

# AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am

Wednesday, February 10, 2021

Pebble Beach, California, USA

Pebble Beach Golf Links

## Jordan Spieth

### Press Conference



DOUG MILNE: We would like to welcome Jordan Spieth to the interview room here at the 2021 AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am, a tournament obviously that's near and dear to you for many reasons. You've had eight previous starts here, your win in 2017 and half of your starts here resulted in top-10 finishes, including last year 9th place. With all that said, just a few comments on being back here this week.

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, it's Pebble Beach. It's, what's not to love as a golfer here? So I've loved this tournament, obviously finding success at this tournament has been really, really cool, just as a golf lover and someone who enjoys the history and the architecture of golf courses. So I'm happy that it's been good to me over the years. And coming in this year with the courses playing a bit different. Spyglass, at least on the greens yesterday, I thought they were a foot and a half-plus faster than they normally are in tournament speed, and this was a Tuesday. And then Pebble was certainly firmer and the tee boxes seemed to be using a lot of the U.S. Open tee boxes, unless they're going to move stuff around, so it's a lot longer. You're hit a lot longer shots into some of those small greens making it certainly more challenging.

So it's a little different this year, I think. I think you got to think your way around the golf course more, both of them. You can't miss in certain spots. I think course knowledge really serves you well. So I'm excited that it is potentially more of a challenge this year. I'm excited that the greens are faster than they normally are, and I'm sure some pins will be a bit different, given, without the amateurs here, you're not really watching out for that and instead can make them quite a bit more challenging.

So I think it's a different year than -- obviously, it's a weird year not having the pro-am be a part of it, but I think it's going to be a unique experience in that we can see the course more similar to major championship conditions even in February.

DOUG MILNE: Now that the dust has settled, so to speak, a little bit from last week, how much did last week,

obviously the third round was the big highlight, how much does a week like that do for you?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, it was a nice confidence boost. I love that I trusted what I was working on all four rounds, knowing that it wasn't necessarily going to fully be there and I think that kind of trust and that belief just pays off. I mean, when you stick to something and you start working at it, it feels a little better each day that you do it, when you're doing it correctly.

But even more so, you just think kind of the golf gods will reward you for -- and that's what happened on Saturday, the chip-in and some long-made putts at the end. But I think that was more just kind of just a reward for kind of the work that I've been putting in and it was really nice to see a low round like that and to be able to continue to take it deeper and deeper as the day went on. So rounds like that are big confidence boosters because going low no matter where you are on the PGA TOUR is very difficult to do.

Then very disappointed off of Sunday. I just, I know standing on the first tee that I don't necessarily have the control that I've had other weeks where I've been in that same position, but I knew it was close enough where I could get the job done. I just didn't make anything. I just didn't adjust to the speed of the greens. I left a lot of putts short. Not even off of -- I had nerves to start, but I didn't really feel the nerves on the greens. I just didn't adjust to the speed like I did the day before. That's really what it came down to. I think I had 35 putts because I 1-putted the last two holes and that's just very unusual for me, no matter the round or the situation.

Do some extra work on speed control here. Make sure I'm a little more dialed in. But these greens seem to fit me better over the years than the ones in Phoenix. So again, confidence boost, but a bit disappointed coming off Sunday.

DOUG MILNE: Understood. Well, we appreciate that and we'll open it up and take some questions now.

**Q. When you look back, do you look back more to Saturday or to Sunday last week?**

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JORDAN SPIETH: I think I look back at Monday through Sunday. I mean, there's some weeks where I look back at either one specific really solid round or I look back at one that, a lot of times when you look back when you're leading on Sunday and it doesn't work out, that's what lingers. But for me it was, where was I at when we started on Monday and then where was I at when we finished on Sunday? And the progress that was made from the end of the Farmers until last Sunday wasn't just out of nowhere. I mean, it was legitimate work and progress in the right direction. It wasn't, Boy, I kind of got lucky here or there or I changed feels and it worked out like I would have said in the previous couple years. It was more, Man, I really felt like we were on -- we're on the same page. I'm getting into where I'm able to actually play golf instead of think about swings, and that's just really exciting. It gets me enjoying the game, loving the idea of going out there this week on No. 1 and if I shoot 65 or 75, as long as I'm trusting what I'm doing, I know I'm moving the right direction, that's just the head space that I've wanted to get into and, for awhile now, and I feel like I'm starting to tap into it.

