

Palmetto Championship at Congaree

Wednesday, June 9, 2021
Ridgeland, South Carolina, USA
Congaree Golf Club

Brooks Koepka

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome Brooks Koepka into the interview room at the Palmetto Championship at Congaree. Brooks, quickly if you could, just let us know your impressions of the golf course, what you've seen thus far.

BROOKS KOEPKA: Obviously, it's kind of unfortunate the rain the last Monday, I guess, and then a few days before, so it's playing a little softer than what they would have liked or where they had the golf course, but it's in great shape. It's a fun golf course to play. Everyone's kind of playing it for the first time, so trying to figure it out.

You miss the greens around here, you could end up 40, 50 yards away from the hole with an interesting chip. It will be a fun golf course to play. So hopefully, it just cools off a little bit because it is steamy.

THE MODERATOR: If you could update us on your health, specifically your knee. We last saw you with a T-2 at the PGA Championship.

BROOKS KOEPKA: Obviously, played well there. The knee feels great. It feels probably better than ever. Doing kind of a quad stretch. My foot can kind of touch my butt for the first time, so the knee is months and months ahead of schedule. It feels really good, just being able to do work, doing some Pilates, just started that. I think a lot of this has really helped.

I know Dr. ElAttrache is very pleased, Mark Wall, physio. Everyone is very happy.

Q. To somebody who's never played Congaree, it initially looks a little bit like Augusta National. You obviously have a pretty great record at Augusta National. Is it true that Congaree plays a little bit like Augusta, or is that not the case?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I don't know. It's kind of hard to compare any place to Augusta, to be honest with you. I



mean, I don't see the similarities. I think this golf course is a lot different. It plays probably more linksy than Augusta. Maybe the similarities with the run-offs around the greens, the green complex, just things like that, I think that would be where the similarities are.

Off the tee, I think this place is a little more challenging off the tee with the bunkers, more tree lines. If you kind of cheat the corner here, you seem to be behind a tree. A lot more bunkers. It will be interesting. I think, if you put the ball in play or in the fairway off the tee, it's going to be -- you know, you're going to have a lot of good looks, and if you just put it -- if you hit a lot of greens, you can make a lot of putts. These greens are really good, really smooth, good Bermuda. It will be interesting to see what the scoring is this week.

I played nine holes yesterday, and I don't really have an idea of what the score would take, but I guess I'll get a better idea maybe today, more of an idea.

Q. I have to ask about the Bryson stuff because golf fans will want me to. I'm curious specifically if you're worried about this affecting the U.S. Ryder Cup team, like being kind of in that room and damaging team chemistry?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I don't see why it would.

Q. You don't see why two players on the team bickering with each other publicly would potentially cause an issue in a team event?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I mean, there's only eight guys that are playing, four guys are sitting, whatever. I mean, I play with one other guy. I don't understand -- if let's say I don't play with Bryson or Bryson doesn't play with me, he takes care of his match, and I would take care of my match, and I don't know how that has any effect. What you do off the golf course doesn't have any effect on the golf course.

Q. Even in a Ryder Cup team setting? I have no idea. I'm asking. What is it like being on a team with a bunch of other guys? Like is there a chemistry component there?

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BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I mean, we're all around each other for, what, seven days, I think. So players, caddies, the captains, the assistant captains -- yeah, I mean, everyone's just kind of around each other, between dinners, all the different things we've got going. Yeah, we're around each other.

Q. Brooks, I'm just wondering, what is going on between you and Bryson? How would you characterize it?

BROOKS KOEPKA: How would I characterize it? I don't know where you want to start, like I guess -- where do you want to start? That's more my question.

Q. Is this a fun thing for you, or is there a little more to it? Some people see this, this is unusual for golf, and we're saying, what's going on with these guys?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I think it's good for the game. I really do. The fact that golf's on pretty much every news outlet for about two weeks pretty consistently, I think that's a good thing. It's growing the game. You know, the younger generation -- I get the traditionalists who don't agree with it. I understand that, but I think to grow the game you've got to reach out to the younger generation, and I think that's what -- I don't want to say that's what this is, but it's reaching out to a whole bunch of people. It's getting golf in front of people. I think it's good for the game.

Q. Brooks, you said your knee was feeling better from the PGA. What was the aftermath of that? Did you feel like they didn't handle things the right way at the end? Were you just kind of surprised at the whole surge of it? And I guess you appreciated the apology the next day.

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, it was interesting. When you're in the moment, you're just trying to like -- from the middle, or I guess from the semi, I'm just thinking, okay, can I hole this out? Is there a way to hole this out or at least have a good look at birdie where he's got to be able to two-putt that. Then before I even hit my second shot, people were in front of me, so we had to wait and stuff like that.

