

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
July 24, 2019



BROOKS KOEPKA

JOHN BUSH: We would like to welcome Brooks Koepka into the interview room. Brooks, first of all, thanks for joining us for a few minutes. Before we open it up to questions, we'll introduce you. You are the FedExCup leader, you also lead the Wyndham Rewards Top-10 and you're tied for the lead in the Aon Risk-Reward Challenge. A lot to play for as we come down the stretch here.

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, this is a big week. You could wrap up the Aon and the Wyndham, so that would be an incredible season to kind of cap all that off, especially with a win this week and really, I guess, solidify that.

JOHN BUSH: Talk a little bit about the state of your game as you come in, and then also your thoughts on this golf course.

BROOKS KOEPKA: I love this place. This place has always been good to me. I feel like I play it really well. I enjoy the golf course, I enjoy Memphis. It's a fun place to come back year after year, so I've enjoyed it. This golf course, obviously with a little bit of rain, it's a little bit softer than it has been in years past, but the golf course is in probably the best shape I've seen it the last four years.

Q. Brooks, I know this is probably splitting hairs, but how do you compare this year and the major season to last year? Is it pretty much the same score, or do you dig that deep?

BROOKS KOEPKA: No, I don't really think about it too much. It's kind of already over with. I mean, I won two times last year and I won once this year, so obviously last year was a little bit better, I just look at it that way. You know, my expectations are definitely there to win every time, but it's definitely not as good as last year because I haven't won.

Q. And secondly, driver testing kind of came up last week with Xander and some players have said they wouldn't mind testing week in and week out on the PGA TOUR. Do you have any thoughts on that?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I mean, the more testing the better. It's like anything, drug testing, driver testing. You can test as much as you want, you'll figure out where rules are broken, where rules aren't and who's broken them. I don't see any problem with it. You know, it's been -- it would be good for the game. We see guys are switching drivers almost every other week and you never know. If you can find one after you hit it a few times and it gets hot, you know, it might be over, you never know. But I see no problem with it. I think it's a great idea, just added a couple random times throughout the year.

Q. You touched on it a minute ago, but it's most likely that the 16th hole this week will be a million dollars shoot-out between you, Dustin and Jason. Will you be trying to make the eagles there, will you have some banter with Jason, anything like that?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Well, probably not any banter, I'm not playing with him.

Q. Jason you are, in the first two rounds.

BROOKS KOEPKA: Oh, okay, I haven't seen the draw. Yeah, I'm sure we'll laugh about it when it comes down to it but we're all trying to make the lowest score possible just for the tournament and that hole. I haven't really -- you're not really thinking about, wow, if I make eagle here, I can jump those boys or anything, you're just trying to shoot the lowest score possible. So I'm sure if myself or Jason makes eagle, I'm sure it will ring in the other person's head.

Q. Yeah, he sort of talked about he might try to get you to lay up there, or try to talk about how good your layup game. I'm sure there will be a bit of fun there as well as the fact that it is a million dollar hole, right?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, it's always fun. Anytime you can get a little bit of jabbing going on on the course where it's lighthearted, it makes it fun, it makes it enjoyable. The guys -- I like to be jabbed on the course, poked fun of, whether it be a bad shot, great shot, whatever. So it's fun. Jason's a good dude, he can laugh and joke and have a good time and that's what you want.

Q. Brooks, two questions for you what is the importance of St. Jude to you and how do you feel about St. Jude? The second question is, what's your favorite barbecue in the city of Memphis?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I'll go with the second one first. I always bring a chef this week, so barbecue isn't really on my diet unfortunately. We stick to the house.

St. Jude, what they've done for this community, what they do for kids is unbelievable. We've gone into the hospital, taken the tour of it I believe three years ago, and ever since you walk in there, you know, it changes you, it really does. It changes your view on life, it changes your view on how you approach things and how fortunate and lucky we actually are. So every time I can get a chance to go in there, it's something that I've enjoyed doing and it's always special for me.

Q. Brooks, what does this event need to do to successfully take the WGC mantle from Firestone and carry it forward?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I mean, this golf course is just as good, I think. I've enjoyed it. I think you see a lot of guys have played this event over the last five years. I don't think there's

going to be any problem with it. I think you'll see -- I mean, obviously there's always a few guys who take off every WGC so you're going to have that no matter what, but I think it's in a great spot. It's in a great spot in the schedule, especially right after kind of major season to have something come up. Especially with what FedEx does, you know, to have it here, it makes it great for them. I mean, they've got to love it and it's a fun place for us to come back.

Q. Brooks, can you talk a little bit about your group? You've got obviously you, you've got Rory McIlroy, you've got Jason Day in your group. Just talk about playing with those guys.