**Q. As you try to build on last week, how important is it, I don't know if important is the right word, but what is it like to come to this place as you try to build on last week?**

JORDAN SPIETH: It requires a lot of precision, obviously, in approach shots with how small the greens are, but there's a lot of trouble down the right side of Pebble Beach, pretty much the entire golf course is you can miss left and left is okay and you can't miss right. So it requires precision off the tee in that sense too, hitting those kind of Jack Nicklaus ball flights, certainly he's loved this place with his fades. The year that I won I know I had a left bias with the ball flight and really right was almost, I couldn't miss it right and that was very helpful when I came here.

So adjusting to getting out in front of the ball a little bit better. And it's different in that it has those characteristics to the golf course, where some of the, some other courses, it just depends on the hole on which ball flight you play. It's almost -- I enjoy coming back here off of last week because I know the place. I feel like course knowledge goes a long way in this tournament as it starts to firm up and if the greens get faster, and then if the conditions get bad too. If it becomes a Palm Springs-like day out here, that kind of levels out the field, but when the conditions get tough, you got to understand a little bit more the course knowledge, and it looks like we're going to have some of that this week.

**Q. Two unrelated questions. First, you mentioned sort of some nerves Sunday in Phoenix. I'm just curious**

**the emotions of it, the exhilaration, I mean, you were in that position so often a few years ago and obviously it's been awhile. What was that like emotionally to put yourself in that spot again?**

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, it was, the biggest thing for me was embracing and feeling comfortable with those nerves. That's how I remember it. That's the goal is to where I feel almost a level of comfort in the nerves, as odd as that is, almost just excitement and adrenaline versus the, Oh, shoot, you know, what if feel. I was battling a bit of that, right? Because it had been awhile and I knew that I didn't, I didn't and don't necessarily have yet my best control of the golf ball.

But I knew that if I stuck to the game plan I had enough results that week in just about every different shot that's needed to be hit in order to shoot a solid round and win the golf tournament. So that part was exciting. So it was a little bit of -- and every single tournament that I've had the lead in or been close on a Sunday I've had nerves and everybody does. It's just to what extent and how quickly can you settle into the round and how positively can you look at that as this is where I'm supposed to be.

**Q. My other question. Any enduring memory of playing junior golf with Will Zalatoris and how, I'm assuming you expected him to reach this point, and why, what about him and his game do you think has allowed him to transition as well as he has?**

JORDAN SPIETH: He's always been a phenomenal striker of the golf ball. I remember playing some junior golf tournaments that he was in, but I more, I have clearer memories of, I think we both tied and had playoffs in high school a couple times when I was a junior or senior and he was a freshman. So after playing some junior golf with him, then you're the senior and he's the freshman and we're in a playoff and it's just it's almost like, wow, all right, yeah, you're next level, you're going to carry this on.

I know he's a very confident individual. We have been playing, we played quite a bit of golf in Dallas together, actually, throughout the weeks. We play a lot with, and he plays more than I do with him, but we play a lot with Tony Romo and we get other pros in the area and have some really good games. So it's been nothing surprising over the last couple years after watching him week-in and week-out at home and the game was clearly good enough to carry on to any level of golf. So excited to see him doing so well and I think this is just the start for him.

