

Cognizant Classic

Wednesday, February 25, 2026

Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, USA

PGA National Champion Course

Brooks Koepka

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome nine-time PGA TOUR winner Brooks Koepka here to the media center here at the Cognizant Classic in the Palm Beaches. This is your eighth start in this event, kind of a home game. If we can get some remarks what you're looking forward to this week.

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, the golf course is in probably the best shape I've seen it. Obviously I know they redid it. It's overseeded. Everything around the greens seems to be a lot more lush. Rough is down from what I remember. At least when you get the Bermuda it's a lot tougher. But the golf course is in great shape, and just ready for a good week.

Q. Brooks, coming back here, having missed it three years, first time here you got an exemption, what does it mean to you? What are your memories of the years coming here?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I mean, growing up here, it was -- I came every year. I remember carrying the sign. From probably I was nine, ten years old until probably maybe a junior, senior in high school I remember carrying the sign.

It's always good memories. I remember when it was at Mirasol. It was always a lot of fun getting up close to the guys, seeing everything, and then obviously being able to play in it is special. It's nice. My whole family and friends get to come out and see, and they're not able to all the time. It's a nice event. It's definitely weird staying at home. You just get so accustomed to living out of a suitcase or hotel or whatever.

But it's enjoyable. It's nice to come back and just feel your own comforts when you get home.

Q. What were the biggest names you remember carrying the sign for?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I remember carrying Jeff Maggert, Scott Gutschewski, Stephen Ames. Those are the names

that pop in my head.

Q. Your exemption, I think your first one was 2014, which was the year actually they had seven top-10 guys in this field. You made the cut. Specifically that year, the first time playing in a pro tournament here, what do you remember about that specifically?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I mean, that's 12 years ago. It's very tough to remember the exact -- I think if I remember correctly, that was the year there was a bunch of rain. I think I played with DJ and Rory; is that correct? I don't know, somebody would have to look it up. But I think that's the year we're talking about.

But it's always fun. Like I said, it's fun to get out here and play in front of people I know and see a bunch of people I haven't seen in a long time and just hopefully put on a good show.

Q. You just alluded to it a little bit, but you'd played in South Florida the last couple years at Doral obviously, but just being here and knowing that you're going to be obviously a fan favorite like always here, what does that element of this mean to you?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, well, this is true hometown event. Like I said, coming to it for years when I was a kid, and then I don't think anybody in my family or really anybody has got more than like a 25-minute drive, my friends. It's nice to be able to be this close to home and to have everybody come out. It's just enjoyable to see faces you haven't seen in a long time. Sometimes it's the only time I see people is when I'm here at this event. It'll be fun. I'm looking forward to it.

Q. I saw the list of charities that you're donating to. I was just wondering the process, how you decided that list of places to donate to.

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, it was mutual. Me and the PGA TOUR got together. All those charities are charities that I've been involved with for years, either participated in or have gone and helped around or donated to before, and I just feel like it was a good opportunity to donate to something where I know the money is actually going to,



things where I'm involved with already.

A lot of them are local, which is very cool, so you get to see the progress over years and years and get to go visit them.

Q. You mentioned a couple weeks back that you had a lot of guys to reconnect with. What has that process been like as you continue to settle in on TOUR?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Honestly, there's probably more guys I've just had to introduce myself to. There's a lot of people I don't know. I think I remember reading a stat years ago where every four years there's a 50 percent turnover, something like that. I could be wrong. That could be completely made up, too, so I don't know. I remember reading that.

But it seems about right, for as long as I've been out here. A lot of faces I don't know. Playing with guys -- it's good to see guys you haven't played with in a while, too. But it's been fun. It's been enjoyable. The feedback has been pretty good.

Q. Tons of new young talent. Are there any young guys that you're excited to play with or have caught your eye?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Chris, pretty good, considering he's won twice. I haven't played with him. I've obviously watched him hit balls and seen his results, and I think that's pretty good.

But I would say that's a name that probably sticks out right now. Another Nike guy. Everybody has been talking about him for a while, so it's good to see.

Q. You mentioned the dynamic of playing here at home. This is your first time playing here as a father. What do you think that'll be like competing here during the day, going home, seeing your son and being a father and kind of balancing both lives that way?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, it's really, really cool. Yeah, it'll be interesting because hopefully -- he's sick right now, but hopefully he's back in school by Thursday and Friday, so hopefully hang around for the weekend so he gets to come out.

But yeah, it's super enjoyable. I rushed home last night. I got out of here by probably 6:40 maybe and was just trying to rush home to catch him right before he went to bed.

It's fun. This morning we were trying to keep it down in the gym to not wake him, so there's a little bit of a weird element, too, of how do we work around him and his

schedule, too. But it's fun. I enjoyed when he's got to come out the last few weeks and be there, and hopefully he gets to see maybe a warm reception. He's going to see -- if he's out there on Saturday and Sunday, he'll see a bunch of people he knows, so that'll be fun for him.

