

# U.S. Open Championship 2025

Sunday, June 15, 2025

Oakmont, Pennsylvania, USA

Oakmont Country Club

## J.J. Spaun

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Please join me in welcoming champion of the 125th U.S. Open J.J. Spaun. J.J., just an unbelievable day, one you'll never forget. Where did the continued belief come from?

J.J. SPAUN: It just, it felt like, as bad as things were going, I just still tried to just commit to every shot. I tried to just continue to dig deep. I've been doing it my whole life.

I think that's been the biggest difference this year has been being able to do that. Fortunately, I dug very deep on the back nine, and things went my way, and here we are with the trophy.

THE MODERATOR: You worked for this your whole life. No one can ever take that away from you. Where did this dream start, and how do you put this moment into words?

J.J. SPAUN: I grew up watching golf. I was a young kid, wanted to play golf. I loved golf. It was a passion for me growing up. I always played with my parents growing up.

One thing led to another. I wasn't really groomed to be a professional golfer. I didn't get put through academies. I didn't play the AJGA. I played local stuff. I did qualify for, actually, my first big USGA event, which was the U.S. Junior. I did that two times when I was like 16 and 17.

That's kind of when I realized my potential. I just kept going, like one foot in front of the other. Junior golf, college golf, turning pro, and now here I am with the U.S. Open trophy.

**Q. I'm wondering, during the delay, as you were walking back out, I heard your coach say something like, Trying too hard. What was that kind of mindset that you went back out to play with?**

J.J. SPAUN: Which one of my coaches? Josh Gregory maybe?

**Q. Yeah.**

J.J. SPAUN: It was on the putting green?

**Q. No, it was out on the range.**

J.J. SPAUN: Oh, it was on the range. Yeah, it was kind of the theme for how the day was going. They were just like, Dude, just chill. If you're for -- if you were given four shots back going into the back nine on Monday, like you would take that. They just said, Just let it come to you, be calm. Stop trying so hard.

That's what I was doing. I felt like I had a chance, a really good chance to win the U.S. Open at the start of the day. It just unravelled very fast. But that break was actually the key for me to winning this tournament.

**Q. Can you take us through the putt on 18? How much of a read did you get from Viktor? And then did you know that, if that went in, that you would be champion?**

J.J. SPAUN: I didn't look at the scoreboard. I knew based off of like what the crowd was saying that I felt like, if I two-putted, I would probably win, but I didn't want to look because I wanted to still -- I didn't want to play defensive. I didn't know if I had a two-shot lead.

I didn't want to do anything dumb trying to protect a three-putt or something.

Viktor helped me a lot. It was a foot left of my line. It's pretty ironic, my first PGA TOUR win, almost the same thing happened at the Valero, but Scott Stallings was in a bunker on the last hole, we were in the same group -- the back left bunker -- and I hit my third shot on the back fringe, and I had to literally mark my ball for him to hit the bunker shot. He, same thing, splashed it out, right on my line, and just like fed it down to the hole. It was probably like a 40-footer.

When I was walking up to 18, I was thinking about that moment. I was like, Oh, my God, like this is meant to be here, because this is the same thing that happened to me for my first win.

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Yeah, Viktor, we kind of got a good line, a good read on the speed. I was more focused on how hard he was hitting it. I kind of knew the line already, but it looked like he gave it a pretty good whack because it started raining there for the last 10, 15 minutes. I just tried to pick my line and put a good stroke on it. I knew it was going to be a little slow.

About eight feet out, I kind of went up to the high side to see if it had a chance of going in, and it was like going right in. I was just in shock, disbelief that it went in and it was over. Yeah, here we are.

**Q. You talked about your close calls this year and how adversity is a really, really good teacher. What are those lessons that you drew from that really helped you bring it across the finish line today?**

J.J. SPAUN: I just felt like you keep putting yourself in these positions, like eventually you're going to tick one off. This isn't -- I don't put myself in this position often, or at all, for a major, that's for sure. This is only my second U.S. Open. But all the close calls that I've had on the PGA TOUR this year has just been really good experience to just never, never give up.

Actually, I was thinking about -- I was having lunch with Max Homa at home. We live in the same area. We belong at the same club. He was telling a Tiger story where he was like, As long as you just like are still there, you don't have to do anything crazy, especially at a U.S. Open. He's like, Tiger said this would happen, and the wind will switch, but you've got to just stay there. Even if you're four back, you've just got to stay there. You don't have to do anything crazy.

I kind of was thinking about that out there this afternoon, where I was four back, maybe going back out after the delay, and then I made some good pars, nothing crazy. Got a really good birdie.

Then, next thing you know, I'm like tied for the lead, I think, and within four holes of the restart.

That just kind of goes back to that, like you just try to like stay there. You don't have to do anything crazy, especially at a U.S. Open. All those things came true.

