

Arnold Palmer Invitational

Sunday, March 10, 2024

Bay Hill, Florida, USA

Bay Hill Club and Lodge

Scottie Scheffler

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Scottie Scheffler into the interview room, our 2024 Arnold Palmer Invitational presented by Mastercard champion.

Scottie, one thing better than winning this tournament is winning it twice. Congratulations on picking up your 7th PGA TOUR victory. If we can get some comments on outstanding play this week.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I don't really know exactly what to say, but I'm thankful for this week, I'm thankful for how we performed out there, and yeah, it was a good week. Can take away a lot of positives from this tournament and, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Your thoughts on winning Mr. Palmer's tournament once again.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, it's really special. Mr. Palmer meant a lot to me, meant a lot to us as professional golfers and the game of golf, and so it's very special to be able to sit hear and wear his read sweater again and, yeah, I'm very proud to be the champion of his tournament.

THE MODERATOR: Okay. We'll get started with questions.

Q. Congratulations. Second win in four months.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Is this a counting event? (Laughing.)

Q. There's going to be a lot of focus on some just terrific putting over the weekend, but I'm curious how much of it would you attribute to the actual club and how much to kind of between the ears, some of the stuff you were talking about of kind of quieting your mind?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I think it has a lot to do with the stuff we talked about on Monday, keeping the mind as quiet as possible. Part of the problem is just trying too hard. It's frustrating to not have the best of myself, just

because I know that I can putt really well. It's not like I've been a bad putter my whole career. I've just gone through a stretch where it's been tough.

Yeah, I think this week I did a really good job of not letting the misses get to me. Teddy did a really good job of keeping me in a good head space and we stayed positive out there and I hit a lot of good putts, a lot of good putts this week.

Q. When you won that other event four months ago, you said that you didn't really tie up your identity in wins or I think it was -- or what you shoot, basically. I guess, what would be your identity after today? Is this how you define yourself, just simply by performing the way you expect to?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I try not to place too much of my identity in what I do out here on the golf course. There's a whole other part of my life that is not in front of you guys that I think is what's most important to me. So, yeah, my life's not a golf score, it's not how many trophies I'm going to win, it's not anything like that. I'm proud to have a great wife and a great family, and we have great friends at home and I'm very grateful for the other part of my life that's away from the golf course.

Q. But you play golf for a living. What's your identity as a golfer?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: You tell me. (Laughing.)

Q. Well, I want to know. What do you think?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I would like to be remembered as a competitor. I would like to be remembered as someone that always gave it his best and just kept a good attitude. I feel like that's my goal always going into an event, is being tough, being competitive, and going out and competing, having a good attitude, and being committed to my shots.

Q. Where does this rank in your victories among overall all around performance and this week what was most gratifying?



SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I think this one's pretty special. Like some of y'all had mentioned, it had been awhile since I won. I did win in the Bahamas, but as far as a PGA TOUR event, it had been almost a year, and so there had been a lot of chatter about my game and the state of where it was at, and so it was nice to kind of come in here with a good mental attitude and to perform well under pressure and I think today's round was really special for me going forward.

Q. How much, as this narrative has sort of played out, has it tested your pay patience, whether the narrative or the results, and are you typically a patient person?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I try to be as patient as possible. I think that's probably a tough thing to kind of figure out. But, yeah, I try to be as patient as possible. I think it can be tough out here. This game can humble you really fast. I'm trying to be more grateful for the success and more grateful for these wins.

Sometimes I have a habit of winning an event and just immediately trying to move on to the next week. So going in tonight, I'll try and celebrate and enjoy this win with my family and, yeah, it will be fun.

Q. I think when you win by five shots, there's problem more than one shot that sticks out, but is there a particular shot that sticks out in your mind from this final round?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Not really. I just think it's another golf course here in Florida where it's really uncomfortable down the stretch. I just don't ever really feel like you have it won until you basically get it to 18 green. I would say if there's a shot that stood out the most, it would probably be, momentum-wise, my up and down there on 13. I think that was really important at that stage in the round. I hadn't made a bogey yet, and it would be silly of me to give one up on that hole that was playing downwind today. Typically it's a very difficult hole, but today being downwind I'm sure the scores were fairly low, and so that would have been a frustrating hole to give up a shot. So that was good for momentum.

