

RBC Heritage

Sunday, April 17, 2022

Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, USA

Harbour Town Golf Links

Jordan Spieth

Press Conference



RBC Heritage

THE MODERATOR: We'll get started. We'd like to welcome the 2022 RBC Heritage champion Jordan Spieth. He wins on the PGA TOUR for the 13th time, and he moves to No. 11 in the FedExCup. Both of his last two wins came on Easter Sunday.

Jordan, congratulations on a great show out there, if we can get some comments.

JORDAN SPIETH: Thank you. It was one -- you know, you have a lot of events where you feel like you should have won and someone outplays you or makes the putt or something, and a couple times you have one where you feel like you played good but not good enough to win, and I honestly felt like this was that week.

I needed a lot of things to go right. I needed to birdie the 18th then needed some help, got some help, dodged a bunch of bullets coming in, and ended up in a one-on-one playoff where my lie in the bunker, although not great, was certainly better than Patrick's.

Yeah, it's a bit of a surprise. I definitely felt like I was putting myself in the position hole to hole this week to win a golf tournament, and I just was having a hard time early in the week adjusting to the speed differences from last week.

Then the hole started to look small to me yesterday, and then just came out today and said I'm not going to leave one putt short. And if they miss, they miss, and just try to be a little bit more aggressive, and made just enough to cap it and win.

Q. You mentioned outside it was not the putter this week. What was it about this week?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, it was just tee to green. Statistically I made a couple putts from off the green that will go on chipping stats, so it wasn't quite maybe as bad as when I looked yesterday, I was a bit shocked at where I was at strokes gained. And that was pretty frustrating. I mean, I knew I wasn't putting well, but it was certainly better than that showed.

Just thought my goal was to get back to positive strokes gained for the week, which meant I had to make up a few today. Early in the round I certainly did that, missed a -- three-putted on 11 but then made a couple more coming in.

Obviously very happy to be in this position. Every year, I think about Kapalua at the beginning of the year once I'm there, and I missed it for a few years, and I never want to miss it again, and I'm really glad that this will get me there. What a great tournament to win. It's an amazing golf course.

Q. Jordan, when you were waiting out things in the clubhouse, did you think that somebody -- you knew the names behind you. Did you think somebody would surpass your total? And how much did you spend thinking about yesterday on 18?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I mentioned it to Michael and to Annie afterwards. I said I knew -- riding into the clubhouse to sign my card, I said I knew that that on 18 was going to cost me, and I hoped it did in a way because, if it didn't, it meant I just played a very average round today. So I hoped I worked my way into contention in spite.

I was about as upset after the round yesterday as I've ever been in a golf tournament. There's just no excuse for those kind of brain farts as a professional to myself, but also to Michael, who's working his butt off, to go out there and do that that could potentially affect the outcome of a tournament. And I've done that a number of times on this stretch in the last four weeks.

So Annie told me last night, you need to take five seconds now -- and she never comments on my golf. You need to take five seconds, if you miss a putt, before you hit your tap-in. So I thought about it today. There was a couple times I was just going to rake it, and I was like, no, I've got to take five seconds. I'm just glad it didn't end up affecting it all, to be honest. Just made it a little more exciting at the end.

Sorry, just to answer your other question, I was inside, and I can't stand watching golf when you're trying to dodge

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made putts because these guys are so good. Every single putt looks like it's going in. It was just way more nerve-racking than actually playing.

I thought, if I dodge Patrick's on 17, I thought he would birdie 18 or at least get a good look, which he did. I went to the range after he hit his second shot thinking I'd come right back in, that he would make that putt. I don't know what ended up happening. I guess it just missed on the right side maybe.

Then fortunate to have not more than one other person in the playoffs.

Q. You were talking about frustration level after last week. What was the level of that frustration, and how did it manifest into this this week?

JORDAN SPIETH: It was very -- I never missed a cut at the Masters before and very rarely had not had a chance to win on the weekend. So I hated it. It was the worst feeling. It was the worst feeling as a golfer that I can remember.

It's my favorite tournament in the world, and I just love contending at that event. I was hitting it really, really well and honestly just didn't feel like I deserved to miss that cut. I felt like I hit shots right where I wanted to and ended up somehow at 6-over.

Wind gusts here -- you know, it wasn't playing easy, but I felt like I got some unfortunate breaks on some pretty committed and nice shots.

I've been hitting the ball really, really well all spring, better than I did last year, and I just haven't been scoring. So I just, I put in a lot of hours on the putting green this week, and to be honest, if it helped incrementally, it was just enough.

I've got a lot more work to do. I've been putting a lot of work into my full swing, and that certainly takes away some of the time you put into other parts of your game, including putting.

So I think I can kind of shift the other direction now and get to really working on the stroke, which is what I tried to do this week off of last week. That was the frustration.

Q. Jordan, first there's a horde of rabid youth out there.

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I'm heading that way. I asked if they could radio that I'll run back over there, yeah.

Q. In the last 24 hours, it's been an unbelievable roller coaster, your golf. You've had a few lucky moments. You've had a few really unlucky moments. What does it feel like to you? Does it feel like you were fortunate to win this? Unfortunate not to win it by more?

JORDAN SPIETH: It felt like a round of golf. It felt like a Sunday on the PGA TOUR. I mean, it's just you compete, and the first three rounds set up today, and today is all about trying to close it out.