**Q. I just want to know what was that moment like when you saw your daughters out on 18 green with you? What are you most proud of about your fight, not only today, but this week?**

J.J. SPAUN: It was a very touching moment to see my girls there. They've never -- well, my oldest daughter, she was at the Valero when I won, and she was about the

same age as my youngest daughter now. It was so cool to just have my whole family there on Father's Day. It's just incredible. I have no words to describe the moment and them being able to see me as the winner.

My daughter always asks me, every time dad goes golfing, she's like, Were you the winner today? Sometimes I'm like, Yeah, I was. She's like, Where's my surprise? So today she's like, You're the winner today. Like she got to see it. She didn't have to ask me. So that was a really fun moment.

**Q. We've heard guys like Shane Lowry and Scottie Scheffler talk about the morning before they won their first major looking in the mirror and saying, Do I have what it takes? Then telling themselves, I do have what it takes. Did you have a moment like that either today or this week at any point?**

J.J. SPAUN: Today I was running to CVS in downtown because my daughter had a stomach bug and was vomiting all night long. I was just like, okay, my wife was up at 3:00 a.m., and she's like, Violet is vomiting all over. She can't keep anything down. It was kind of a rough start to the morning. I'm not blaming that on my start, but it kind of fit the mold of what was going on, the chaos.

I don't think I had any -- I didn't really -- like when I go back home after the round, my kids are there, and it's such a big distraction where I'm not even having to dwell on anything or think too much, which is a good thing.

Like THE PLAYERS was tough, I was alone that week, and I'm just kind of sitting there at night in my hotel room, like trying not to go on social media, trying not to go on Twitter or whatever, X. It's nice to be able to have the kids to be around and be a dad. That kind of keeps your mind off golf and kind of gets me in a calm, cool, collective mindset going into today.

**Q. J.J., almost as a follow-up to that, at THE PLAYERS you said on Monday that you were going to start to let golf be golf, that golf was a thing, but more important was going home to Melody, to your daughters. How much did that play a part in what happened out there today?**

J.J. SPAUN: I think when you start to put expectation and that adds pressure and you start putting -- you just don't want to have that extra pressure, and you can do that easily by letting your mind wander. What if this? If I do this, what happens? I used to do that all the time. Like, Oh, if I win, I can get into the Masters. If I do this, I lock my card up for two years, or blah, blah, blah.

I just started saying like, my career is my career, like whatever happens happens. I'm just happy to have the career I've had. That kind of took a lot of pressure off my back as far as expectations on the golf course.

Last year in June I was looking like I was going to lose my job, and that was when I had that moment where, if this is how I go out, I might as well go down swinging. That's kind of how my coach tells me about my golf shots or my golf swing on the course. If there's a challenging shot, he's like, at least you go down committing to the shot. Don't bail one out right because you feel uncomfortable, just go down swinging. You might as well put the swing you want on it, and if it doesn't work out, it doesn't work out. That's kind of the mantra I've been having all year.

**Q. When we were out there on Thursday, we talked about how you kind of admired Kobe Bryant. Was that your Kobe Bryant moment then on 18?**

J.J. SPAUN: Yeah, that was unbelievable. That was more like the Fisher shot with like 0.2 seconds left. Yeah, I was just -- I couldn't even believe what I witnessed when that went in, kind of like a Nick Taylor moment but for the U.S. Open.

**Q. J.J., how different was the golf course when you came back out, and how did you try to approach those different conditions?**

J.J. SPAUN: It was super wet, but it was similar to like yesterday. The greens slowed down quite a bit, but I knew with my iron game, as long as I got on the fairway, I could attack because of how soft it got. It was already pretty soft. So that's kind of -- I kind of relied on the experience yesterday where it was a little slower, the greens were a lot softer, and I just tried to take what the course gave me.

**Q. You had the close call at THE PLAYERS, but this was pretty much four days where you couldn't, you weren't sneaking up on anybody. You shot the 66, chipped in on the 1st hole, so you were in the spotlight right from the start. How did you find that experience this whole week? There was no sneaking up there, you had to manage it this whole time.**

J.J. SPAUN: Yeah, there was no faking, there was no hiding since Thursday. I think that's what I've been able to overcome. I'm not trying to shy away from the moment. Like I just tell myself, if I can do this when there's no pressure or no lead, like why can't I do it when there is?

It's just trying to get over that line of handling the nerves and handling pressure. I really showed myself a lot today on that back nine.

**Q. You hit a spectacular second shot into No. 2. Your reaction was even more spectacular. Wondering if you could talk us through that, please.**

J.J. SPAUN: We had 90, I don't know, 100 yards maybe, maybe less. But it was like a perfect kind of flighted chip sand wedge, which is what the shot called for, kind of because it's straight into the wind, how soft it was.

I hit it perfect, and it was right at it. It was just a matter of was it the perfect distance or not?

All I heard is like a really loud like, Oh! It wasn't like a good one. So I was like, What the hell? Did that hit the pin or something? I didn't even think it hit the pin. When I saw it coming off the green with that much speed, I'm like, that had to have hit the pin.

