
DOUG MILNE: I'd like to welcome Jordan Spieth. Jordan, thanks for joining us for a few minutes. Making your fifth start here in the Genesis Open where you finished fourth in 2015 and you are a week removed from your ninth career PGA Tour win last week at the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am. Congratulations.

JORDAN SPIETH: Thank you.

DOUG MILNE: With that, it was also your fourth top-10 finish in as many starts this season, so obviously off to start that you're happy with. With that, just turn it over to you for a few comments on being back here at Riviera.

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, this is my sixth event at Riviera oddly enough. We played the NCAA Championships. Actually, before that I played as an amateur here, received an exemption and then the last three years. So this is going to be my sixth start here.

This is a golf course where it is really nice to have some course knowledge. You see a lot of veterans golfers win and golfers who have won before win again here. Certainly that's the plan this week is to try to get ourselves in contention like last week. Looks like we might catch some rough weather at least Friday on. Just stay patient just like last week. We had the same kind of deal there. Just feel very confident about where the game's at and I love coming back to this track, I would call it top-5 favorite tracks in the entire world and definitely my -- yeah, I mean top couple inland courses for sure. It's just beautiful. It's very well designed and it's in phenomenal shape right now.

Q. So you said that this is your sixth event at Riviera. This is actually one of the proposed venues for the 2024 Olympic Games if L.A. gets the Games. Can you speak to what you think the experience might be like for the Olympians who would play here?

JORDAN SPIETH: It would be incredible, and you'd get a lot of obviously players that have played before. You'd get I would say half or more than half the field, slightly more than half the field will have played this event before, therefore are familiar on the golf course.

But I think it would showcase beautifully this area. There's a lot of great golf around L.A. here and obviously we have a U.S. Open coming here to L.A. North, which is a fantastic golf course as well. Riviera for me is obviously special because what happened with the NCAAs starting out. I think it would be -- it should be probably the lead candidate just based, I mean personally based on the courses that I've played. I still haven't played that many of them around this area, so it's hard to tell. It would be amazing if the Games did come here. It would be pretty cool for the country to have another Olympic Games and really cool for the

city of Los Angeles, and I think obviously you've got plenty of venues to choose from for all sports, so Riviera would be a great match.

Q. Jordan, on the West Coast Swing you have a lot of poa greens and a lot of players mentioned that. Some players don't like them as much. Do you think it's an advantage for a good player on poa greens versus other surfaces or are they all pretty much the same?

JORDAN SPIETH: I think it's an advantage for experienced players and there's a lot more experienced players than myself. What I mean by that is to recognize -- I mean, I walk around here and there were more players today watching me hit putts and saying "I just want to watch one" than I've ever had because putting on poa annua greens you see guys get so frustrated and they start second guessing themselves.

I've now had enough, I've done that, I've done it every year until this year, and I didn't do it last week and it served me really well in the way that we were able to bounce back from missed short putts and just hit putts at the right speed and just my frame of mind throughout the tournament. You see more putter changes in the West Coast Swing, probably double than you see the rest of the year.

So just experience of recognizing that you're going to hit good putts that don't necessarily go in because the type of grass is a little stickier and the footprints are more significant and it can kind of shoot balls offline easier.

Most importantly is to look at strokes gained. So for me, what I tried to do really well last week was just hit putts at the right speed. So if I missed it, whether it was this far short which you never really want to leave putts short but that was much better than having four feet coming back and three-putting obviously. I think just having enough experience now and having missed enough short putts and seeing the frustration just lead to worse and worse and worse, I just kind of had a different frame of mind last week and it definitely helped.

So I don't know about better players, I think it's more experienced and guys that are just okay with recognizing that it isn't a perfect surface like it is every week normally for us and then just move on from there.

Q. Why is the strokes gained so important to look at, it just gives you confidence?

JORDAN SPIETH: Well, instead of looking at one putt percentage to greens in regulation, your numbers are going to look down on poa annua, but it obviously compares to the field in very similar conditions. And so if you're putting, if I'm fifth in strokes gained in Phoenix and I'm fifth in strokes gained here, my numbers are still going to probably look worse as far as putts per round, but as far as compared to the field, that's where you want to look because that just shows that everybody's kind of having a bit more of a struggle than they do on a different surface.

Q. First of all, curious, what's the best thing you drank out of that beautiful crystal trophy.

JORDAN SPIETH: Actually, nothing. Yeah, I brought it with me, but no, I don't drink alcohol.

Q. Water?

JORDAN SPIETH: No, I didn't. I just brought it to the room and then went out to dinner here with Jake once we got in, and then last night had a shoe launch and I don't plan to. I'm just planning on bringing it home.