**Q. What was he like as a teenager, just personality-wise? Quiet? You said confident. Give me a sense of what his demeanor was like.**

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JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, he was always a really confident, really confident player. Yeah, I don't think quiet. I mean, I wouldn't have said anyone called me quiet either, so -- I've never been accused of being too quiet. So he was always a very confident and at some times in a good way, kind of cocky. When you're the older one, you know, you kind of look at that as, all right, man, but when nowadays you look back, you're, like, you need some of that. And you got to have it and you got to continue to have it. I felt like he certainly had that, not in any kind of a bad way, but more in a, I feel good about my chances on this shot, you know?

**Q. On Sunday you had said that you believe in what you're doing, needle's pointed the right direction. Just curious when is the last time you felt like that, and probably a dumb question, but what are the specifics of what you're doing with your swing and I guess why does it feel different?**

JORDAN SPIETH: It's been, it's definitely been a few years, which is very weird because there wasn't a time period where I didn't believe in what I was working on prior to that from when I was 12. So, which has been tough, right? Because you go out and put in all the hours, but if you're not necessarily, one, fully trusting what you're doing and, two, it's maybe not the, exactly what you need to be doing, you're putting in hours going the wrong way. So that's just extra time that it takes to, once you're going the right way, to be able to get things back to where you want. So getting over kind of scar tissue of certain holes and rounds that you've played at different places where you just didn't have it that day versus being able to just draw back on positive memories for a number of years at places is something that is a new and different challenge over the last couple years. But once you start to see light at the end of the tunnel, get a little bit of confidence, you just kind of want to stick with what you're doing and keep the train rolling and kind of reverse that trend.

So for me, you know, there was a number of things. There was a number of things that I got off on mechanically and it was very frustrating because I felt just as competitive and felt just the same, same, I was still me, still the same me. I just would take the club back and feel lost. So kind of feeling, making some significant adjustments starting really last fall through this winter to kind of get back to my DNA has been a process that has taken a lot of hours and still will. Now I'm able to try it out and trust it on the golf course and make the adjustments necessary because you can only -- on a driving range it's real easy to almost overdo things the direction you're trying to go to, but on the golf course it's what level of trust will I have out here?

So fortunately I'm on the PGA TOUR and I'm able to look back on swings that were made from good angles and trust that Cameron's like, Okay, I saw what you were doing here, a little more of this, a little less of that, and we can move forward that direction.

**Q. Mechanically what are, just one of those things that you're referencing?**

JORDAN SPIETH: There's quite a few things. I think most importantly it's just getting the club into the hitting position to where I feel like I can kind of turn and burn and I can get over to my left side and clear out and I don't feel like I have to use my hands as much and don't get stuck. So there's quite a, yeah, there was quite a few things, but ultimately it's about feeling nice in front of it and feeling like you're kind of hitting the ball with your pivot versus having to kind of back up and use your hands. I mean, it's just too hard to be consistent out here doing that.

**Q. Leaving Scottsdale with like texts you were receiving, reaction of family, friends, your team, was there any part of it that felt kind of like a victory?**

JORDAN SPIETH: No, actually on -- I think it was like Friday afternoon I was at 8-under, I was just in the top-10, maybe like 6th or 7th and I was receiving texts that were like, like it was my first PGA TOUR event ever. And as much as I enjoyed that support, I was also like, I mean, I'm not leading by three, I didn't win the golf tournament, I'm -- yeah, I know it's been a little while since I've been near the top, but like come on guys, I expect to be here, you know?

And then after Saturday's round, after a low round like that it's, you know, those texts, you'll get texts from friends or people that are like, Oh, that was awesome, this or that, which that was just the round specifically.

But, no, after Sunday, really after my putt missed on 16, and I hit a great putt and just nothing went in that day, I knew that I essentially couldn't win. Maybe I had to go eagle, birdie. So then it was, let's go ahead and just finish strong. So I was actually happy walking off the 18th green. But at walking off the 16th green, it was pretty deflating, just being in the lead and having two holes to go and knowing that you essentially didn't have much of a chance to win the golf tournament. That was frustrating, and it's driving. It makes me want to go out and work hard this week and try and get in the same position because I know that you put yourself in that position enough, you start hitting the pins and they go in or the ball lips in on Sunday and it goes your way. So I didn't leave feeling like I won. I actually left, fortunately, I felt disappointed that I didn't win.