Then I'm walking up there, fixing my pitch mark that was a foot short of the pin, and everyone was like, It hit the pin. During the delay I went and watched my thing and it was just really unlucky. It was pretty much a two-shot swing. I was thinking that would have been pretty close, maybe inside of five feet, if it didn't hit the flag.

Yeah, it was not a good start to the day.

**Q. Most guys are going to stomp a little bit after that. All you did was one of these (indicating.)**

J.J. SPAUN: Yeah, because it's the U.S. Open, and I like to explain normally on the golf course. I'm just, I'm at the point where I feel like I get a lot of bad breaks and I'm just like used to it.

It was so early on in the round that I couldn't let my attitude or any frustration get to me.

**Q. You don't usually get 90 minutes in the middle of a tense round to collect your thoughts. How did you maintain your focus while not just obsessing over shots like the flagstick and that sort of thing?**

J.J. SPAUN: I thought it was a good thing having the delay. It happened to me at THE PLAYERS earlier this year where I was kind of struggling on the front nine. I had the lead going into Sunday, and we had a four-hour delay, I think. I ended up turning that round into a nice fight where I got myself into the playoff.

All I was thinking was -- and even my whole team, my coach, my caddie, they were like, Oh, dude, this is exactly what we need. And it was. We went back out and capitalized on kind of -- I changed my outfit. I'm like, I'm

done wearing those clothes. I just needed to reset everything, kind of like start the whole routine over.

**Q. Last couple weeks, what tools has Josh Gregory given you that you didn't have before?**

J.J. SPAUN: The ability to read lies in the rough and how to chip them with consistent contact where you can predict like how far the ball's going to come out or how dead it's going to come out or how much effort you need to put in the swing to get the ball to where it needs to be.

So definitely some mechanics, but more of like understanding what lies kind of dictate how the ball comes out. It's been good, obviously.

What was funny, the first hole of the tournament -- we worked Monday through Wednesday, and the first hole of the tournament, I'm dead, short-sided on 10 in the rough, probably -- not far from the pin but it was dead because it was on the wrong side of the green. It's one of those lies where we try to -- I'm not going to tell the secret -- but we try to do the secret, and I chipped it in. My caddie goes, Nice shot, Josh. It was nice to see that come to fruition so quickly.

**Q. After the restart when you came back out, was there a particular moment on the golf course when you realized that you had to reset yourself here and you were ready to go and we're going to be in the hunt?**

J.J. SPAUN: The tee shot on 9, like my first shot back. That was the hole we got stopped on. I just flushed one, like a nice little cut up the left side. And I was like, All right, we're back. I didn't hit too many bad shots after that.

**Q. You've touched on this a little bit, but you talked about where you were at this point last year. Can you kind of just reflect on the kind of work that you've put in since then to get the top fives that you got earlier this year to now, to where you are now?**

J.J. SPAUN: I think it's just perseverance. I've always kind of battled through whatever it may be to kind of get to where I needed to be and get to what I wanted. I've done this before. I've had slumps kind of at every level. I've always kind of, I went back and said, You've done this before. You've been down before. You got out of it. There's kind of like a little pattern, so hopefully I don't do that pattern again.

This is a pretty all-time high for me.

**Q. There was a moment when Robert MacIntyre finished at plus 1 when everything was happening that**

**seemed to give momentum to him. Sam was making bogey. Viktor, Tyrrell, I think you had even just made bogey. So to him, all the momentum was -- the way it turned around on 17 and 18, from a distance, from a storyteller's standpoint, there was something romantic about it, even watching you hit it from the mist. My long-winded question, is there a spiritual element, a romantic element that you look at, maybe not in those moments because it was so soon, but just golf in general, do you ever get that sort of extra feeling?**

J.J. SPAUN: Yeah, it's definitely like a storybook, fairytale ending, kind of underdog fighting back, not giving up, never quitting. With the rain and everything and then the putt, I mean, you couldn't write a better story. I'm just so fortunate to be on the receiving end of that.

**Q. You talked about Josh earlier, but Adam and you linked up a few years back, and he's given you some talks over the years. Can you talk about the Lou Holtz talk you guys had on Thursday, and how that kind of got your mind right before you went out and ultimately won this thing?**

J.J. SPAUN: Yeah, he loves to talk about Lou Holtz, how he would kind of tell Adam about his stories to get his team pumped up. I can't phrase it how he does, I'm not even going to try to say it. He's been doing that a lot recently to kind of get my attitude and mindset right, and I think that's kind of one of the missing ingredients that I've been lacking the last couple years or so.

It's nice to kind of feel confident in what I'm doing but also have the mental side to it as well.

**Q. I see you carrying your daughter up the steps after making that putt. Are you the luckiest guy in the world after what happened these last four days?**

J.J. SPAUN: 100 percent, at least in my mind. Just to finish it off like that is just a dream. You watch other people do it. You see the Tiger chip, you see Nick Taylor's putt, you see crazy moments. To have my own moment like that at this championship, I'll never forget this moment for the rest of my life.

THE MODERATOR: One more time, our 2025 U.S. Open champion J.J. Spaun.

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