Q. So what is it about this course specifically that you like besides the obviously great win with UT?

JORDAN SPIETH: I love the design. I think the fact that 10, 11 under par, and the course plays the way they want it to, which this week's not going to show that, it's going to rain too much and the scores are probably going to be lower, but the fact that it's around 10 under par is a winning score with a course that they don't really have to do anything to. You just firm the greens up and speed them up just a little bit. You don't have to grow any rough up because if you're out of the fairway, just that it's designed so well that say take No. 3 for example, the green is perfectly designed to come in with a pitching wedge or a gap wedge. Well, the spin rate that you'll get coming out of the rough here, even though there's not much rough, is still down 400, 500 RPMs, but it makes such a difference for where they put the pins on whether you can actually get to them or not.

So it's just each hole, the way the bunkering is and the greens for the length of that hole makes you still have to play towards -- play out of the fairways in order to get at pins. The thing is for us out here, when we get in this rough and the ball's sitting all right, we're used to rough being let's play safe. Out here you still think you can take it at the hole and that's where you get into trouble.

So it's almost the anticipation, like almost the false hope and not playing the safe shot away and taking par because you think you have a good lie, but it still knocks down that spin rate enough to make a difference. So it's going to be different this week. It's going to be more of a bomber's course this week it looks like as far as Friday on. The first round will probably play similar to years past and then it looks like the course is going to change significantly. It's a little bit of a shame in that sense. There's nothing you can do about it, but it's going to be a little bit more of dart throwing I think than it has in the past.

Q. You won at the other Hogan's Alley last year. What kind of similarities do you see, if any, with Riviera and Colonial?

JORDAN SPIETH: Again, they're very well designed, both of them. Goes back to what I

was just saying about kind of the green shapes just fit the hole beautifully. Very different in the grass types, bentgrass and bermuda versus this kikuyu and poa annua. But you have to take kind of very straight lines. Hogan liked playing that straight ball, maybe a little bleeding fade, just two-, three-yard fade and it served really well around both tracks. There are a couple holes that are forced right-to-left shots, but for the most part if you keep it straight or hit just a slight left-to-right shot off the tee here, that's what a lot of the holes play for.

I'm trying to think of -- I mean, I think 14 is one of the only ones that forces you to hit the ball right to left and just about every other hole is kind of a Hogan shot. And Colonial's very similar. A couple holes play for a draw, but the majority of them play for fade. A little bit the opposite of Augusta where you have a couple, maybe one or two shots where you fade the ball but the majority of the time it forces you to hit it right to left.

Q. I did want to ask you about Kelly Kraft. Obviously last week was a big week for him. Did you get a chance to talk to him much and what kind of reaction did you have from him?

JORDAN SPIETH: Definitely. I was a bit scared of what he was doing for a lot of that round, but it was really cool to see. Kelly's -- I spend the most time with Kelly than I do with anybody else as far as the work I put in outside of a tournament. So at home we train together quite a bit and a lot of times we practice and play together. So it was really awesome to see. I root hard for Kelly. He's one of the favorites on my PGA Tour app. He's a good friend and somebody that I've enjoyed I guess getting better with over the last few years. So it was awesome to see. It was fantastic that he finished solo second, that's huge. Does a lot for him as far as the way he's thinking about the year, job security for next year, just frees somebody up a lot. I saw him right afterwards. I came up to him, congratulated him on the play. He did the same to me. It's really cool when you've got somebody that you put work in together and we can finish 1-2 in a Tour event, it's awesome. And I know that our teams were excited about it, too. We train with the same guy and he got in today and I've never seen him smile so big, so it's pretty cool.

Q. Are you one of your favorites in your PGA Tour app?

JORDAN SPIETH: Actually, I'm not. I normally check my app when I'm not playing that week, so there's no use in having myself on there. Plus I'm pretty -- I kind of know where I'm at all times.

Q. That would be a step away from using the, you know, saying "we" or your own name instead of "I" or something.

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah. I know what score I'm at, too, so it doesn't make much of a difference. But I do click on my own there to find out throughout the week what strokes gained look like and green percentage and that kind of stuff. I've looked more at the stats throughout tournaments, kind of in the middle of the tournaments than I have in the past just trying to dissect exactly what's going on and where to maybe spend a little extra time.

Q. My real question though, at any time last season did you find yourself rushing shots because of a perception that you were slow?

JORDAN SPIETH: Probably the second half of the year, yeah, I tried to speed things up. I was still not real content with my swing and that's kind of a bad combination. I've tried to be -- I've tried to anticipate when I'm hitting this year a bit more and therefore just be ready. Even if I spend the same amount of time over the ball, I'm at least ahead of the time getting the numbers and getting that kind of, that time out of the way. A lot of times I'm paired with guys that hit it past me so I'm the first one to hit.

