

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
15 October 2019



JORDAN SPIETH

NICK PARKER: I would like to welcome in Jordan Spieth here to the media center at THE CJ CUP. Your first start here at this event, just talk to us what it's like to be in Korea this week and how you found the course this morning.

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I'm very excited to be here. I'm happy to start my season here. Jeju's a beautiful place and this golf course I've heard about and watched on TV the last couple years.

With the way the schedule worked this year, it was perfect timing for me to start my season here. The golf course is immaculate, it's really fun. I like the imagination that's needed on it, hitting shots in the wind, and then obviously the very undulating and difficult greens. I think it fits my game well and I'm excited to kind of get out there and get going.

NICK PARKER: Like to open it up for questions for Jordan, if the media could raise their hand.

Q. You mentioned the new schedule there and you're excited to come over here for the first time. Is the change in the schedule here with the moving of the majors and the kind of extra break after the Playoffs, has that enabled you to kind of rethink about coming over for all these events over in Asia and change your season up?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yes, absolutely. I haven't been to Asia in I think since 2016, and obviously now with the entire fall being almost half the season, it's a time where it's nice to have a break after the season and then you get to come over to these invitational, these fantastic events in Asia and really start the season off and try and get off on the right foot.

It's certainly a big reason why, but I've also kind of wanted to come back. I've enjoyed my time in the events I've played, whether it be Presidents Cup here, playing in Singapore, playing in China, playing in Dunlap Phoenix in Japan. It's cool how global the game is and I think to an extent we have a right and almost a responsibility as players to keep it that way. And it's cool when you have a field of this caliber internationally, I think it helps grow the game.

Q. This is the third year that we're holding THE CJ CUP and one of your good friends, Justin Thomas, he was the inaugural champion, so I was wondering why you decided to take part in THE CJ CUP this year. And this is your first tournament for the season, so any goals going into this new season?

JORDAN SPIETH: I think after watching the tournament the last two years combined with

where it is in the schedule relative to where last season ends is a combination of why I've chosen to come here.

For me, it's a great opportunity to start the season with a world-class event and a world-class field, which just so happens to be over here in Korea as well, which is a really cool experience to go get to travel the world and see different cultures from what we're used to.

All in all, it's one of the best golf courses and most well manicured golf courses that we'll play all season and all that really excites me to be here.

Q. And the second part of the question is, your goal going into the new season?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, my goals are pretty personal right now. So I certainly want to get back in the winner's circle, it's been a little while, and I would like to be more consistent this year, being able to tee it up on Sundays with chances to win more consistently and that comes from better ball-striking.

So I've been working hard on my tee-to-green game to get it back on track where it's been before, and when that gets cleared up, which it feels like it's close to being done, then should present some more weekend opportunities with chances to win golf tournaments.

Q. First of all, I want to say I'm a huge fan of yours and I really hope that you will win the tournament this time. There's a Korean player called Sungjae Im and he was selected as Rookie of the Year for the PGA TOUR and he's been doing a great job on the field. So do you believe that he is one of the contenders to win this tournament this year and what are your thoughts on him?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yes, absolutely. He's a very consistent player, certainly knows how to win. He worked his way up at a very young age through the Korn Ferry Tour and now the PGA TOUR and it seems pretty easy for him, which is unusual in general. Normally, there's more of a learning curve and he seems to be ahead of that learning curve. He's got an extremely solid game; pretty much every part of his game is fantastic. He's somebody who could win every week.

Q. So you were talking about recovering to your past sort of form or game when you were explaining about tee to green. For this season, how many wins do you sort of set for yourself? If you win X number of times during this season, would you be satisfied? So do you have like a criteria or --

JORDAN SPIETH: I don't have a set number of wins. For me, it's more about the consistency, giving myself opportunities, and then certainly having a chance to win two or more of the majors on the weekend, that's always been my goal. Trying to tee it up to have a chance to win every single week, learn from when you do and when you don't win. I know what I need to take care of, what parts of my game I need to take care of to have those

opportunities each week and I've been trying to address those and certainly make progress.

Each part of my game at different points in my career has been towards the top of the PGA TOUR at different times and sometimes at the same time. So I know that I'm capable of doing it, it's just a matter of the normal ups and downs of the game and addressing them and quickly turning the downs to ups and then maintaining when those parts of the game are on top.

Q. And the second, I guess you kind of answered the second part of the question. The second part of the question was, how committed are you to regaining the No. 1 title in the world?

JORDAN SPIETH: I'm not, that's not really a goal in mind. For me, it's attacking the major championships. That's where my focus is and ranking systems will take care of themselves. I had a goal to get there at some point. If it happens again, it means that I accomplished my other goals, so it's almost something that just comes with accomplishing the major championship goals.

Q. We know that you're very close friends with Justin Thomas. He's been here at the tournament the past two years, so what did he tell you about this tournament?

And then the second part of the question is, when you are arriving in Korea, everyone could see you are great buddies, so if you can maybe tell us what kind of friend he is and what kind of golfer he is.

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, he talked very highly of the tournament. He talked about how great the hotel and the food and the golf course and the tournament itself, everything was very positive and said it's a great place to go play in the fall, certainly get the season started and rolling.

Yeah, he's a good buddy of mine. We have similar interests, so when he says something like that, I believe that my experience will be pretty similar, and it certainly has been to start. We came in together here and certainly love kind of having friends on Tour that you can, when you're away from home, you can certainly feel more close, more included. You have friends to go to dinner and hang out with, which makes traveling a bit easier.

Q. So you were talking about when you come to these global tournaments, you have the opportunity to experience the local culture and this time you have your buddies with you. So off the course, do you have any plans to maybe experience Korean culture or have plans to do something outside of the course, outside of the tournament?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I think just given we're very busy spending long hours at the course, most of the time we can go experience anything else is for dinner, to go out and try some new restaurants and that's kind of the cultural experience. I know this island's

beautiful and there's many places you can go, and I don't know if we're going to be able to have that happen, but as far as right around where we're staying and being able to go to dinner and just that in and of itself is really fun to go do in another part of the world.

NICK PARKER: Thanks for coming in, Jordan. Best of luck this week.

JORDAN SPIETH: Thank you.