Then a good 2-putt on 14 and then I made the long putt there on 15.

Q. A lot was made this week about Rory having a putting lesson from Brad Faxon after struggling on Thursday's first round. I'm curious, what did you find after Thursday's first round when you went to the putting green?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Thursday, I think, was a really

important day for me. I got off to a horrible start with the putter. I hit a really bad putt to start the day and I missed a couple other makeable ones on the first few holes. When I got to the practice range after, the discussion was not what are we going to fix. It was how well that I did. And that all goes back to the process that we're working on and it's not results-based.

Like, we got done with Thursday's round, and Teddy and I kind of looked at each other, and it was like, you know, man, I felt like we did pretty good today. So that was the discussion and then we continued to work on the things that we're working on. Yeah, it wasn't like we were searching for anything out there. It was more just kind of a reflection of where I was mentally at the time and I thought we did a good job.

Q. Do you feel like you found the putter you'll be using for awhile?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I mean, hopefully. (Laughing.) Yeah, I like not having to line the ball up. I line this putter up well in the middle of the face. It's very good visually. And yeah, I try not to focus too much on the results, but my process was really good this week and the results so far are pretty tough to argue with, I would say.

Q. Rory was very complimentary in talking about your consistency. Is maybe that your identity, that you made a lot of cuts in a row, tons of top 10s since you won the Waste Management a couple years ago? Is that maybe the takeaway for you?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I try to be as consistent as possible out here. It's a difficult thing doing that week-to-week out here on TOUR. The golf courses are really tough, the competition is really tough, and I try to be as consistent as possible and bring the right attitude each week. So I'm definitely proud of the results over the last couple years, how consistent I've been and it's nice to get a win this week.

Q. You talk about not trying to be perfect on the greens this week and clearly that worked out well for you. In the past or over the course of the last year, have you found yourself trying to be perfect on the greens and that's what's led to the aggravation or the frustration?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I just think that's how it works across all aspects of the game. If you're trying to play perfect golf, it doesn't really work. There's no such thing. I think sometimes the perception from people on the outside, golf looks really easy when you watch it on TV. I mean, it really does. It does not look that hard. But then when you

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go out here and compete and play on the PGA TOUR, it's pretty dang difficult.

So I try to take that approach to all aspects of my game and sometimes when things aren't going right, you try to be perfect and at times in the last year or so, it's definitely been frustrating knowing that I can hole putts and win tournaments and not being able to do it at the clip that I would like to. So going into today that was really one of the positives I took from the first round, was I had a good attitude, I held my lines well, and it's just a matter of continuing to stick to what we're doing and just wait for results to come and not force 'em.

Putting's such a difficult thing because you can't force it. Like, I can hit a really good 9-iron from the middle of the fairway and every now and then I'll get gusted, and it won't turn out well, but worst case it's not going to be very far from the hole. But putting, I could hit a really good putt from 15 feet and if it lips out, it's the same thing as me just hitting a terrible putt a foot short and then tapping it in.

So it's a tough thing to quantify when you're just looking at the results, so that's why I try to focus more on my process and what I'm doing over the ball versus any sort of results-based thinking.

Q. Couple things: During this process over the last six months of working on your putting, did any of your regular routine work, long game, not suffer, but did you take time away from that to devote into putting?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Well, I tried not to. I've always approached the off-season in a way in which I always have one point of emphasis. Some years it's been my diet, some years it's been work in the gym. This last year it was my putting. So I don't feel like I tried to let any of the other parts of my game suffer. I think that can also be the tough thing about -- when you think so much about improving at one thing, I think sometimes it just dominates your brain, and so it's almost just as important to just put in the work and be done with it and then go home and think about things other than golf.

If I'm thinking about my putting 24/7, there's going to be a lot of anticipation going into that first putt on Thursday or whenever it is, and it's probably not going to go that well. So a lot of it is just putting in the quality work and then being done with it.

Q. Secondly, I'm sorry this is kind of silly, but someone asked me about the beard this week. I didn't have an answer. Did you just like grow that on Tuesday? Was that a putting thing? Are you not going to shave until the baby's born? What's the deal?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I get lazy. That's pretty much it. I got lazy in the like two weeks that we had off and it started growing out and then one day, I don't remember why I wanted to be presentable for something, I don't even remember what it was, but I grabbed a razor and just like shaved my neck, and then I was like, it's just kind of nice not having to shave each day, and really just more of a laziness thing than anything.