As far as driving distance goes with the top 20 players in the world, I'm not in the top-10 probably. Therefore, most likely I'm hitting first, which then makes it kind of seem like it's a bit longer, which it actually is. When we get timed, the first person to hit into the green gets an extra 15 seconds.

It also goes back to the point where I felt it was better for me to become a quicker player and a more reaction player as long as I put the work in on my swing to be comfortable enough and that's kind of where we've been this year. I feel like I played quicker. We got on the clock once. I've been on the clock once this year, I think it was 17th hole in Phoenix because we were giving stuff out on 16. Rickie and I deserved that one, and that's okay. It's been better for me, too. I've felt like I've been in a better rhythm.

Q. Jordan, I think you're asked about this every year here, but five years out now from the NCAA Championship here now, what are your biggest recollections of it?

JORDAN SPIETH: I remember we were out of match play and we needed a really solid third round of stroke play just to get into the top-8 and I remember everybody stepping up to the plate and kind of delivering their best rounds. We were a fantastic team, we set records last year for number of wins and how we won and we came in and we just, for whatever it was, we just didn't have our stuff the first two days. I shot like 79 the first round and the team was relying on me to shoot a low round. So came back the third round and shot 69 or 8 I think and our team actually got the three seed, which was great.

And then obviously I remember our final match. I remember getting paired up against Justin and watching kind of the match unfold, trying to focus on your own. Our maturity level in match play there is less than it is now, and now I would still call it somewhat immature because we don't play it very often, but it was a great match. I can see the shot from my angle that I hit on 15. I made a two with a 4-iron into the green to the back center pin where I kind of pushed it a little bit and it caught the right slope and trickled all the way around and went in and it kind of sealed my match against Justin. I went 3 up with 3 to play by making a two there. He wasn't very happy about that, but I remember that.

So every time we play a practice round here, Michael takes a video of me on No. 15 and we're both like, Hey, Michael, do you know what hole this is, and we send it over to Justin.

Then walking up 18 I remember being on the fringe there watching Dylan Frittelli hit the putt to win and then just crashing the green with him. Just so cool. We put a lot of hard work in as a team and to be able to kind of share that moment on 18 at Riviera was something very, very special.

Q. Other than those videos, were there other times where you give little reminders to Justin of what happened?

JORDAN SPIETH: He won National Championship the next year and he was Player of the Year that year. We were battling it back and forth and off of that week he clipped me by like a 10th of a shot. So no, if I start to give him crap, he's got stuff in the arsenal to bring back. We're obviously happy for each other getting those rings and something we both wanted to accomplish in college.

Q. You were out here, you've been out here long enough to know the weekly grind. I'm just wondering after a win as you had Sunday and it's so quick you're down here again, it all starts again. How do you face that and is it any different had you not won?

JORDAN SPIETH: I got up and had an 8:40 tee time yesterday in the Monday pro-am for the Collegiate Showcase. I've never had to do that after a win, so that was new.

Q. At Pebble?

JORDAN SPIETH: No, here. So we got out of Pebble and came down here that evening and then got up and played in that yesterday. But yeah, it's cool. It's awesome the week after a win because I was telling Cameron on the practice green, Cameron was kind of getting frustrated with the practice green, the ball was kind of going off right, going off left when my stroke was fine, and I wasn't and it's normally the other way around. I kind of just thought about it like why is this the case because I'm normally the one getting frustrated and he has to calm me down.

I just feel loose, just feel free flowing. That kind of burden of the year just to grab one is off my back and I feel like that's going to free me up a bit the rest of the year. It wasn't like it was my first win, but at the same time each new year you want to kind of start it off and get something done early like that. It just changes the mental approach of it, but at the same time -- and it's also very cool walking through and the guys on Tour saying congrats and the caddies saying congrats and equipment guys and everyone. It's a good feeling on the range.

And then by the time you get to about Tuesday afternoon, it's forgotten and it's time to go for the next one. That's what I've kind of started to realize. Sometimes I've kind of basked in it, like kind of felt real special for longer, and now it's, you know, again I very much enjoyed it and I will continue to once we get an off week just kind of looking back. I'm very focused on this week and recognize that by Tuesday afternoon no one really cares anymore, and that's

fine. It's on to the next one, and what's better than one win is two in a row. That's what Justin said.

Q. How do you compare your game right now to the game you were playing when you won the majors?

JORDAN SPIETH: I feel as confident in my game now as I felt going back to there. Yeah, I feel very confident throughout. Everything in my game. Cameron was here. Cameron's hardly ever there the Monday, Tuesday after a win. What are we going to work on? But there was stuff we wanted to nail down and we've gotten some really good work in the last two days and I feel even more confident right now than I did last week. I don't know how it's necessarily going to translate, right. I mean you could get the good end of the draw, the bad end of the draw. You could have putts that just miss or shots that, you know. So I'm not sitting here saying I'm going to play better than last week but I'm very confident in how my game is now and I was thinking about how that -- how I feel right now going back through my -- through the last five, 10 years and I feel really good about things.

