

U.S. Open Championship 2021

Tuesday, June 15, 2021

San Diego, California, USA

Torrey Pines Golf Course

Bryson DeChambeau

Flash Interview



THE MODERATOR: Welcome back, everyone. We're here with defending champion Bryson DeChambeau. First, we saw the pictures of some of the footage of you returning the trophy. Talk about what that felt like but also what it's been like having it for almost a year.

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Almost a year. I wish I would have had it for a year. But I'm blessed to have won this championship, and I think that from my perspective, touring it around a little bit, taking it to fun places and having some fun with it was great. I was nice enough to bring it back in good shape, no dinks, no dents, so that's what I was proud about. Hopefully, I can take it back again this week.

Q. Having seen the course already a little bit this week, where do you plan to be aggressive, and what are your thoughts on the setup?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: That's a great question. I try to be as aggressive as possible. I feel like it's a little bit similar to Winged Foot, albeit the grass and the rough is a little thicker. It's a different type of grass, so you can't get through it as easily. For the most part, I'm going to be trying to bomb it as much as possible and try to gouge it out when I don't hit it in the fairway.

Q. Any memorable moments with the trophy? Anything that stands out to you as you look back on that year with the trophy?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: So I took it to Albany in the Bahamas for a little bit. We had some fun with it. It was in some interesting places, but definitely places that were safe. Yeah, taking it on the beach was fun and just taking pictures of it. That was cool.

Where else did we have it? It was mainly in the house. Took it over to a bunch of buddies' houses. I had it in my hometown, which was pretty cool. It was pretty special to have it back there and just getting everybody to see it. I grew up not too far away from my high school and was able to kind of tote it around there.

It's just fun bringing it back to places where you grew up

and it meant so much to you that they had given everything they had to help me succeed and just being able to give back with that trophy was pretty cool.

Q. How much more of a grind is a U.S. Open week compared to other majors or even other weeks?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: In the beginning years, it was a big grind trying to understand the golf course, what could I do. As the past couple years have come about, the game plan has really simplified my course preparation a lot, and so I haven't really been able to -- I don't really need to go out as much, I don't think, and try and get comfortable with all the golf holes. That's one of the things that people don't realize is you just get more comfortable over the years, so you don't have to work as hard, which is nice.

I played with Akshay Bhatia, and he was going to go play 18 and practice a lot. I'm like, look, even I find it tough to relax on one of these weeks because you want to do so well, but he was working really hard, and I just said, look, you've got to take time off and rest and get your body ready for Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday. It's a long grind.

Q. Obviously, the situation with Brooks coming in, now you're on a bigger stage at a U.S. Open. He was asked a little while ago what he thought that does or doesn't do for golf. What's your thoughts on that?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: No, I think it's fun. There's a point where it's great banter. I personally love it. I think that, as time goes on, I hope on the weekend we can play against each other and compete. I think it would be fun and would be great for the game.

Q. People were asking, if you were asked, whether you'd be okay pairing with him in the early rounds. Was there ever a conversation about that?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: I would be okay with that, but there was never really anything that went through me.

Q. What are your memories of Tiger winning here in 2008 and your thoughts on what he achieved?



BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: I would say the putt on 18 was very memorable. Obviously, him chipping in on 17, I think it was a Saturday, and making a couple eagles on 13, those are pretty cool. But 18, making that putt knowing he had to make it, and there was nothing more to it. You just had to make it, and he was able to do it.

I'd say the amount of times that human being has willed golf balls into a hole, it goes beyond conscious comprehension. It is beyond miraculous what he can do with the golf ball and what he can do for the game of golf in general. That's what -- I wish he was here, but I think that we're all keeping him in good spirits and pumping him up when we can. His memory, his thought -- my thought of him out here will keep pushing me forward to play my best.

Q. You mentioned it's all good fun, this thing with Brooks. What would have to happen for it to cross the line? When does it cross the line?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Oh, I wouldn't say -- look, for me, I'm always going to be trying to play my game and not really worry too much about what other people are doing, but I think there are just times where, if it gets outside the scope of just integrity and honor, yeah, that can get a little interesting.

At the same point in time, all of it's been good fun. It's been fun. Shoot, to be honest, people saying Brooksy's name out there, I love it. I think it's hilarious.

Q. Does it bother you that no one's called him Bryson yet?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: No, I'm not worried at all. He's older than me, and he's won more majors than me. Hey, I've got something to look up to.

