

# Arnold Palmer Invitational

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Bay Hill, Florida, USA

Bay Hill Club and Lodge

## Chris Gotterup

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, we're going to get things started. We are joined here with Chris Gotterup. Chris, welcome to the Arnold Palmer Invitational presented by Mastercard. You're making your tournament debut. Just like to get some comments on what it's like to be on-site at Arnold Palmer's property.

CHRIS GOTTERUP: Yeah, this is my first time here, obviously. Everyone always raves about this tournament and you watch on TV and obviously it's some iconic finishes. So about to go out and see nine holes for the first time. But obviously excited to be here. Cool to be a part of this tournament. Obviously what Arnold Palmer meant to the game is special. So I'm excited for the week.

THE MODERATOR: You mentioned this will be your first time, you haven't seen any of the holes or played this course at all before?

CHRIS GOTTERUP: Yeah, no, I've never been up here. But obviously you've watched this one on TV for a long time, so I've seen some of the holes and some of the finishes, so I feel like I know the course to some degree, but obviously some of the middle holes where TV doesn't quite cover that will be what I'm looking for.

THE MODERATOR: You had quite the stretch playing four tournaments in a row and including a win. Your first time getting rest since your win. What did you do with your week off in between this?

CHRIS GOTTERUP: Me and my dad and my brother actually went and got a practice round in at Augusta. So a week off kind of, but, yeah, that was awesome to be able to go up there. And I felt like I actually played six in a row, because even when I took a week off during AmEx I stayed out on the West Coast, so I haven't been home for a while. It was a lot of golf, a much needed week off, so excited for, I feel a little rested and ready to get back after it.

THE MODERATOR: First impressions or any memories or stories to share from your first trip to Augusta?

CHRIS GOTTERUP: Yeah, I mean, it was, you know, it's one of those things that you just kind of always hope to be able to go there. Then to be able to play a meaningful round there. Obviously everyone in the world of golf would love to go play a round there, but obviously to be able to have the build-up into the Masters is awesome. To be able to share that, my brother and my dad had never played either, so to be able to go down there with them and share that whole experience was really cool.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up with questions.

#### **Q. Curious, what you do you do, call the pro shop and book a tee time?**

CHRIS GOTTERUP: So I think the rule is if I want to bring -- so like you can bring two guests with you, but you have to play with a member. So you just have to find someone that's willing to take you and spend the day. Luckily, I mean, the guy that took us was a local guy and he was super nice and showed us all around the whole property. We spent the full day. We played the par-3. We got it all taken care of. So but, yeah, I think if we went by ourselves and our caddie wanted to come with us we can go not whenever, but like you said, ask the pro and he'll tell us what days work.

#### **Q. Was there a phone call involved or do you have people that do that for you?**

CHRIS GOTTERUP: I had someone help me with that, but I had talked to the pro and we got it all sorted.

#### **Q. What was your biggest impression of the day? What stood out the most?**

CHRIS GOTTERUP: I think like the one that really -- well the chute on 18 is much tighter than TV gives it credit for.

I would say, like 2 with no people there, 2 green is so wild looking because it looks so massive on TV and obviously the framing of all the people behind you. It's just like the green's just thrown in like perfect grass obviously. So it looked much smaller and different.



Then I would say 1 green was much more severe than TV gives it credit for. So like you have obviously a tough tee ball and then you have to hit a good second shot to be able to get it in the right section.

**Q. Did you buy anything?**

CHRIS GOTTERUP: A couple hats. I got my brother and my dad something. Then I got my mom and sister and girlfriend taken care of. Yeah, that's a mandatory. I got some playing cards and stuff for just little things like that.

**Q. Have you ever bought anything at another course before?**

CHRIS GOTTERUP: Yeah, I mean I've definitely bought a couple, like I usually just go for a hat or like a nice non-Nike golf shirt that I can wear to dinner, rather than wearing all my stuff that I wear out here. So nice to change wardrobe every once in awhile.

**Q. When you played the golf course, and it's obviously not anywhere close to what the conditions will be, but did you look at each hole and say, I know how to play this hole, I think I can score on this hole?**

CHRIS GOTTERUP: Yeah, I think you do that anywhere you go. But there's definitely, I mean, I think that's the one tournament or course where not having played I know every hole there and it's just something that everyone watches the Masters and knows Augusta National, so there's definitely holes where I was surprised like I said with certainty balls and stuff that I probably need to prioritize in the weeks leading up to that.