I want to say -- you know, I thought, if I made that putt on 18, I just thought it was tricky enough, the wind was shifting, I knew somebody was at 14 -- I think it was Erik at one point, and then it went to Shane. I just thought, maybe with these closing holes, I might -- I thought it was maybe for a playoff.

When I finished, I heard Shane was left on 14 and then chipped it in the water and thought, okay, I really like having posted just because it's tricky, but there's still some wedge opportunities for those guys coming in. When Shane, Harold, and Patrick all parred 15 is when I really thought I was still in it because, if they made a birdie there, they just needed one on the last three, and there was going to be essentially a wedge, a 9-iron, and a 9-iron.

So you'd think out of three guys that somebody might make a birdie on those three holes, which Patrick did. But I dodged some bullets on 15, and no one made birdies. I think that was the difference maker there to trick people out.

Q. You had such a great first eight holes, and 9 you get really unlucky. Obviously being a golfer is getting past those moments and not dwelling on it, but mentally what do you do there when you have this rally killer?

JORDAN SPIETH: I was pretty excited coming off the 8th, being 5-under through 8. I thought I was in a good place, and I really tried to settle down on the 9th tee because it's an important tee shot, and I hit it right where I was looking. It got about as bad a break as I've gotten on a tee ball to where I really didn't know what I could do.

It was just in the corner, so I couldn't even get a putter on it to hit it in the bunker more, and it was kind of half plugged. I did fine off of the 9th hole. I just wished I'd made the putt. I think I played the smart shot, played the right way, hit a good chip, and I line the putt up.

I said, all right, with this line that's on the ball, it has to be hit firmly. That's something I've not done well on slower surfaces, whether it's San Antonio or here, versus last

week. And I just have a really hard time starting the ball outside the hole and hitting it firmly because the speed of the greens we're normally used to.

When I just mis-hit that putt and it lipped out, that's what I was upset about, not the break. I thought I've gotten some. I might get one later, whatever it may be. But that was the tough part.

Then regrouped and thought I needed to shoot 3-under on the back nine, and I think I shot 2 -- 1? 2. I bogeyed 11, birdied 13. Yeah, just 1. So I thought I needed to get 3. So in that sense, yes, I felt pretty fortunate to win at only shooting 1 on the back nine.

Q. Given all the success you had early on and through the years, there was a lot of documentation as you struggled to get back to a win. How close do you feel to being at the top of your game again? Because you sound like someone who thinks you're pretty close?

JORDAN SPIETH: Close but far. I wouldn't say far. I would say tee to green, if you take my last three events, it's as good as it's ever been. Structurally, I still am trying to feel 150 percent of what I'm doing in a rehearsal that's not -- it's feel versus real. It's not actually doing it.

I'd like to get to a point where structurally I'm not having to do rehearsal swings every time and it just sets in a nice place, and it's not there yet. And then just really getting back to being dialed in with my stroke.

So I would say very close on the full swing and then really got to put some time and effort into getting my putter where I know it can be.

Q. Jordan, you've had so much success in your career, but what was the feeling when you won in the playoff and you're able to go give Annie and your son a hug and a kiss? What was that moment like?

JORDAN SPIETH: It was cool. I was kind of -- I didn't think Annie was going to run onto the green, but she was really excited. So it kind of took me -- the whole thing took me by surprise because I legitimately thought Patrick was going to make it from 35 feet.

I remember my first playoff with Patrick Reed at Wyndham, and I made like a 30-footer for par to extend it. I'm like Michael's checking out the wind for 17 already while we're next to each other.

Then when that happened, I was like who do I go to where? I was like -- anyway, it was really amazing. It was very cool. We've traveled with Sammy the whole year, and

fourth week in a row he's been a champion sleeper, and I think that was the difference maker.

Q. How much is being like a father, and as you said, traveling with Sammy, how does that help when you have moments like yesterday on 18 where you can go home and you can be a father and kind of maybe put some of that stuff aside?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I thought that was -- that turned a lot around for me last night was just hanging out with him and this morning. Even this morning, I was kicking myself. I thought about it all night. Just like -- just how am I going to get that back?

It just takes your mind off of things and puts it where it should be, which is in the moment of hanging out. I really, really enjoyed that. Had a great time spending the mornings with him, and we got our dog here too. It was a blast.

Q. Jordan, this is an event you don't always come to. It's always the week after the Masters. Was it simply because you missed the cut at the Masters that you came here, or were you kind of committed to be here no matter what?

JORDAN SPIETH: I had told my management team that I was going to play here pre-Masters week. I was fully intended from months ago to play four in a row.

I really wish that it wasn't the week right after the Masters because I would play this every single year, and after obviously just having this week happen, I certainly plan on it going forward. I've missed a few years, but I played the first three. I played '19 and '20 and then this year.

I think it's a really good fit. I just really enjoy playing this golf course. If you hit good shots, you get birdie looks. If you don't hit good shots, you got to play cool punt shots through trees. It stands the test of time. It just seems to always do that.

I was actually very surprised by the amount of support that everyone had this week, and I felt a lot of it personally. These crowds were just fantastic for it being a non-major championship. Wednesday it was four deep on the 1st hole. These guys, my amateur partners are freaking out. Like we just don't want anyone to get hurt. And it just carried on the rest of the week.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations once again to our champion Jordan Spieth.

JORDAN SPIETH: Thank you.