There, the difference was is I was stepping in after the Masters the rest of that year, stepping into those tournaments even more free flowing. Like the U.S. Open, we just had this mentality that hey, these guys chasing us haven't been there, we have. And so as far as major championships go, it's a bit different and I'm going to want to gain some more confidence going into those but pretty close.

Q. How did you get back to this level?

JORDAN SPIETH: Just figuring out what parts of the game needed work, how we needed to work them. Then it all comes from putting in the work but then also seeing that, seeing the execution in action in a Tour event and then seeing a result. So it's all that combination. But it starts with dissecting what needs to be worked on, putting in that work and then trusting it on Tour and then from there after you trust it, then mentally closing it out. It's kind of a three, four-step process in a way. And then you've got to continue to do it to maintain it.

Q. Jordan, you've talked a little bit here today about sort of the "we" aspect of it, sort of like almost the team aspect of, a lot of people look at it and think it's an individual sport and it seems more and more like maybe it's not. Can you sort of talk about your team, who's part of your team and how important that team is to your success?

JORDAN SPIETH: You know, I don't try and force saying it. At this point it really is a belief that I have because if audio's picked up during the rounds, I'm very reliant on Michael for positive energy, positive voice, somebody to obviously do the work to get the numbers and what we're hitting. Obviously depending on what position we're in, back off Sunday protecting a six-shot lead, hey, we don't need to fire all the way back at this pin, throw it at it and let it spin back to 25 feet, two-putt when we have an in-between number. Michael's very helpful on the course and he certainly deserves credit. I believe that he's the best at what he does and I trust him with obviously our livelihood as far as our competing to win a

tournament.

Got my coach Cameron here who is responsible for my development as a player on and off the course for the last 10 years. He's a guy who I can come to and, I can't talk to anybody else about. His golf IQ is as high as anybody I've ever met and he's somebody I can certainly trust to give me the right advice whether it's been mentally or within my game. Got my trainer here. And then you've got to take care of stuff off the course. I've got great management to free me up and do what I love to do and kind of take the worry out in a tournament week of all the outside, of stuff. And then obviously family, friends, I consider them part of my team. Sponsors do the same thing, free you up on the course. I could go on for a while and I think I already did.

Q. Jordan, just to ask you a general question a bit like Art about basking in the glory, when you win a tournament like the AT&T last week, how many text messages do you receive on average and were there any special messages?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I get quite a bit, yeah, quite a few. I still haven't been able to go through them all and get back to everybody, which is something I need to improve at doing. You get so caught up in the next week, like I said 8:40 the next morning we're back into the next week, but it's something that I need to do.

One of them that I haven't gotten back to yet was Tom Brady, which was cool. I texted him right after the Super Bowl obviously saying that was really inspiring what he was able to do. Amidst the Under Armour family, Steph was one of them, too. It's kind of cool that these other athletes that are going through ups and downs and recognizing kind of knowing what's going on in the head on a day like Sunday and trying to protect the lead and how that can be a different challenge than starting tied for the lead and winning the tournament. So it was more specific messages to that, which is pretty cool to experience. It's awesome. But I don't know about, I don't know the number of text messages, but quite a few.

Q. In that line of experience winning back-to-back because you haven't played that much after you've won, but the time you did was going from Australia to Florida and you almost did it going from Silvis, Illinois to St. Andrews. Does having a short travel week like that do you think make any difference as opposed to coming down the coast and having three days of whatever before you tee it up again?

JORDAN SPIETH: I think, I mean I notice that on Tour guys go in runs, right? Guys that start, maybe they get 40th and you see them get 20th and you see them get 18th and maybe 24th and they get ninth. When you're playing well, you're playing well. You may get, again, a bad end of a draw and a couple bad breaks and it may not show up the same but I think it's very advantageous to be playing right after a win. Why not? You should have the most confidence of anybody in the field, which I believe I do. Hideki won a couple weeks ago and he should have obviously a very high confidence level as well. Guys that have been playing well recently, look at as these guys are probably going to be working their way into contention this week, whether it happens early or later on. So the more you can play

when you are playing well, the better in my opinion. And I think a short week and short travel and in pretty similar grass and what looks like pretty similar conditions honestly will be very helpful. I think it's very useful.

Q. So if you win you'll go to Honda?

JORDAN SPIETH: Well, that's very different grass types. I'm not sure yet. We'll see. I don't like playing four in a row, so we'll see.