A couple, like hole 2 wouldn't be a hole that suits my eye, preferably hitting a cut. So that's something that I'll touch on when I'm playing practice rounds or something fun beforehand.

**Q. Wanted to ask you something about your rise through the ranges here, and you're sixth in the world now and so forth. Going back to college, I think you would have been here no matter what, but do you think that maybe that one year at Oklahoma sort of set you up better for being a professional than just being at Rutgers, the type of competition you had, etcetera.**

CHRIS GOTTERUP: Yeah, I think the way that I would describe it and everyone always asks like what changed. I think, you know, I was not ready to turn pro leaving Rutgers. And that's not a knock on them, I don't think I was, I don't think I would have gotten to Oklahoma without like my four years at Rutgers and the lead-up to that and getting better and going through all the ups and downs that

you go there. But, yeah, I mean I would be naive to say that Oklahoma didn't change my trajectory in golf. But I think it was, you know, another year getting another year of development and playing against, like you said, competition that obviously a lot of the guys that I played against in college I see out here and play practice rounds with. So I think it's all the pieces. I think it's the four years at Rutgers, the year at Oklahoma, the Korn Ferry Tour, like I think I've been through and done it, you know, the way that it's designed for me to get to where I am now. I think it's all just part of, you know, it's not the fast track, I definitely wasn't on the fast track to the PGA TOUR, but I feel like earning my way through all the rankings and stuff, I feel like I've kind of proven to myself each kind of step that I have gotten this far, that I've earned it. You know, I wasn't really, I mean, I played 12 sponsor exemptions I think when I turned pro, which was, you know, somewhat earned and somewhat not. I think from other than that I feel like I've played my way into where I am now.

**Q. What are some of your memories of watching this tournament when you think of the Arnold Palmer Invitational, what do you think of?**

CHRIS GOTTERUP: I mean, mostly you think of 18 and some of the putts that Tiger made on 18 and some of the, I feel like it's always a good finish. It's definitely not a course where people seem to run away with the tournament and win by six. It always seems to be, all right, you need a par to win on 18. Or it's tied, and the last group, someone's going to make a birdie. I think it's known for its finish. You got you got a reachable par-5, I don't know if we're even playing it as a 5 or a 4 this week, but I think it's a par-5. Obviously you need to make a birdie there. And then 17 and 18 you kind of got to hold on for dear life. Obviously I think the weather looks good this week and it will be firm and fast. It seems like a tournament from what I've heard that you need to just have all aspects dialed in. You got to be in the fairway, you got to hit it in the right spot and try not to leave yourself a bunch of 10-footers for par grinding it out.

**Q. Going back to your trip to the Masters, what was your favorite hole?**

CHRIS GOTTERUP: I think 7 for me was like the, it's just like, it's so simple, but you just have to hit a good tee ball and you have to hit the right shot coming into the green. Just visually when you step on the tee box you're like, wow, this hole is really cool looking. I think that's just -- because you see all the other ones all the time and all the shots on 13, 18, 12, and I think that's one of the holes that maybe gets slept on. That was one of my favorites.

**Q. Do you have a personal fifth major?**

CHRIS GOTTERUP: I could probably list a couple. I feel like John Deere's a special place for me. That was one of the sponsor exemptions I got and I came in 4th. They have been super helpful in my growth and getting to where I am. Then obviously Travelers is close to home. So I think between those two, those are my, like they have been also super helpful giving me an exemption, and that's one tournament where every year in that tournament people can come watch from home and it's usually the close to New Jersey. So those two are probably my biased, you know, towards tournaments and helpfulness towards my career. So I would say those two are probably my 5th and 6th or T-5.

