Last week is forgotten about, and I'm ready to come out here and compete again.

**Q. Is there a big thing you worked on over the break?**

**SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER:** Nothing too specific. I tried to get my body and mind into a good space to I could come out and compete for an entire season.

Each year out here is long. We play a lot of golf tournaments, and now we play them in a pretty -- I shouldn't say short amount of time, but shorter amount of time than I've been used in the past. It feels a bit more like a sprint at times.

You know, at the end of each year you get pretty tired, so it's nice to have a little bit of an offseason that you kind of earned through playing some good golf, and then rest and recuperate to get ready to come back out here again.

**Q. You talked about coming back. You're well aware what this tournament is all about. Do you still marvel when you get here and you see the size and the scope and the crowd?**

**SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER:** Yeah, it's pretty nuts. It's a lot different than what we see throughout the year. I think it's

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really fun. It's a unique experience and I think something that as a professional you always want to be able to experience.

Yeah, it is funny, when you're flying in you can see all the buildings and you know exactly where the golf course is, and it's a spectacle for sure.

**Q. You touched on the majors. When you think back to -- you've had success at the Masters of course, when you think back before you won there, what were some of the hard lessons you had to learn to get over the hump at that particular venue in?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: At the Masters specifically?

**Q. Yeah.**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I think there is a bit of a learning curve on that golf course. I think there are certain places where you have to play to and there are certain pins you can get at and there are certain pins you can't quite get at.

A lot of is being patient and continuing to get better. Each time you fail you try and learn something. Sometimes it could be something physical. Oftentimes it's something mental that you can learn.

I feel like in this game we're always learning and taking in new information and it's all about how to apply that going forward.

**Q. Is this the first time you've had a special guest like this for a press conference?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, first time.

**Q. As a two-time winner of this tournament, this tournament obviously is very unique with the way it's set up with the crowd. What has allowed you to have so much success specifically here in Scottsdale?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I've always enjoyed playing this type of test. I think this golf course plays really well when it comes tournament time. It plays firm and fast and you got to hit a lot of different shot and you got to be very precise with your ball, but then there is also a big crowd that comes with it as well.

I think it's always a lot of fun to play in front of a group this size. It can be a bit hectic out there sometimes, but it really is a lot of fun.

**Q. You mentioned that you were getting your body and mind ready for this season. I wonder what do you**

**mean by getting your mind ready? Is it anything in addition to just going home and relaxing with your family?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Relaxing has a lot to do with it. I mean, physically I think the season is exhausting, but mentally can be very tiring as well. By the time you get to the end of the year, I'm pretty spent.

It takes a lot out of me mentally and physically to compete on a weekly basis. I've been able to put myself in contention a number of times over the last few years and I think that's draining as well.

So a lot of it is getting home and getting rest and spending time with the people I love at home and getting ready to come back out here and do it again. Rest is a huge part of it, and I've come to value that more as my career has gone forward.

**Q. Pivoting a little bit, I am curious from your perspective, why is it so important for the TOUR to bring back a Brooks Koepka, a Patrick Reed from LIV?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: When you look at a lot of the discussions we've had and when you look at like what a lot of the fans are saying, I think people want the best people playing together again. So when it comes to great players like Brooks or Patrick Reed, Patrick Reed is a major champion and I think Brooks Koepka has won five majors, so having those guys competing out here is great for the TOUR, great for the fans, and great for our sponsors.

I think the last few years -- there is just been a lot of the noise, and so I think getting those guys back is another step towards us just being able to play golf again.

That's what I'm looking forward to the most.

**Q. I know you don't replace your irons in a set. You kind of as one wears out you replace them. I am wondering have you replaced any of the irons you won the majors with last year? And also, do you keep any clubs from majors or wins as mementos?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I keep a lot of my old clubs, and I typically change out the whole set when I do change irons. I try to do that as little as possible. I get almost emotionally attached to clubs at times. Once you get a feel for a club, you know, I think feel is such a huge part of the game, so changing clubs can be difficult.

Even when I have the greatest club maker in the world make me a set of the irons and he spec'd them and he's checked every inch of them, I've got a guy at TaylorMade

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that takes great care of me, and even then I still find differences and still stuff that I got to get used to.

So I do change them out, but when I do I change out the whole set and keep a lot of my old clubs just as a reference point for me.

**Q. You bring up Adrian. I know you guys are super close. Can you talk about what it was about your relationship that brought you to TaylorMade?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Well, I had signed on with TaylorMade I believe in 2022. Is that right? I had been using a Ping driver for a while and I tested the TaylorMade driver and liked what I saw. I had already been using the irons. It was pretty much a seamless transition.

It was like, hey, I love the equipment, love the guys I've been able to work with. Adrian was one of the first people I worked with at the company. He takes care of everything for me. My clubs typically don't start a tournament without him getting his eyes on them out here on the road.

