

U.S. Open Championship 2024

Friday, June 14, 2024

Village of Pinehurst, North Carolina, USA

Pinehurst Resort & C.C. (Course No. 2)

Bryson DeChambeau

Flash Interview



THE MODERATOR: Welcome back to the interview area. We're here with Bryson DeChambeau. 1-under 69 out there. Can you talk us through that round.

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Where do I start? Felt like I was actually hitting the driver pretty solid today. Starting lines just weren't exactly where I saw them coming out of the chute, and consequently ended up in the native area a few too many times, which cost me probably three or four shots. Something I'm looking forward to fixing over the weekend.

But all in all, was very happy with how I stayed patient, gave myself good opportunities when they mattered, and I made a lot of clutch putts coming in.

Q. Do you think the course conditions changed at all yesterday to today?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Oh, they got a little -- even though it was a morning round, it actually started to get pretty firm already, which is a sign that they want this golf course rolling by tomorrow and Sunday.

I'm excited for the test and challenge, and I think it's going to continue to evolve, especially with the conditions being as hot as they are, and if the wind picks up, it's going to be diabolical.

Q. From a strikes gained standpoint, you did most of your scoring yesterday off the tee, today it was the putter. Do you feel like there's another level you can get to where everything comes together, and would that be the difference do you think?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Yeah, if I can get everything going together, kind of like I did yesterday, I felt pretty solid with the putter, putts just probably didn't go in the way they could have. But if I get both those components -- driving, iron play, putting down, even chipping around the greens -- yeah, you're going to play really good golf, obviously.

My focus is on the next shot at hand. I'm not really focused on the total strokes gained for the most part, just trying to

execute the best shot I can every single time under the conditions because it's going to be different. This golf course is not going to be the same come tomorrow and the next day, and I'm expecting that. Us competitors, players, have to adjust to those conditions accordingly.

Look, I'm excited for the game that I have right now. I feel pretty confident and ready to get after it this weekend.

Q. You're going to have a late tee time tomorrow. Can you roll me through what the next 24 hours look like for you?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: You know, that's a great question. Something I didn't expect. I probably am going to sit my butt on the couch and watch havoc on TV.

This golf course is not going to be easy this afternoon. Hopefully I can see a little bit of how it's going to play tomorrow. I'm going to try and get some insight into that.

But get some treatment on my body, go work out a little bit, work on my game for just a little bit, but get back and relax. I need to relax. I've had a long couple weeks and need to give myself some energy for the weekend.

Q. Do you watch the morning coverage before you play?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Oh, yeah, I love it. It's good insight, great information, see how things are playing, where not to be, where to be. I like going to bed late and waking up late, as well. So I won't be getting up at 8:00 a.m. or 5:30 a.m. like this morning. I'll be sleeping in. I need some rest.

Q. As far as the field goes, I would qualify you as a player who is considering golf as entertainment, golfers as entertainers. When you look at a tournament like this, fans seem to revel in the struggle being entertainment, seeing you guys struggle. Is there something about the sport or this tournament that, I guess, leads it to be entertaining, the struggle of it all, you guys ping-ponging back and forth?



BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Yeah, you're going to have super highs and super lows. I just saw when we were on 10, Sepp Straka made a hole-in-one, right? Right behind us. That was a high, super high, and it was really cool to feed off that energy. Then I see guys ping-ponging it around the greens out here, and it's like, I don't want to watch that.

So for the fans it's great. It's super entertaining. I don't want to be on the wrong side of it, albeit it's going to happen a few times out here. I've just got to stay patient and focus on giving yourself the best chance, best next chance to make a putt or get it up-and-down, whatever it is.

And then when something nice happens, yeah, showing the fans a little fun, giving them a wave or pulling the hat off or tipping the cap or saying thank you, whatever it is, maybe a fist bump here or there.

Just doing something to excite the crowd a bit. It's always fun.

Q. I think you said recently that maybe the best play of your career was like 2017-2018 range. Do you think your major play this year has reached that level?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Yeah, so far. So far.

Q. Why is that? What kind of led back to that level of play for you?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: The equipment that I have. The combination. I've got LA Golf shafts. I've got a crank driver in the head, driver head, and some amazing irons that work well for me and a putter that I've trusted since 2018. It's a lot of the equipment that's really helped give me that confidence back.

I can't tell you how important it is to have stuff that works for you, for anyone out there listening. It's possibly the most important thing to have done to yourself if you're trying to improve your game, especially at an elite level. I can play with a junior set on YouTube, but it is never going to be the same as having your own golf clubs where you can control the shots day in and day out.

It's really good equipment, and as I've said before in other press conferences, it's me getting a little bit older and realizing there's more to life than just golf, and when I'm out here, appreciating the time that I have out here, and hopefully continuing that fun that I can showcase to others.

