

Honda Classic

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Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, USA

PGA National Resort

Brooks Koepka

Press Conference



JACK RYAN: We'd like to welcome Brooks Koepka into the interview room at the 2022 Honda Classic. Brooks is making his seventh start in the event highlighted by a runner-up finish in 2019. If we could get a comment on your return to the event.

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, it's nice to be back after a year off. Golf course seems in pretty good shape. Fairways are nice and tight. It'll be difficult chipping around the green. Rough is getting a little bit thicker.

Greens look like they could use a little bit of water. Hopefully they don't die out there come Sunday because they are pretty brown.

It's a tough test, especially when the wind blows. You're going to see even par is always a pretty good score around here.

JACK RYAN: Finished tied for third at the well Phoenix Open, not the result you wanted last week, but just a comment on the state of your game.

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I feel good. I like the way I'm playing, like the way I'm putting. Just some things going on last week, but yeah, I like the way I'm playing, like the way I'm putting, like the way everything seems to be coming together and rounding into form.

Q. What are the advantages of a home game, and if there are any, what are the disadvantages?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I'd say probably more disadvantages than advantages. Phone blows up a lot more, a lot more people wanting tickets, more people wanting to go to dinner. I don't do that in a normal week. I'm pretty much locked in my house and only see the golf course and the gym. It's different.

You're used to having things in a suitcase. I know it sounds weird, but when I'm in my own home sometimes -- and I just moved, so literally trying to find stuff isn't always the easiest, but when you've got it all packed in a couple

bags, it makes it a lot easier.

Just odds and ends, making sure everybody is taken care of, family, some friends, things like that, so it makes it a little bit more difficult.

Q. Do you like the golf course, and does it by any chance bring up any thoughts of a U.S. Open type of challenge or a major championship if the wind blows?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I like it because it's difficult. I like difficult courses. I think that's why -- I can't compete when it's 30-under, 25 under every week. That's not me. I'm not going to go out and shoot 66, 65 every round. Probably why you see U.S. Opens I'm pretty much contending every time, and the more difficult tracks I seem to do better.

That's kind of our MO, the history I've looked at it. I think maybe four or five times I shot over 18-under, that's about it, but the rest of the time when it's difficult I'm usually right there.

What was the first part?

Q. If you like the golf course and if it reminds you --

BROOKS KOEPKA: Oh, U.S. Open, no. I think they have to redo the greens. I don't think the greens are in U.S. Open shape. As far as difficulty goes, yeah, I think you probably could. Those four holes to finish on the front nine and the four on the back are probably some of the more difficult holes you're going to see on the finishing side.

Q. Did you say you moved?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah.

Q. Still in Jupiter?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah.

Q. I was wondering, would you prefer to be paired with your brother Chase in this tournament?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Probably not, just because -- it would



make my family's life a lot easier. My mom probably won't even watch me or my dad won't watch me, they'll probably just go watch him. I know my friends are all going to be doing 36 watching me and then going to watch him because we pretty much have the same friend group. They'll be out there watching him. A lot of work for them.

I don't know, it's different. We don't really get to play too much anyways, even when we're here at home, so I think playing in a tournament, I think he'd be more worried -- I'd rather see him do his own thing.

Q. I know he played well here last year --

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, it was last year.

Q. Have you guys practiced at all together this week?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I played a practice round, played nine holes with him yesterday, and that was really it. But over the last year probably not as much.

I remember watching him last year, I think he played poorly on Saturday, but if he has a decent Saturday he's right there top 10, top 5. But it's all a learning experience, and hopefully he figures it out.

Q. Obviously you've been on the TOUR many years now, all the major wins, week in, week out you're playing tournaments. When you're here, does the little kid in you kind of creep out a little bit just with all the memories you have? Do you ever pass a certain area and just remember something when you were like 11 being a standard bearer or whatever?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Not at this place. If we were at Mirasol, yeah, because that's where I did it. I think four or five years was a standard bearer at Mirasol, but never out here.

I think one year, might have been either the Wednesday pro-am or Monday, I think it might have been Monday, I remember playing with somebody, I forget the name of the pro, but they did like four juniors got to go out and go play with him, so that was pretty cool. You got to compare yourself to where you wanted to be, to a guy playing out here on TOUR. So that was pretty neat.

Not too much as a kid. I think it depends on the place.

Q. Is it a little bit of a nice feeling? Is there a different kind of vibe or do you get right into the zone when you're out there and it feels like another PGA TOUR tournament or is it in the back of your head that you're at home?

BROOKS KOEPKA: It's never in the back of my head that I'm home. It's just more of when you go to work, man, you go to work. It doesn't matter where you're at. You've got a job to do, whether that means on the golf course, off the golf course, go to the gym, rest up, take care of my body, and then out here it's just practicing. It gets very repetitive and never really changes.