Then once I hit the second shot, everyone had already gone in front of us, so we just had to walk through it. I mean, it wasn't a big deal. It just would have been nice to have a little bit more -- I think we had one cop walking with us, and it was kind of tough to get through.

Other than that, it was a pretty cool scene.

You saw it with Tiger and Rory at East Lake, things like

that. The only difference was it just would have been nice to be in front of the people, but other than that, it was pretty cool to be a part of and see and the atmosphere and the fans. I mean, we haven't had fans for, what, a year, just over? So it's nice to have the fans back and have their support, and props to Phil.

Q. I'm guessing too that the way you played at the PGA, you're pretty excited about your chances at the U.S. Open next week.

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I'm playing good. I like the way everything's been going. My body's getting better and better every day, feeling more comfortable doing things on the golf course that maybe I couldn't do from Augusta to PGA. It's just getting better and better every day. So I'm very pleased and like my chances.

Q. Just wondering this week, is there anything that you're really focusing on as far as your game leading up to Torrey that you really need to work on or get tight before next week?

BROOKS KOEPKA: The one thing why I think we're playing this week, I like playing before the U.S. Open, and I'm under reped this whole year. I haven't played much. So I think the big thing is just getting big reps under my belt. I felt like I played good at Kiawah. I liked the way I played, putted iffy, didn't putt too well, but it's one of those things where I felt like maybe if I had a few more rounds kind of going through the year and was a little more comfortable, it might have been, I guess maybe easier for me.

So that's part of the reason why I wanted to play this week. I need to play. I haven't played enough out here to really feel like, hey, man, I've got this shot. I feel comfortable with everything we're working on, and now that the knee's not really an issue anymore, it's getting a lot freer and able to hit golf shots and read putts, get down there fully without bigger effort to get down to read it.

Q. I've seen a little bit on social media about a matchup with somebody Dave Portnoy at Barstool. Are you overlooking the Open at all, that matchup, and what may happen if you lose?

BROOKS KOEPKA: No, I won't lose. I've got Portnoy in my back pocket. I'm good.

Q. I wanted to go back to the PGA thing. Can you tell us what it was that Bryson said or did in that moment that caused your reaction, which was obviously pretty telling? And secondly, were you upset that that got out? I mean, obviously, it doesn't appear it was meant

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to. In the moment you had that, and then later on are you not happy that it got out, or are you okay with it at this point?

BROOKS KOEPKA: It doesn't bother me, honestly. I'm okay with anything I do. I don't really live with regrets. It's nothing I'm terribly upset about. From everybody I spoke to, it is what it is and move on.

As far as that was, he didn't say anything to me. He wasn't speaking to me. He was, I guess, either signing his scorecard or wherever he was, and I was just to the right of the media tent, or I guess right in front of the microphones where you guys all were, and I don't want to say he was like screaming -- he was saying something about how he hit a perfect shot and it shouldn't have been there, and it was just very, very loud. I don't think the mikes picked up on that, but it felt like just so that the fans could hear.

With the media right there, you kind of know, hey, look, we're all kind of in this area, just tone it down, and it was just so loud. Then I think he realized that he had gotten right behind me, and he toned it down a little bit, but it was still -- and I just lost train of thought, which I think was pretty obvious.

Q. So you were obviously distracted a little bit there in that moment. Just curious, though, of your own standpoint. Are you at all frustrated with yourself? I mean, obviously, you're doing a bunch of media. I think you had talked to us first and then you went to talk to them, so you've done a couple of these. Maybe you're not that happy with yourself. I'm wondering if that leads to any of it.

BROOKS KOEPKA: No, I was pretty happy. I mean, I had a chance to win. I was right there. So I don't know what I would have been -- I wasn't upset at all. Yeah, you get done with a round, I'm just talking about it like, hey, look -- I mean, if I have a bad ball striking day or a bad putting day, it doesn't affect me. As you guys know, it's not like I turn down interviews. I don't turn down anything. I'm always happy to speak with you guys.

What I do on the golf course doesn't affect my happiness. I get that off the golf course.

Q. I'm just curious, has the PGA TOUR got in contact with you or your agent about this Bryson feud back and forth by any chance?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I have no idea. I really haven't spoken to Blake too much. I've spoken to him a couple times, but he was on vacation, so I was trying to let him be. He doesn't get too many vacations, so I was just trying to

let him be.

I speak with the TOUR all the time. We speak maybe once a week, once every other week, just about what's going on out here, how to better the TOUR, the game, players. We speak all the time. We're always in constant communication.

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