

U.S. Open Championship 2026

Tuesday, June 16, 2026

Southampton, New York, USA

Shinnecock Hills Golf Club

Brooks Koepka

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Please welcome to the interview area two-time U.S. Open champion Brooks Koepka. First and foremost, how does it feel to be back at Shinnecock?

BROOKS KOEPKA: It feels good. First time I've been back since I won. It's a cool feeling, good memories, and excited to get it going this week.

THE MODERATOR: A couple of changes to the course, especially the fairways. What have you seen this week from your practice so far?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I just played the back nine. The golf course is definitely a lot softer. Greens are definitely slower than I remember. I'm not saying they're slow, but it's a lot different than what I remember as far as firmness.

But, then again, the wind's blowing, and I'm sure -- I haven't looked at the forecast, but I don't think -- is there rain? No rain? I mean, they can do what they want with the golf course. They can make it firm pretty easily if they like.

THE MODERATOR: You're someone who seems to relish the toughness of the test. When you circle this week on the calendar, what are you sort of looking for out of the U.S. Open?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I like a tough test. I like something that's usually around par winning. I think this golf course is a second-shot golf course. You've really got to control your iron play. The position off the tee I think is really important.

It just kind of depends where the pin locations are at and really -- we play the hole backwards, I guess, is the best way to put that. Figure out where the pin is, and then try to put the iron shot -- or the tee ball into a great spot for the iron play.

I think that's how we've had success at this golf course, but we'll see.

Q. Brooks, speaking of the course and how you see it, explain to me how is it to play the 11th hole on this course in windy conditions on a Sunday with a U.S. Open on the line?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Probably would start by not hitting it over the back on the left. That's how I would start that.

I think the green complex is so undulating, so small, it's very difficult. If you're going to miss it, you've got to miss it right. I think that's the first thing you've got to do.

From there, it's just a good par-3. You've got to be precise with your distance and your accuracy. I think it's a good challenging hole, and you can walk away with 5 very easily.

Q. Can you give us an update on your hand? Tell us what happened and how it felt, and did I guess go to a doctor or anything like that? How is it feeling now?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, it's getting better day by day. I would say yesterday was pretty much how it was Sunday, but today there was quite a bit of improvement. I don't think I would have gone out and played if it wasn't.

Yeah, I think it's just the ulnar nerve, just flared up a little bit. I don't know what I did. I know I came back Friday. Didn't go to the gym on Friday. We came back, and it was probably about 8:00. We were watching a show, and I just kept playing with my wrist, and it just felt like it was very weak and kind of a tingly feeling as if you kind of hit your funny bone. That's kind of how it felt in my ring finger and pinkie finger.

Q. Did you actually visit a doctor or anything like that or get any treatment?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I've got treatment from my physio, Marc Wahl, and then I called the guy, Dr. ElAttrache. He hooked me up with somebody out here, and we were able to get a scan on my neck because we were worried about that. That came back good, which is all good, and just simplified it and made sure that's what it

was.

I was going to go into the city yesterday and go get a nerve test, but with that scan coming up negative, I think it's kind of obvious what it is.

Q. How close are you form-wise to 2018?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I feel just as good. I think ball striking is even better than what it's been. Putting, I had a great week putting last week. I'm excited for the challenge.

This course can be quite difficult. You're going to have to be creative around this place and really, really work on your angles coming in. I'm excited about it, and the game feels good.

Q. Brooks, back to your hand. I know you hit some balls, and you said you played nine holes. Has it affected your swing at all?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Well, yeah, if you can't hold the club, it kind of does.

Q. You feel like you can, that it hasn't interfered with your movement?

BROOKS KOEPKA: No, no, no, everything's fine. The movement's fine. I can do everything. It's literally just my ring finger and pinkie finger were just kind of -- and the transition coming down, they would come off. It felt like they were coming off the golf club, but they were just very weak.

Then as soon as impact would come with the turf interaction, it felt like it was fully off. So excited to be able to hold a golf club again.

Q. Do you feel like you're a hundred percent in your grip in your left hand now?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I don't think the grip strength is a hundred percent, but it's good enough. It's fine. There's no pain. There's absolutely no pain, which is kind of the weirdest part of this whole thing.

I'd almost prefer there was a little bit of pain. It would make sense why this hurts and that doesn't. It just feels like you hit your funny bone all the time.

Q. Two things, Brooks. Do you get any sense that based on what's happened here the last two times, that the USGA is going to be super cautious to make sure it doesn't happen again?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I would say so. That would be a best guess. I think this golf course is challenging enough with the wind, and I think it's supposed to blow all week, or at least the first two days. So I think that will make up for, I guess, the soft greens.

Q. I get a sense you're not a weather geek. You don't look at weather maps.

BROOKS KOEPKA: No, I don't look at anything. I don't look at the pin sheets. I don't look at the wind map, the weather, anything. I just kind of wake up that day and go.

Q. Tee time, you look at that?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I do. I try to be on time for that.

Q. Secondly, there's been a number of players over the years who have been described as tough players. What would be your definition of that? What do you consider someone who is a tough golfer?

BROOKS KOEPKA: A guy that doesn't let the previous shot affect the next shot. A trier. A guy that's just got a lot of grit and doesn't give up, I think is a very tough golfer. Then you add talent in there, and it's pretty tough to beat.

Q. How many tough guys are there?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Tough guys? It's grown. It's doubled since it was in 2018, I'll tell you that much.

Q. Brooks, I don't know if you've ever spoken on the distance issue. Do you believe that there's a distance issue in professional golf, and can you talk about how you've seen technology evolve throughout the course of your career?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, it definitely has evolved, but I think it's more of the athlete. I think guys are now bigger, faster, stronger. They're able -- yeah, technology plays a part in it, but when I was coming out, my generation maybe not, but the generation before it was find fairways and then figure it out from there. Then this young generation now is how far can you hit it and go -- you just find it.

That's how I was taught when I was younger is to find the fairway and never -- it wasn't always just about how far we hit it. You watch guys come out of college now, they're all athletes. They're all 6'4", tall, lanky, long arms, big swing, and it create a lot of power. That's, I think, a huge, huge thing when you look at the golfer from the '70s, the '80s, to the golfer that's come out over the last ten years. I think there's definitely a big difference in what the average guy looks like.

Q. Would you be opposed to regulating the driver head, shrinking the forgiveness on the driver head?

BROOKS KOEPKA: It doesn't matter to me. We've all got to deal with the same thing, so it doesn't matter. Whatever they want to do, they can do.

Q. Brooks, if you could identify one thing that is the key to success around this golf course, what would it be?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I think -- it's tough. I think it's very easy to say it's a second-shot golf course is kind of what I think, but when it was so firm in '18, you couldn't get above the hole. Now that it's a little softer, you can kind of get above the hole. Ask me that on Thursday or Friday, I might give you a better answer on that.

Yeah, it's just conditions are so different. So it's tough to kind of pinpoint where that is.

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