**Q. Going back to that first TOUR event, the 2010 . . . when all is said, we're done.®**

**Nelson, what's your best like rookie mistake story or story that illustrates a teenager playing his first TOUR event?**

JORDAN SPIETH: You know, I don't think I knew much about through lines back then. That's one thing I remember. I remember, like when you're going to mark your ball or you're going to go tap in, just being more aware of where the next person that's putting may, if they miss their putt, where that ball's going to go. It's not quite as big of a deal now that you can tap down spike marks. But I think that was the No. 1 thing. In high school, college golf I just never really -- that was just high school golf back then -- you never really thought about that. You kind of just, everyone was trying to get you to play as fast as possible so you just go finish out and go to the next hole. And that was something I had to learn.

**Q. Going into last week on Monday or Tuesday whenever you showed up to Phoenix, did you think what you were working on was good enough for you to be able to win the tournament?**

JORDAN SPIETH: It was really, I drove over on, we drove over on Saturday and I started working Sunday there and, no, to answer your question, no. I thought that once I played Friday's round, I thought, yes, but it wasn't until then. And I mean it's not like I'm not -- I mean I'm probably as optimistic in myself being able to get the job done with less than my best, I would say, as much as anybody. But I'm also realistic enough to know, hey, this still feels quite a ways away, I'm not sure if I'm trusting this shot or this shot yet and so I got to play away from spots versus being able to just go out and play with freedom.

And it was after Friday's round where I kind of walked off that day saying, Man, I shot 4-under, but I should have shot 6 or 7. I'm doing the same thing I've been doing, it's just starting to feel better and better, now let's go have some fun on the weekend. It's just funny how, when that kind of just a little bit that have feel comes back what ends upcoming from it and I was rewarded the next day for it, for sure.

**Q. The other thing is, obviously you've been frustrated over the period of time when things haven't gone well. How frustrating is it for people to keep coming to you and asking you or maybe even shunning away and not wanting to ask you things or not wanting to talk to you over this period of time? How difficult is that considering you've had such success as a professional?**

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I think for the first little bit of time it was, you know, I think that even friends on TOUR are

probably like all right, just struggling for a year or something. And then people are reaching out saying, you know, I see this or you know, it's kind of a tough thing, because even some of my best friends out here on TOUR I play a lot of practice rounds with, they want to help, but you don't want to overstep, right? So it's kind of a tricky situation.

But anyone that I would reach out to, I was probably too stubborn and waited too long to probably reach out to people that I definitely could have for just help in whether it's certain areas of the game or just getting through kind of areas of down years or something like that, I probably was just a bit too stubborn on that when there were a lot of people willing to help that are super friendly that have gone through, you know, I guess somewhat relatable situations out here.

So with a bit of friends kind of stepping in and offering help, to myself doing some more reaching out and just kind of letting my guard down a little, kind of letting the walls down and I think that kind of combination kind of helped free me up a little bit to -- hey, for me it's, when I've been struggling it's very public, right? I mean, it's very aware. If I had just kind of been 120th on the FedExCup every year, it would have been pretty easy to have a couple off years. But instead it just gets heightened.

So it was about just kind of just being myself, not caring about how heightened it is, but instead allowing the belief in the system, belief in my age, saying you could start at 27 and have an unbelievable career, so let's just take our time, make sure we're getting on the right path. It just took a little longer than I would have liked and I feel like I'm on the right path.

It doesn't mean that I'm going to have massive success immediately. I saw a little bit of success last week, but for me it's about the feels more than it is the results and I know when it starts to feel a certain way that the results follow. And that's what I'm trying to tap into.

DOUG MILNE: All right, Jordan we're going to cut you loose, we certainly appreciate the time and insight as always and we wish you a wonderful week this week. Thank you.

JORDAN SPIETH: Thanks, Doug.

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