

Arnold Palmer Invitational

Friday, March 3, 2023

Bay Hill, Florida, USA

Bay Hill Club and Lodge

Jordan Spieth

Quick Quotes



Q. Tough fight out there. You got to be happy with the round in the 60s in those conditions. There was not many with a 6 in front of it out there this afternoon.

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I thought anything under par would be a great score. Really I figured we would be able to maybe do something towards the end of the round. But the first nine I thought was going to be, was going to tell a lot. To be bogey-free with a couple nice saves and under par through nine holes, that's where I kind of was like, all right, we can get something going. I got a few scorable holes coming up.

There's a few places where I would like to have a shot back, maybe three or four of 'em today, that were pretty controllable that didn't have to do with the wind. But all in all tee to green it's going really well and I hit a lot of good putts today and finally made a couple.

Q. The short game was on point. In fact, you lead the field in strokes gained around the green. Tomorrow we're not expecting as difficult conditions, but they're still calling for gusts in that 25 mile per hour area. Knowing how you feel right now around the greens, how much does that give you a little bit of confidence to say, I don't have to squeeze this in a hole I don't like, I don't need to be perfect?

JORDAN SPIETH: I think what speaks to kind of around the green is also in approach. Leaving the ball into the wind if anything today was important. So even if a shot, if I was in between clubs, I was favoring a side that was going to be into the wind, which always gives me a chance to get it up-and-down.

It's not always the chip shot. It's a lot of times how you set it up. I also had made two putts from the fringe rough area, long putts. So statistically it helps the around the green and it goes off to the putting.

But I always have confidence in my short game, the ability to just kind of try a shot anywhere, whatever is going to produce the shot to get closest. On a course like this you

know you're going to need it. You're going to hit some really good shots that end up in bad places and you got to get out of it.

Q. On a day like this when it going to be tough with the conditions, how important is mindset, just general mindset?

JORDAN SPIETH: I think I actually did a really poor job of that ahead of time. I was kind of, from Tuesday when I saw my pairing I was like, man, I just feel like if there's been a draw, I've kind of had it, a run right now where I've kind of been on the side that ahead of time doesn't look so good, and they it just always ends up closer, minus a couple times here or there, they always end up closer than we think.

But I was just, I was pretty down on myself knowing that I thought today was going to be a three-shot difference in a draw and I don't think it really was a difference. Having said that, I didn't, once you get started on No. 1 tee you just have to be ready for anything. I was really proud of the front nine. I was glad to get 1-under with no bogeys on the front in those conditions. That was solid golf.

Then I saw in front of me, I saw JT taking it a few under on the front and carrying that on. But there's some scores going on right now, Cam Young behind us, you kind of want to get a gauge on where it's at. Then I thought the TOUR, as much as you'll hear complaints from our side when it gets out of the control, I thought they did a phenomenal job of preparing for the worst and still having it about a difficult but fair test today, given the conditions.

So once we started to see how receptive the greens were going to be I kind of fired a couple shots landing closer to the hole than I maybe would have if it were yesterday's round.

Q. I think you had maybe four birdies from 11 on. Any stand out? 17 maybe?

JORDAN SPIETH: I had two 2-putts on par-5s. I hit tee balls or approach shots that were key when I needed 'em. I got, I stole one on 17, kind of first steal of the week kind



of thing. So that one. The other two were par-5s. And number 11 I made, that was probably the best played hole I've played in a long time. I made two of the best swings I've made in a very, very long time and hit a putt that went right in the middle with the right speed.

So sometimes it just takes one hole like that where you're like, all right, I know it's in there, let's just keep pressing forward. So I need to do a couple swings off of my 18th tee shot. That was, as many really good shots as I've hit that may have been the worst I've ever hit. So I'll, I just need to get it out of the system and get ready for tomorrow.

Q. What did you hit at 11?

JORDAN SPIETH: I hit a sand wedge. I hit driver, sand wedge, which that hole can be one of the harder ones of the year. We got a favorable wind the last two days, which if you hit driver, you still got to split it up there. And then I took a wedge right at the stick and made about a 10-footer or so.

Q. What exactly did you do on 18? And do you consider yourself lucky that it didn't bounce over the fence?

JORDAN SPIETH: Absolutely. I was very prepared to grab another golf ball. I was trying to hit a drive that I don't know the last time I've ever hit a drive that way, like easy and head high and drawing. I mean, I just didn't want to hit 3-wood. I thought the wind was like hard enough for a 3-wood to get in the air, but a driver if it was smashed could run into the water.

So I was trying to like hit a low one that held the wind that didn't get up in the air much and I drop-kicked it, which I don't think I've ever done on TOUR. So, yeah, like I said, I've hit a lot of good tee balls. That one wasn't one of 'em. So I just want to hit a couple of 'em that aren't that way --

Q. Did the ruling you sought, did that come into your head pretty quickly when you got there?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I mean, I walked over there and the way the fence is angled, I mean, there's, I couldn't even stand to hit it right-handed. But left-handed you have a full arc. So I mean, I would have taken a 52 degree or a pitching wedge and just hit it lefty and just tried to get it over to the fairway. I could have hit it as hard as I wanted to. Just try and get it up in the fairway, and I would be standing on the cart path.

So it was very fortunate. I'm a bit surprised that it's where they have the fence. You think maybe they would put it further away where you don't get that opportunity or right

on the path. It was very lucky. I almost, I mean, the whole entire hole I should have made 6 or 7 and I sneaky almost made a 4.

Q. So they really did set the course up well?

JORDAN SPIETH: They did make it easier, yeah. Yeah, they did.

Q. When you holed your putt on 17 and snapped it on 18, your emotion, expression, whatever looked exactly the same. Were you pretty within yourself today?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah. I'm trying to do a better job of that. I'm trying not to, how do I describe it? Tell a story to Michael after every shot. I'm trying to just hit it and it's where it is. I don't have to justify why it wasn't better. I don't have to justify why it was good. I'm just trying to, I don't think it helps, so I'm trying to just -- the one on 17 when I hit the putt, I was like, oh, sit down, I think that's 3 or 4 feet by. So when it hit the pin I'm like, oh, nice.

But it wasn't like a moment where I'm like, oh, that's dripping in, it's perfect. I mean, I was putting it out of the rough, so it was just a guess.

Then 18, I don't know, I've hit enough drives in bad spots where I'm just like, all right, well, that was really bad, let's not do that again. I need another ball.

Q. How difficult is that tee shot on 18? If you could describe that tee shot to the average golfer on 18, how hard is it?

JORDAN SPIETH: It's tough because the miss is left, but the out of bounds is left. If you miss it in the right rough, it's almost an automatic bogey. I'm sure the hole plays more than a 5. So you just can't be right.

But you can be left, but there's not much room. The wind's blowing down off the left pretty hard. So at the spin rates that drivers or 3-woods produce it's really hard to hold that wind, and so you're likely going to have to lineup down the out of bounds, which is what I should have done, and just peel a fade into the fairway. You can't see it either, so it's blind. Then it's kind of wind-dependent on how hard or easy it is.

Q. What's key to holding on this weekend and making sure you have a chance on Sunday?

JORDAN SPIETH: I think don't do anything differently. I felt like I putted better today than yesterday. I felt like I struck the ball pretty similarly. Tee to green I'm doing what I need to do to be able to win the golf tournament. Just try

to hole some more putts.

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