**Q. You answered it, but what's your, I realize you haven't played it yet, what's your scouting report on 18 and what makes that hole so tough and what are you taking off the tee there?**

CHRIS GOTTERUP: From what I've seen guys hit usually 3-woods, I think. I don't know what it is to the water. Obviously it depends on how firm and fast the fairways are. But I think what makes it tough is just from listening to the announcers and stuff on TV, it seems like it's a little bit blind to where you like don't see the fairway, it doesn't, you know, line you up properly. Not that it lines you up incorrectly, but it's just hard to pick a good target. Obviously you have a giant pond and a small green. So if you don't hit the fairway it gets real tough. They always tuck it in the back right and you have to hit a good shot in there. I think it's just one of those holes that once you get in the fairway it's not over, you have to hit another good shot, and there just seems to be trouble looming. And especially coming down the stretch trying to win the tournament, there's not much forgiveness on the 18th hole.

**Q. You mentioned the John Deere. T-4 your first year playing? What did that do for you?**

CHRIS GOTTERUP: Yeah, I mean --

**Q. Just the nice check or?**

CHRIS GOTTERUP: The check was nice, for sure. But at that point I had zero, I mean when I finished PGA TOUR U, I think I was 6th so I would have got in Canadian TOUR status. I obviously knew I had a bunch of sponsor exemptions lined up, but I had basically no status at that point. That got me, for sure into Korn Ferry Tour finals and then Q-School finals and I mean without that I am going to third or second stage of Q-School and I got all the way into final stage and obviously didn't get my card through that, but played good and got me into a bunch of other tournaments. Just a lot of experience and the ability to at

least place myself into position to play well in the future. So it was definitely, at the time I didn't realize it, but now looking back it was a massive week for me.

**Q. When you have tournaments or other players that are particularly meaningful to 'em, and a new schedule comes forward, whenever it's going to be, is that something you would still make time to go play if you can?**

CHRIS GOTTERUP: Yeah, I played it every year so far, and I think I plan on playing it this year. Obviously we'll see what my body says to me through that stretch. Obviously there's a lot of golf coming up too. But I don't think I'm someone that says thanks and no thanks type of person. I am aware of what everyone's done to help me, and if I can give back -- obviously there's going to be some years where it just does not work and we'll see what happens down the line, but there's plenty of tournaments that have helped me out and I'm going to try to do my best to play. I mean, I like playing tournaments. It's just up to my body and what I can handle. But I'll play as many as I can and we'll see what happens from there.

**Q. There's no charter, right, you went straight from John Deere to Edinburgh?**

CHRIS GOTTERUP: No, they do a charter. They do a charter from I think Moline, from all the way to Scotland. So that's obviously a nice bonus as well.

**Q. As hard as it is to win on the PGA TOUR, you've done it three times now in the past eight months. Is there something in particular that you've been able to tap into or a common thread that has been able to let you get three in such quick fashion?**

CHRIS GOTTERUP: I don't know if there's one thing that is like, wow, just because I did this I've won three times. I think it's a mix of everything. I feel like I put a lot of attention into small details that I probably didn't care about before. Not that I didn't care about it, but I wasn't aware of it. We've obviously looked into stats and stuff that maybe I thought I was good at, but compared to others am not as good. It's been beneficial just to kind of, I think it's just been more of a, I put myself there or close to there more often, and I've obviously when I've been in contention I'm obviously playing well, so I feel like I'm comfortable. You're never comfortable in those scenarios, but I feel like I've gotten more comfortable executing shots under pressure. There's a whole lot of, like stuff that goes into it, and obviously a little bit of luck. But I feel like it's a mix of a lot of improvements, a lot of comfortability and experience that has helped me in those moments.

**Q. How comfortable are you coming down the stretch on Sundays?**

CHRIS GOTTERUP: Depends on the day, but I mean, if I'm playing well and I feel good about what I'm doing I'm as comfortable as I can be. Obviously there's a lot going on on Sundays, and when you're in contention and, you know, I'm someone that's going to go, you know, a hundred percent, and if I go down swinging, I'm going to go down swinging, but I'm going to give it my best shot. As long as I can leave the course on Sunday and be like, listen, I tried my best, if that comes in 10th or that comes in I don't care what place it is, as long as I can leave with a peace of mind that I gave it everything I had, then I had a great day out there. So most of the time, you know, I'm not, I've won in those scenarios, but I know if I keep putting myself there you're not going to win every single one, but as long as I'm there and in a good frame of mind I feel confident in what I'm doing.

THE MODERATOR: Perfect. Thank you.

CHRIS GOTTERUP: Thank you.

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