

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
November 3, 2020



SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER

JOHN BUSH: We would like to welcome everyone to the first press conference of the 2020 Vivint Houston Open and we would like to welcome Scottie Scheffler into the virtual interview room.

Scottie, it was last year at this tournament you were presented the Korn Ferry Tour Player of the Year award and now you've recently been named PGA TOUR Rookie of the Year. Can you take us through the craziness of that time span in terms of everything we've been through of late?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, it's been a weird year, for sure. Things have been going pretty quick.

I'm just glad that we're out here playing golf. It was weird. We left THE PLAYERS and we thought we'd be back in a couple weeks and we thought this thing would just blow over and look what it turned into. So we're just glad we're out here playing. It's going to be great to have some fans back out here this week and looking forward to the rest of the week.

JOHN BUSH: Speaking of, as I mentioned, your rookie season, two third-place finishes and you finished No. 5 in the FedExCup. Can you take us through the season and how you're looking to build on that momentum this year?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, so I got off to a good start last season. I played a lot in the fall, played a lot of fall events, got off to a solid start, got comfortable out here and kept playing well throughout the year. I think I was real consistent most of the year just getting a lot of good starts, some good solid finishes.

Improving on that going into this year, I want to put myself in the final group more often, just get a little bit closer to the lead. I think I just made a lot of kind of silly mistakes last year and I need to clean up a few areas of my game so I can save a couple shots here or there in the tournament to put myself in a better position to win on the weekend versus last year I kind of was on the outside looking in it those final groups. Hopefully get myself in that position.

JOHN BUSH: You finished T-28 last year at this event, but obviously we're at a completely different golf course. Do you have any history here at Memorial Park Golf Course and have you seen it yet this week and what can we expect?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: So I came out and practiced a little bit yesterday. I have not been around this place yet. My caddie went around the front nine, he said the greens are real undulated and very firm. When you put in new bermuda, it's extremely firm and I'm assuming

that's what the greens on the course are going to be like because the course is pretty much brand new. So I think it will be challenging hitting approach shots into these greens just the way they'll be bouncing and it should be a fun, exciting week.

Q. Morning, Scottie. You just mentioned feeling comfortable. Can you pinpoint when that really occurred and what did that feel like?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: So it occurred pretty early on. I think I was playing in the final group Saturday at the Greenbrier and so I got comfortable pretty quick just because I started competing (inaudible.) So I think if I got off to a slower start, maybe missed a couple cuts at the beginning, it would have been a little bit different, but it was nice to get comfortable those first few starts, so for me it was pretty early on.

Q. You've gone from 81st a year ago to you're No. 30 in the world. What has been the biggest change in your game since a year ago?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I've been driving the ball really, really nice and I think that's something I kind of lost in college. I was always a really good driver of the golf ball all through junior golf and in college I kind of lost that. In the last couple years I've just been able to hit a bunch of fairways. Playing from the fairways out here is extremely important and I feel like I've given myself a lot of opportunities and so driving the ball has been a tremendous improvement in my game over the last couple years.

But a lot of that, too, I just felt like out here getting opportunities as well was extremely important. Getting into those bigger events where there's more world ranking points available, getting in those World Golf Championships and majors where there's a lot of points available to get. You know, playing on the Korn Ferry Tour there's only a small number of points available each week, which is the way it should be, but getting out here and getting those opportunities was also very important.

Q. You had a deal with COVID yourself. What did that do -- did you lose some momentum during that time just missing a couple events?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I for sure lost some momentum. I was playing great leading up to that and all of a sudden I take a few days off before the U.S. Open just to get some rest after the Playoffs because we only had that one off-week. So I took a few days off that week, started practicing I think like Thursday, Friday, Saturday and then Saturday night I got my positive test and I had to wait another 10 days before I could start practicing again.

So taking those basically two weeks off kind of took me out of my rhythm. I would have definitely not have liked to have taken that much time off, especially when you're playing well. Even if I am going to take two weeks without playing, I'm going to go out and hit a few balls, play a few money games and stuff like that at home to make sure I can stay in shape. Due to COVID I was not able to do that so took me a little bit to find my swing again, but I think I found it last week in California. Game feels like it's in a good spot again.

Q. With the world No. 11 Dustin Johnson be going through a similar process, how do you think this could affect him going into the Masters?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: You know, I think it's different for everybody. I'm one of those guys that's going to try to play more events than I think a Dustin Johnson would because that's how he treats his schedule. I would assume that it would be a little bit easier for him to deal with the time off versus me and I think he's going to be just fine.

Q. And what do you think you need to do to get over the hump, get that first W?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I think just put myself in position more. Like I said earlier, I feel like I'm giving away shots, too many shots early in the week, not really taking advantage of when I'm playing those really good rounds, not necessarily -- not being able to put it together for four days.

Like I'll have a day here or there where I'll make a few silly mistakes and stuff like that and it will kind of put me on the outside looking in and a little bit too far back on Sundays, so being able to clean up my rounds a little bit, stay a little more consistent I think will be very helpful.

Q. And you mentioned figuring some things out this California. Were you working with a coach out there? Take me through a little bit your Masters prep.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: So I was just sending a bunch of videos to my coach at home, Randy Smith, and Scottie was taking a bunch of videos on the driving range just trying to send them home, a few FaceTime lessons and see if we could get it figured out. Finally I showed Randy a swing from six months ago and it clicked with him one night and I think it was the day before the final round of the CJ Cup and just a little thing in my takeaway, I was getting my club into a weird position, it was messing up everything else. Figured it out and swing's starting to feel good again.

Q. And as far as Masters prep, what have you done so far?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Just working on hitting some high iron shots, hitting some draws off the tee, just little things that you need around that golf course, just little touch pitch shots around the green and practicing a lot of downhill putts.

Q. How much time have you spent there and what was the experience like the first time you went?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: So we played there when I was in college, my college team went out there. It was amazing. The golf course is awesome. Being able to play for the first time was really cool. I've never been that nervous just stepping on the tee to play a round for fun.

I feel like I'm in a good position because I don't know what it always plays like during

tournaments and people are talking about how it could play a lot different in the fall, so that might be a little bit of an advantage me being a rookie at that tournament.

JOHN BUSH: Scottie, we appreciate you coming by early this morning and best of luck this week.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Perfect. Thanks, guys.