But now it's getting to the point where it's probably getting a little bit longer and it's growing in weird directions, so I'm probably going to have to shave it now and then grow it out again. Really, it was just pure laziness.

Q. You described earlier that Bay Hill is one of those courses that's designed to make you uncomfortable, especially down the back nine. When you look at the scores and what everybody else did and you went bogey-free, how uncomfortable, really, were you today?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: At times the golf course can make you really uncomfortable, but going bogey-free out here is really a feat, I feel like. It's not easy to go bogey-free around this place. I had some really good up-and-downs and I'm especially proud of how I finished off the round, making a great par there on 13, good 2-putt on 14, played 15 the right way, and really good pars there on 17 and 18 as well.

Q. As well as you played, are you surprised to see your closest pursuers shoot the way they did today? Even par, 2-under, was the best that anyone could muster atop the leaderboard?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, it's just around this golf course it gets so much harder as the day goes on, just because the greens get firmer, they get crustier, they get harder to putt, it's harder to hit your shots closer to the hole. I mean, if you looked at the scoring average over the years between the afternoon waves and the morning waves, especially when you get to Friday, Saturday, Sunday, it's probably a pretty significant difference, especially on Friday, just because everybody in the field is kind of playing even.

Saturday and Sunday it may not be as big of a difference because the guys at the bottom of the leaderboard aren't playing as well as the guys at the top. But the golf course is significantly more difficult here in the afternoon than it is in the morning.

Q. If you were asked what's the worst tournament you've played in the last year, would you have any

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idea?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Not off the top of my head and I think that's a good thing. If you give me a few seconds, I could probably think of one, but, yeah, it's nice.

Q. Time's up.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I'm blanking under the pressure. (Laughing.)

Q. What exactly do you have planned from here to Augusta? What kind of a schedule do you look at and when will you go up to Augusta?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: So I've never really been one of the guys that goes up to Augusta throughout the year, really just from a time perspective. I like to take advantage of the time we have at home. Hadn't made any plans to go up to Augusta before the tournament. I'll play next week at THE PLAYERS, have a week off, play Houston, and then another week off, and then we'll head up there on Sunday, so, normal prep. I played the week before the Masters once, that was enough. I don't think that playing the week before that tournament was good for me. I went in a little bit tired. You got to have your legs to play that golf course, so taking the week off before and showing up ready to go.

Q. You have sort of a low-key personality, you've been No. 1 in the world for 10 or 11 months now, are you comfortable being sort of the face of golf?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah. I don't really look at the world rankings very often, but with that being said, it's nice to be No. 1. I would much rather be No. 1 than No. 2. It's something that I don't try to focus on, it's not something I place my identity in. For me, as a golfer, I just try to put the work in, and just because you make it to the top, I mean, the work almost gets more difficult to stay there. It's a challenging thing. Everybody, I guess, now is kind of looking up at me at the top of the rankings and trying to take me down, so in order to stay up there, you got to put in a lot of work.

Q. I know you said earlier in the round is when you kind of got close enough, closest to a bogey, but I would be curious, on 17 that -- it maybe didn't matter at that point with your lead -- but the lie looked really bad. What were you trying to do there?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Just trying to make sure I got out of the bunker first and foremost. It was a really bad lie, it plugged in the lip. Fortunately, it was on the upslope, so I had a good chance to get out. Basically those shots you're just blindly swinging at 'em, making sure you get the club

under the ball. That one was nice to see it kind of pop out and trickle up there towards the flag. More than anything, I was just trying to make sure I got that ball on the green.

Q. Curious, did Shane say anything to you on the 18th green, other than the standard, good playing?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: After I hit my approach shot in there he just turned around and said, That was a heck of a round of golf. Then, he kind of let me have my space as we walked up there. Then, on 18 green, Shane's a great competitor and great player as well, and he's had his fair share of wins, so he's always very gracious. So, yeah, he congratulated me, and then he gave me some crap, because it took a little while to get into scoring, but you got to do interviews and all that stuff, but, yeah, it was fun, I enjoyed going around the golf course with him today.

THE MODERATOR: All right, Scottie Scheffler, congratulations once again.

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