I can't say enough about all the stuff it takes behind the scenes in order for me to come out here and compete. There a lot of the people that take care of a lot of different stuff for be to be able to go out there just hit this little golf ball around.

**Q. Last year hole No. 11 was the hardest hole on the course. What makes it so challenging tee-to-green?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: The tee shot is easily the hardest on the golf course. The fairway from the tee box looks wide, but it plays extremely small. You get that run-off on the left, water on that side.

So typically if you hit up the left center of the fairway the ball is pretty much going to go in the water. You got to squeeze it up the right side, but when you squeeze it up the right side there is also rough on the right side and trees, and the green is tough to get at when you're in the right trees.

Really starts with a great tee shot. Even when the pin is on the left side you're not typically aiming at the pin. It's a pretty challenging hole overall.

**Q. A lot of guys talk about taking less club on 16, the energy, environment. Is that something you think about, or is 16 not really affecting the way you're looking at those numbers?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I think the hardest thing on 16 is figuring out where the wind is, which can be silly at times

saying in the desert because you don't get a ton of wind, but those little gusts that come in and out can feel really different inside of that arena. The wind has as tendency to move around. I think that is one of the most challenging things about the hole is figuring out where the wind is and committing to your shot.

What I love about this golf course is how firm the greens get. And so if we had really soft greens that shot wouldn't be that difficult. With the firmness, you put any little curve on the ball, the green kind of rolls off and there is some really challenging up and downs.

There are certain pins you want to attack and you also have to play defensively to some pins as well.

**Q. Dave Harmon being out there, 86 years young. Your dad said he opened the floodgate. What can you say about what he's meant to your career and any special memories with him?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, it's always fun getting to catch up with Dave. He was a huge part of me winning the U.S. Junior. For those though don't know the story, I got matched up with a caddie at the U.S. Junior camp when -- I think it was 2013. I got matched up with a 73 year old guy and he didn't -- I don't think he expected to caddie that many rounds, but you do your two practice rounds I think Saturday, Sunday, then one round Monday, one round Tuesday, and I think one round Wednesday, and then 36, 36, 36.

For 73 years old at altitude for a guy to make it around the golf course was an impressive feat. He did a great job keeping me relaxed and calm out there and was a huge part of me you can able to win the U.S. Junior.

Then it was definitely the biggest tournament that I had won at the time and was a huge kind of steppingstone in my career to perform when it mattered most, and Dave was a really big part of it. It's always fun to getting to catch up with him here.

**Q. I am curious at a course like this where there are so many scoring opportunities down the stretch, what are the emotions you feel when you hold the lead knowing there is guys behind you that could easily go on a run to catch you? How do you manage that balance of being aggressive and cautious at the same time?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I think in order to win tournaments out here on TOUR, you have to play well at the end. I think this golf course is one of those -- one of the best ones we see all year in terms of a an exciting finish. Like you said, there is opportunity, but also a lot of

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danger. You look at even the second shot on 15. If you hit a really good shot there you can get a really good look for eagle, but if hit a poor shot you're going to be in the water staring bogey in the face.

So there is a lot of variety, and I think it's a fantastic finish that provides a great amount of opportunity, but also can be pretty severe penalties as well.

**Q. Not sure if you caught any of Justin Rose's dominating performance last week at Torrey Pines. The Top 3 players, one is in their 20s, one in their 30s, and one is pretty deep into their 40s. What do you make of a guy at the age of 45 being right up there the younger guys?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I mean, when you look at Justin specifically you see a guy that not only works really hard on his golf game, and has for a long time, he also works really hard on his body. For me, I look at a guy like that at 45 years old to be in the shape he is still in is extremely impressive, and I don't think you luck into that. He puts a lot of work into that.

I think it's inspiring for the young guys to see somebody at that age do the things he does. I mean, I'm 29 and I feel tired already. I can't imagine what I'll feel like at 45. I can't say enough about how impressive it is for him to still be putting up the scores.

And the ball speed. He was almost keeping up with me when we were playing in Palm Springs. Guy has got plenty of speed and plenty of talent and plenty of work ethic to go with it.

I don't think he's slowing down any time soon.

**Q. Almost keeping up with you though.**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Almost.

**Q. I know I already asked you this question, but of all the people on the PGA TOUR what would your starting five be?**

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Starting five would be I think you got to start with Gary Woodland. He played college basketball, so that's a tough one to pass up.

Russell Henley will be our point guard.

Jacob Bridgeman I think is going to make the lineup. He still plays a couple times a week, so he's going to be fresh. He is probably going to be the only guy out there that will be fresh for us.

I think Tony Finau will be the big guy for us on the team, and then I'm putting myself in the lineup as well because I love basketball. I couldn't sit on the lines and watch those guy play. I think we'd do all right.

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