Q. I'm wondering what you thought of Steve Stricker's comments. He said he wasn't happy with you two going back and forth on social media. Any reassuring words you can offer him?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: I personally think, when we're on a team, we're going to be on a team, and it's going to be a different atmosphere. We're players competing individually on an individual basis out here, and I think we banter back and forth in good fun, but when it comes time to play on a team, it will be different.

Q. Phil was asked a little bit yesterday about you asking him about his flop shot. Can you talk about what went on there.

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: It's funny you say that. I didn't realize there would be that much talk about him just describing his flop shot and how he does it. Chris was very interested -- my coach Chris is super interested in trying to understand what's going on, like how he hits that high spinner. I think that was a big question he's had for a long time. How does Phil, how does Tiger, how do these guys do that shot? He just wanted to know, and we were asking him questions. There was a super slo-mo video on it, and he saw it, and he was like, man, it's cool to actually see that in action. I know I do it, but to actually see it, it's pretty cool.

It was a fun back-and-forth interaction. Phil is a great guy. He means really well for the sport. What he did at the PGA Championship was great for the game of golf. I hope he plays well here and competes and contends. Hopefully, I'll have something to say about that, but we'll see. Any time you get a little information from a veteran out here, it's pretty useful. He's done a lot.

Q. Can you hit that shot?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: No. I don't have the right bounce. He's got a different type of grind, and the way it goes through right now -- I just swing it differently, totally different. He's a lot more wristy. I'm a lot more neutral handed, so I cannot. It's something I've got to work on. He's got that on me. No, not this week.

Q. What are the challenges of winning at Torrey Pines maybe in comparison to winning at Winged Foot?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Personally, I'd say the rough is a little different, so it's not going to be as easy to get through, I think, with the wedge out here at Torrey Pines compared to Winged Foot. But having said that, I think it's going to be the same sort of strategy. If I can keep hitting it to the front of the greens, two-putting when I get into trouble, I'm going to give myself a great chance this week. When I hit it in the fairway, I have to take advantage of those holes, have to take advantage of the par-5s out here. If I can do those two things, I feel like I'll have a great chance at contending.

Q. Do you think your advantage is similar to what it was at Winged Foot or maybe Bay Hill?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: I think so. If I have over 190 mile-an-hour ball speed, it's going to be tremendous out here covering bunkers and whatnot. But again, sometimes the bunkers are good to be in out here, though, I will say that. They're in really great condition, and the rough lies can be treacherous sometimes. It really depends what type of lie you get.

I really don't know if bunkers or rough is better, but for sure just getting it as close as I can to the green is going to be a strategy of mine.

Q. How is your game compared to those wins?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: It's about the same. It's about in the same area. Hopefully, I worked on something today that I feel a lot more confident with. So hopefully, I'm a little bit in a better position than I was at Winged Foot and Arnold Palmer.

Again, you've just got to putt well out here. These greens, I didn't grow up on poa annua, per se; I was in the central valley, played on perfect bent greens. Coming over to the west coast or the coastline, it was always a little more difficult with poa annua.

As I've started to putt better, with SIC technology in the face, my putters and what I'm doing with arm lock, it's just helped me be more confident. I have had success on the West Coast with poa annua, obviously, PGA last year. I'm getting more comfortable on the greens. If I can stay comfortable, I'll contend this week hopefully.

Q. Rickie is starting to come out of a bit of a struggle; Jordan went through it a couple of years; a couple of guys went seven years between wins. I wonder, what do you consider the greatest struggle you had in the game, and were you better for it, or do you wish it never happened?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: I think any struggle that occurs is always going to make you better personally. I had one when I just got on TOUR, 2017, and I missed 14 cuts in a row. I don't know if people realize that, but I missed 14 cuts in a row, a lot of them by like a shot. It was tough. I didn't know how to deal with it, emotionally, physically, how to practice, what I needed to do to make that next little leap. It just took a lot of grit and resolve.

Those moments, even though I hated it in the moment, I look back as defining me and making me the person I am today. I have to appreciate those moments as much as possible.

I think with Jordan and Rickie and coming out of what happened with them, it's making them better too. There's no doubt about it. I have more respect for them from it, to see them keep persevering and going on.

Even Phil, he had a little bit of a funk, and he won the PGA. There's a lot of respect we have for peers that are struggling.

Q. Was that time for you more difficult physically or emotionally?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Emotionally for sure. Again, I was not the size that I was back then, and having to practice the amount of hours I did to try and figure it out was grueling on my body. Actually, I got injured a couple times doing it. But as I got through it, it made me realize what my baseline is. So I could always go down little rabbit holes, but I could pull myself back to a baseline that was successful on TOUR.

Q. You didn't have that baseline before those 14 missed cuts?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Not at all.

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