Q. Just want to know what you think about your game at this point since you've been back on the PGA TOUR, and with the U.S. Open at Shinnecock approaching, how do you feel your game is now compared to perhaps how you were leading up to your win there in 2018?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I feel really good. I think the first week was just a matter of getting out and going to play. Phoenix just kind of exposed some stuff I need to work on. I was back at it on -- I think we got back Saturday night, took Sunday off, and been grinding since Monday.

But it feels really good. I'm excited. I know that it's progressing very, very nicely, and just want to put myself in contention here a few times before Augusta and see where everything lies.

Q. Just a follow-up to being a father, has that changed you as a person and as a golfer?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah. Oh, yeah. It's changed me as a person. Definitely has.

I think I've always wanted to be a dad, and getting the opportunity and being around him every day is special. Wake up with a smile on my face every day, just going to see how happy he is and how excited he is to see me.

It's a lot of fun, and then getting him -- he's started to want to hit balls the last couple weeks, so that's been pretty cool. He got a little Cleveland set of an actual wood and a real iron. Before it was like plastic stuff. So I took him out to Atlantic Fields last weekend, I believe, last Saturday and Sunday. Obviously being a metal wood, it's a little bit heavier than the plastic set and plastic ball that he's been hitting, so he kind of hit it and it went quite a bit further, and his reaction was quite cool. It was awesome to see as a dad.

I want him to play golf and enjoy it so we can go do it as a family. But he's taken to it. He watched a lot of hockey the last few days, too, so that's been fun. Took a stick to the face the other day at the house, so that was interesting. It's been a while since that happened. It definitely hurts. I feel Jack Hughes and his pain a little bit, but didn't lose a tooth, thankfully.

But it's so much fun just getting to see him kind of evolve

and grow.

Q. What is your game plan when you get out to PGA National, getting around the course, holes that you feel you can take advantage of, and other than majors, where would this on the TOUR rank for winning for your career as a non-major win?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Well, I think to win here would be pretty cool just because it's a hometown event. Having my entire family here, a bunch of my friends would be able to come out and see, that would be special.

What was the first part of the question?

Q. Where you think you can take advantage here on the course, scoring opportunities for you.

BROOKS KOEPKA: You know, the course has changed so much, I think, from when I last played it, being overseeded. I can think -- 10 is back to a par-5. 6, the two bunkers on the right are taken out. Chipping around the greens has gotten a lot easier. The rough is down a little bit. It was so difficult because if you got in the rough here, you had to judge whether it was going to be a 30-yard flier or just come out 30 percent of its normal distance. It was just a pure guess.

So it's a little more consistent now. You can kind of judge that better. Then I'll see the back today.

But as far as the front, everything seems to be -- they're good changes. It's the best I've seen this course in probably my 15 years, 20 years down here.

Q. Now that you're back on the TOUR, what are your objectives over the course of the next couple of years, and what would you like your ultimate legacy to be as a golfer?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I don't know. I feel like that's a very deep question. I don't know what I want my legacy to be. I kind of don't think about it. I just try to be the best person, best golfer I can be, and then wherever things settle up, they settle up. I just don't want to look back at the end of my career and say, man, I really could have put more effort in and just give everything I've got, 100 percent effort, and trying to win as many tournaments as be as dedicated as I can to the game.

Q. You touched on a little bit about the course. This used to be one of the most difficult courses out here and it's change a lot in the last couple years. How aggressive can you be, and how much more do you think the scores are going to be lower this year?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I definitely think they will be lower just because of the overseed. I think you saw last year with Jake, those scores are definitely possible. Not saying anybody is going to do it this year. They very well could, but it's definitely gotten easier.

I think you look at 10 being a par-4, chipping around these greens. On the back of 4, 11, they were always very dicey. If you missed those greens, you knew you were pretty much making bogey. Now with it being a little bit more consistent, I think you've got a reasonable chance of making -- holing a chip or even getting it up-and-down. It was always a little bit -- not sketchy, but anybody that knows or lives down on the East Coast knows that Bermuda isn't exactly the easiest thing to chip off of, especially when it's been trampled down over plenty of days and it's a little grainy into. But now at least you can get under the ball and have good contact with it. It makes chipping a lot easier.

I think removing the bunkers on 6 made that hole a lot easier because if you hit it in those bunkers, you were laying up immediately. I don't know for a fact, but I believe they took out some trees on the right, too, because you kind of aimed at the bunkers and swung hard, and if you pulled it you were in the fairway, and if you blocked it you were all right on the right-hand side, where now you can actually take it down the fairway.

Q. We saw you switching to the Spider putter in Phoenix. Just wanted to ask you how you felt that week went and what you're seeing on the greens and feeling.

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, made a few changes. Everything is starting to get better, which it should. Got a game plan set going forward, which is nice, and making just little tweaks here and there.

I probably hit 300 putts with it before I actually played. But having two weeks of being able to get work done and make some adjustments, it should be a lot better.

Q. Was it a huge change for you to go from the blade to a mallet?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I didn't know where exactly I was hitting it, and obviously when you change putters, speed becomes another thing, and I felt like the speed was slightly off. Now I understand exactly where to hit it and where it's going. I feel like my speed control has gotten better, and just with a few changes, just tidying those things up.