Q. I thought the 7 through 10 stretch today was really important, really interesting. I guess you could include 6 in that, as well. 7 not able to get up-and-down, but

then a great up-and-down on 8, great up-and-down on 9. Saw that lie on 10 --

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Gnarly. It is what it is.

Q. Talk about the mentality of the up-and-down maybe to the amateurs out there. How do you bounce back? You talked about the next shot, really focusing on that and keeping that level head space.

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Yeah, that stuff is going to happen to you. I caught quite a few unfortunate lies today. People might not have seen it, but there was definitely some lies where I was dug down into the sand, one being 12, another being 2, and then I had some just brush pull my club a couple times and threw it in some weird places.

That's what you're going to get. It's the penalizing aspect of this golf course. So when that happens, learning to say, hey, I've got to focus on executing next best shot that I can. I know it's cliché, it's simple, but that's legitimately what I just do and focus on. It's nice to have a caddie there just telling me, Hey, come on, focus, next shot, let's go. What's done is done. You can't control that.

Q. Going back to yesterday on the 5th hole when you got the ruling with the TIO, can you talk about -- as you're walking towards there and saw what was going on, take me through the sequence of events and talking to the rules official.

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Yeah, first off, going out to that position knowing I missed it right, I'm thinking, do I have a lie, first off; do I have a swing, second off. Then I looked at it, like whoa, that cable is right in line with the flagstick where it was coming down, and I know it's an immovable obstruction, I believe.

So I asked the rules official. I said, Is this relief?

And he goes, Yeah, you're within one club length of it in the line-of-sight. So, yes, you get relief, and you can go to the opposite side.

So I used the rules to my advantage there.

I had a swing. I could have hit a shot. But I used the rules to my advantage to where I had a cleaner, better lie and was able to get it up on the green. Sometimes you're lucky, and sometimes you're not. In that situation, I was very lucky.

Q. In terms of the process in working with the rules official, how efficient -- did you feel like that went pretty smoothly, all things considered, in terms of --

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Oh, yeah.

Q. In terms of the interaction with them and explained to them what you were thinking?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Yeah, I looked over to them, I said, What is the situation here? I see this thing in my way.

I believe it's -- is it a TIO or whatnot? And he goes, Yes, it's absolutely a TIO. It's within one club length.

He wanted to make sure when the flag was put in that it was within one club length. He did that, and he said, Absolutely, it's a free drop.

And we went over to the other side and placed it down. And I was just trying to find a good line, and luckily I dropped it into a good position and was able to go from there.

So he was awesome, yeah.

Q. You don't know what you're going to get the next two days out here. You presume you know to some extent. How do you actually mentally prepare for that, A; and, B, would you take 4-under today and not play the next 36?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: I think 4-under is going to have a really good shot. I just don't know the conditions the next few days. If I had a crystal ball, I could say 4-under is going to have a really -- it's going to be close. I'd like to get to 6-, 7-under. I think that would be a position where I'd feel a little bit more comfortable, and maybe it goes to 10. I have no idea.

But certainly I feel good about where I'm at. Don't really know what else to say on that question. It's more of a we'll see what the weather provides, what the conditions provide.

I would probably -- if the conditions are the same as they were today, 4-under is going to have a really good chance.

Q. If the conditions are the same, if they change to some extent, do you change your game in any way, shape or form in regards of the conditions?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Not necessarily. I'm still trying to play to the center of the green most of the times. I'm sure you guys see I'm not really going at flags for the most part, trying to hit it to 20 feet, make a 20-footer. My long putting game has to be good this week, and that's going to be the goal. Boo Weekley, center of the greens and call it

a day.

Q. You were probably only five years old when Payne Stewart won this tournament and died soon after, but you went to SMU, you still wear the hat. What does he mean to you?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: He's the reason I went to SMU, first off. I'll never forget walking into the SMU athletic department -- funny enough, I actually didn't know he went there and I wore the hat as a bit of a tribute to Payne and Ben Hogan. Growing up, big Ben Hogan fanatic. Knowing what Payne meant to the game of golf, also, Payne Stewart fan.

When I went to SMU, in the athletic department on the wall I saw a mural of him, and I'm like, Oh, my gosh, he went to SMU?

They're like, Yeah, didn't you know?

I was like, No, I didn't know he went here.

That was probably the moment I decided to go to SMU, when I saw that mural on the wall.

So he's meant a lot to me in the game. As I played on the PGA TOUR, my first win was I believe his first win, which was the John Deere, and it was a different tournament back then, but it meant a lot to me to win there.

Then the last thing, too, is we have the cap on my bag this week as a remembrance of him, so the cap is hanging on the side of the bag and it's with me and makes me think of him every time I'm walking on these grounds.

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