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I mean, it's fun, it's always fun to watch Rory hit the ball, watch him hit the driver. I think this golf course suits him.

Jason, these greens are pretty much made for him. He makes everything inside 20 feet, it feels like. So it will be a fun week. Obviously there will be quite a few people out there following that group, which will bring some excitement, bring some passion, which I think this place definitely isn't lacking.

Q. Brooks, you talked about 16 a little bit. What other holes kind of stick out to you that you need to do well in order to be in contention on Sunday?

BROOKS KOEPKA: There's a bunch of holes. If you're going to put it in the rough out here, you're going to have some problems. Nine, nine's a difficult hole if you're not going to put it in the fairway, the way that green's set. There's quite a few holes where if you don't put it in the fairway, you've got to carry some water in the front of the green. And the bermuda rough, it sits down, it could jump 40 yards or it could come out dead and you're right in the middle of the lake, dropping. It makes it very challenging.

I like the back nine. I think the back nine, it will test you. If your ball-striking's on, I think you can shoot a low one, I think you can shoot four, five under no problem. If not, if you're not hitting the fairways, I think you very easily could shoot two over, but that's the sign of a great golf course.

Twelve, tough driving hole, and at the same time it's just awkward enough. You get the ball below your feet, a little downhill lie to a green. I feel like that green's always been difficult for me to hit. I don't know if it is for other guys, but for me that's always been a difficult one.

Q. Brooks, just the vibes here, the fans, how is it different from any other stop on the PGA TOUR and what do you enjoy the most about the people and the course here?

BROOKS KOEPKA: There's a lot of energy, a lot of passion here. I think every time we've come on the weekend, there's been -- I don't know how many fans actually show up, but it always feels like the last couple groups, it's packed like 10 deep and that's what makes it -- it makes it fun for us. It makes it fun for us to go out and play in front of a bunch of people

especially if you're playing well, the energy, people applauding it kind of roots you on a little bit where you're trying to please them a little bit more, trying to make a few more birdies and kind of build off that rhythm. It's always been a fun place to play.

Q. So Brooks, you were saying that this event works well for you in the calendar, but there's the issue of some guys preserving their energy until Atlanta and seeing how they manage the calendar. That's not your case. And also for next year with the Olympics, the Ryder Cup, how is that kind of going to work?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I haven't seen the schedule for next year, so I have no idea. I'm worried about right now, I'm worried about this week. I'm worried about the FedExCup Playoffs and then the Presidents Cup. That's the only thing that I've got really in my future for certain. So that's what I'm going to focus on. I'm here this week, I'm here to win and that's my goal.

But yeah, it does, I like where it sits in the schedule. Obviously with the Olympics next year, there's going to be a lot of changes. I don't know, I haven't seen the schedule. I don't even know if it's out. Whenever I see the schedule, I'll start figuring out what next year holds.

Q. Brooks, you mentioned last year being ranked a little higher than this year based on winning two majors compared to one. Now with a five-week stretch left being the leader in the FedExCup, what would it mean to you to win the season-long race and hoist the trophy in Atlanta, and would that win of the season-long race being the FedExCup champion rank this year a little higher in your book?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Rank a little higher than what?

Q. Rank a little higher for you getting to be the season-long champion.

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, that's the goal every time you step out and play an event out here on the PGA TOUR. You're trying to build up FedExCup points, you're trying to build as big as a lead as possible and that's what you want. That's why it's season-long. It's who's been the most consistent over the course of, I don't know how many events there are, but 35, 45 events, I don't know. You know, that's why we play, to make it to Atlanta. I'm sure everybody that tees it up on the PGA TOUR, that's their goal, to make it to Atlanta and to have a chance to win.

So to be able to put myself in the spot that I have, it's been an enjoyable ride to say the least and I think this would just cap off this, if you want to call it a two-year stretch of great golf. It would just, it would cap it off and be right up there.

Q. Brooks, how do you reset the motivation this week coming so soon off the last major of the year?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I mean, it's a golf tournament, so I'm going to show up. I'm ready to

play, I'm focused. There's obviously a lot to play for, everything that's been said, with Wyndham, with FedExCup, making sure you're up there, Aon. There's so much to play for. Anytime I tee it up, I'm ready to play, I'm ready to go win a golf tournament.

Q. Is there a scenario you play next week trying to chase No. 1 or --

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, there is a scenario. If I do what I'm supposed to do this week and win, then everything takes care of itself. But yeah, there's a lot of scenarios that can happen. I don't know the actual breakdown of them, but there is a possibility that next week I could be out there and playing for a lot. So we'll see where everything kind of falls. It is Friday you've got to commit, so we'll see where everything goes.

JOHN BUSH: Brooks Koepka, thanks for your time.

BROOKS KOEPKA: Thanks.