

WM Phoenix Open

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Scottsdale, Arizona, USA

TPC Scottsdale

Brooks Koepka

Press Conference



MICHAEL BALIKER: We'd like to welcome two-time winner of the WM Phoenix Open, Brooks Koepka, to the interview room.

Brooks, great to have you back here at TPC Scottsdale. You returned last week at the Farmers Insurance Open. Coming here to TPC Scottsdale, a place you're very familiar with and have had a lot of success. What's the excitement level to get it going this week?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I like this place. Obviously had some good results here. I'm excited, a golf course I feel comfortable on. Obviously winning it twice helps. Any time you win twice on a golf course, you're going to feel pretty good and pretty comfortable.

Hopefully a good week this week, and just got to continue on for next week.

MICHAEL BALIKER: Interesting Pro-Am group, playing with Travis Kelsey. Seeing him hit a close shot there on 16, what was that experience like?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, it was good. We've got quite a few mutual friends. So there's been, I guess, many conversations between those third parties.

But yeah, he's a great guy. First time I ever got to meet him. Yeah, he hits it long. I'm sure that's not shocking to anybody. He's got speed and size. So it was fun. It was a good group and I enjoyed it.

Q. Knowing how you feel about this place, did you miss it at all the last three years? Did you watch on TV at all when you weren't here?

BROOKS KOEPKA: No. I was asleep when this was going on. Kind of tough to watch.

But yeah, it's a golf course I really like. A tournament I like coming to. I think this is always a comfortable event for me.

Yeah, I've just enjoyed it over the years. So I am excited to get back.

Q. What is it about -- is it the course? Is it the environment? Is it some of both that makes you comfortable here?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Probably a bit of both. Golf course suits my eye. Off the tee, it really does. And then everything about this place, it's always in great shape. It's a fun tournament to play.

I enjoy -- I said it earlier, I think last week, I enjoy the chaos. It's fun. It can kind of get you in between shots. Gives you something to either kind of laugh at or whatever's going on, there's always something to see.

But yeah, it's a fun week.

Q. Speaking of chaos, I'm wondering if you have any fun or memorable chirps from fans that you remember over the years.

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, there's definitely some memorable ones; I don't think any I can share here.

Yeah, you spend a few years here, you'll see a lot of things.

Q. Last week, you went to the Scotty Cameron Studio to work on your putting, and I saw you working again with Paul out on the green this week for a couple hours on Monday, again on Tuesday. What exactly is it that you're working on with your putting right now?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Trying to get the ball in the hole.

Yeah, like, just really never felt comfortable over the ball. You've got to have everything squared up to the target. Just working on things like that. Real simple stuff, setup. Shoulders were open. My feet are always a little bit open but just trying to minimize the lines crossing so much.

And yeah, just tried to keep everything more consistent, the face, the path, everything.

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Q. I know you've played around with different putters last year, and this year you've got two identical ones in your bag. What's the difference between the two, and are you considering changing at all that plot?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I just always carry a backup. You never know what's going to happen. I never get too angry but you never know.

But no, I've been putting pretty poorly for the good side of two years. I don't know what's going on but I've got to figure it out.

Q. You talked about how much fun this course is and how much fun this tournament is for you. Now that you're back on TOUR, can you name some other tournaments that you're looking forward to getting back to that you've missed the last couple years?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I'm excited for all of them, I really am. This one's great. Cognizant is a home one for me. That's quite easy.

Yeah, there's -- I mean, I can go Houston. I helped design the course. So there's -- I mean, I could go down the list. We could be here for a while.

Yeah, it's just good to be back. Good to see some golf courses where I'm familiar with and kind of know where to hit it and have some familiarity with them. I think that's a huge thing.

Q. And speaking of familiarity, with the Masters, is there a particular hole there you like, and can you talk about why that might be?

BROOKS KOEPKA: A hole I like? I don't know. They are all challenging. If you hit them offline, they are all quite tough.

Yeah, it's so depends on where the pin is. You've got to know where the pin is off the tee, I think, to be successful there. And it's all about angles. If you leave yourself above the hole, you're going to have a hard time all week.

But I know 12 has given me some bugaboos over the years. That one sticks out as probably one that I've struggled with.

Q. When you made your decision to return to the PGA TOUR, seeing this tournament right at the start of your return, were you excited to have this one out of the way quick to get those fans and that energy back on this tour?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I was just excited to be able to play. I really had not thought about it quite like that.

But yeah if you're going to think about it that way, it's nice, a place I'm familiar with, comfortable with. Get that out of the way quickly, and kind of reassess by the time I get home the next few weeks of where my game is at.

So it will be a good test of knowing where I'm at.

Q. You mentioned when you came back that you might have to have a few difficult conversations with peers. I'm just wondering, have you had any conversations like that so far, and how have they gone?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I haven't had any difficult ones. Maybe ones that, I guess, just happy to see you back, we're glad you back, type things.

But then again, I haven't seen -- there's a lot of guys, I mean, I'm only, what, nine days into this. There's still a lot of guys I haven't seen.

So that will be easier to answer probably midway through the year.

Q. Shortly after you came back, Patrick Reed announced he was leaving LIV and making his way back to the Tour as well. He mentioned in his statement tradition. He wrote in his statement, "I'm a traditionalist at heart." I was wondering, can you relate in any way to that statement?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Everybody is their own man. Everybody is a little bit different. Everybody has their priorities. I don't know what his priorities are. As long as he's doing what's best for him and doing what's best for his family, I'm all for whatever he needs to do.

Q. Do you have, I guess, any like relation to the idea of tradition and the PGA TOUR being a bit different from LIV Golf in that way?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Everybody's idea of tradition is a little different. So it kind of depends on who you're asking.

Q. I know you said last week that you didn't really want to get into the politics between tours. Just curious from your perspective, with the defending champion of this tournament currently on top of the leaderboard in Riyadh, is that one of those times whereas a player, the divide between the tours kind of feels a bit more amplified, or is that something you're

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just not focusing on week-to-week?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I'm just focused on myself. I'm focused on how I can go play the best golf over the next four days. I'm not focused on anybody else.

I think -- it's a very boring answer but it's true. I can only do what I can do. If I do that the best, I mean, I think Scottie is a perfect example of that right now.

Q. When you're a junior golfer and went through some struggles, like we all do, can you describe what your struggle was and what helped you get to the other side of it?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I think getting through the other side of it is -- you always are a lot closer than you really think. It's not always about hours. It's about quality.

I think sometimes you think you can go hit -- if you go hit a thousand balls it might be the answer but sometimes if you go out there with a real purpose, sometimes 50, 60 balls is all you need.

You know, it's not -- it's about how the quality, I guess, you're putting into your work instead of, you don't need to be there for a certain amount of hours. You don't need to be there for a certain amount of balls.

Honestly, don't be afraid to mix it up. I think one thing -- my dad did this when I was young. We used to go play and go play, like, the ladies tees, the red tees, the white tees, the blue tees, the gold and the black and just mix it up.

One thing that I thought was really good out of that, it got me -- sometimes when you go play the up tees, you think you're going to go shoot 9-, 10-, 12-under really easy, and it's not the case, because you really work on your wedge game. And sometimes you do get that deep and that under par, and you get comfortable with it, and I think that's a huge thing.

MICHAEL BALIKER: Brooks, thanks for the time. Best of luck this week.

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