Q. I know you have a strong commitment to playing in this tournament every year, but you're from here. What do you make of a lot of the big-name golfers who live here but don't play in it?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I think you've got to take a break somewhere. It's pretty tough. You figure you've got Tiger's event, next week Bay Hill, PLAYERS. Got to take a week off somewhere. I think going from West Coast to East Coast, guys don't want to do that.

Like I said, I think being a home game is more difficult than being on the road. Seems like a good week to take off, and I understand it.

Q. A couple off-topic ones. Could you take me back to 2015 and talk about the letter you got from Arnie and what that meant after your Phoenix Open win?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I remember getting it. I was still living with -- I had just moved into the house I was living at. I was living with Pete Uihlein and Matt Broome. I mean, it was the first one I had ever gotten. Anytime you get a handwritten note, somebody took the time to do it, so that's always special.

Q. AP reported that Zach has been named the -- will be named the Ryder Cup captain. Your thoughts on what would make him a good captain, what makes him a good person to lead you guys?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I mean, is that actually done? I have no idea.

Q. AP is reporting it. I think they're going to make it official.

BROOKS KOEPKA: Okay, yeah, I like Zach. He's always been fun in the team rooms. He's been kind of a little bit of a rah-rah guy, which is always good. Some of the stuff he comes up with that the public won't see and what we see behind closed doors is probably what makes -- we all knew he was in line, knew it was going to happen sooner or later, so it's nice to see him get one. But yeah, the stuff he does behind closed doors is what I think makes the big difference, and I think every guy that's played on a team

that he's been an assistant or played with him would definitely agree with that and be happy to see him do it.

Q. Brooks, on this golf course in particular, the Bear Trap always gets the attention, but on the front side, 5, 6 and 7 played just as difficult if not more than the Bear Trap. What makes it so difficult out there on 5, 6 and 7?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Water and wind. That usually is a pretty good combination for quite a few balls. It's just tough tee shots. 5, you hit it left and you're going to be re-teeing or dropping. You do that on a par-3 you're going to make a big number anyways. Then 6 is just a difficult drive. You don't put that ball in the fairway, if you put it in that bunker or the rough, you've got no chance at putting it on the right shelf, whether it be in the back right or in the little bowl in the back left, and you're probably looking at 40, 50 feet of first putt. You've got to hit two quality shots in. If you don't do that, you're going to be most likely making bogey.

I think everybody in the field would take playing all those 1-over for the week and then just hopefully birdie some of the easier holes. It's like the first four holes are gettable out here, and then you kind of hang on, and then through 12, 13, 14, you're looking at birdie and then just hang on again, and hopefully birdie 18. There's really only like five birdie holes, I think, and then the rest you're just hanging on and playing not conservative but just trying to make sure you don't make the big number.

Q. Did you have a chance to see Phil's statement yesterday, and if so, what's your reaction to it and if you've talked to other players about it?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I mean, I skimmed it over. I'm happy with the PGA TOUR. I think everybody out here is happy. He can think whatever he wants to think, man. He can do whatever he wants to do. I think everybody out here is happy. I think a lot of people out here have the same opinion.

Q. Do you think that will put an end to all the Saudi league talk, the way everybody has come out in the last week or so, a whole bunch of guys have come out with the same opinion you have? Do you think that will put an end to it?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I don't think -- I think it's going to still keep going. I think there will still be talk. I think -- everyone talks about money. They've got enough of it. I don't see it backing down; they can just double up and they'll figure it out. They'll get their guys. Somebody will sell out and go to it.

Q. I know you played a few tournaments with Chase; have you ever been in the same grouping with him?

BROOKS KOEPKA: No, no never played with him.

Q. I interviewed Chase a couple days ago, and he sort of shed some light on how competitive you guys are at no matter what it is. Is there anything besides golf that you can remember where you guys really kind of locked horns or is it just everything you do, like monopoly --

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, it doesn't matter what it is. We're pretty competitive. We went out skiing in Montana in December, and we had a basketball court in the house we were in. I can't shoot it as well as he can. He's a pretty good shooter. Hopefully people -- well, they're going to find out now, but I chucked that ball a few times against the wall. I wasn't happy. I think we were playing horse. I definitely wasn't going to play a game against him on my knees.

But yeah, he drives me nuts. He's a good shooter, but anything we do is competitive. It gets a little intense, and then you throw my dad in there, he's competitive, as well. When we were younger usually one or two of us left crying. Somebody was pissed off, and my dad either kicked our butts or one of us went at it pretty good crying or it got physical.

Q. Who's a better trash talker?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I'd like to think I'm a little better. I think a few people will back that up.

JACK RYAN: Brooks, thank you for the time. Best of luck this week.

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