

ROUND 2 INTERVIEW
February 19, 2021



JORDAN SPIETH (-6)

Q. Jordan, another 68 on the card, you're 6 under heading to the weekend, a round that included five birdies. You hit 14 greens. Your evaluation of how you hit it today?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I struck the ball really nicely today, even I want to say I hit somewhere around 17 greens with the others just being on the fringe out of the four missed ones. All in all, very pleased with the ball-striking today.

There's a couple wedges I could have hit in closer and then a couple kind of 10-foot-and-in birdie putts that I missed that you almost -- you know, when you have them out here, it's such a bonus, you're looking to cash 'em in. Yeah, I feel like today it was almost the highest score I could have shot and it's really a good sign for things to come.

Q. You played yesterday afternoon and you even talked about how the course will be firming up over the weekend. How different was the golf course playing this morning?

JORDAN SPIETH: It actually I thought played somewhat similar to yesterday afternoon, which should make it get firmer and firmer for these guys going off now. The greens were rolling really pure, they were just phenomenal surfaces this morning. You're kind of looking to take advantage of that because in the afternoon on poa annua it gets tricky, especially when they're fast.

Obviously Sam had some success on the greens and everywhere else, but it's not like you can go chase people on this golf course. So I'm happy with where I'm at, but just eliminate a couple of the kind of minor mistakes here and there and try to keep clean cards on the weekend and let the rest of it take care of itself.

Q. So thoughts on the weekend? Anything particular you're going to work on this afternoon in the game that needs to get a little bit better?

JORDAN SPIETH: No. I mean, I'll just do a little bit of light work. I made a couple iffy driver swings, but I actually drove the ball really, really well today until No. 9. Yeah, I mean, my ball-striking was really solid and my bogeys came from, you know, just being in the wrong place on 18, which can happen, and missed about a six-footer.

Where was the other bogey? It was on 2 where I caught a jumper that I wasn't expecting. It was really nice today. I'm just going to try to look to continue what we did.

Q. It's now the third week in a row that you're in position after 36 holes. I know you talked the last two weeks about it's still not there yet, you're still working on it, it's a

process. Where are we in the process? Are the expectations starting to change?

JORDAN SPIETH: No, and they shouldn't ever no matter what. I mean, the idea what I'm trying to do is just to get better every single day, have everything feel better each day and be able to be kind of outwardly focused versus kind of swing oriented. The more I can shift that direction and eventually to where it can be 100% that way, the better off I'll be.

I'm in good shape. I'm a little kind of -- you know, I wish I would have grabbed one of the last few today. The last four holes I had good chances, so that kind of leaves me at, you know, where I kind of wish I had moved up to 7 or 8 under and got a little closer because six shots is quite a feat, but on a course like this it's one where it certainly can be done. Just try and get myself close to the lead by the end of tomorrow, that will be the goal.

Q. A lot of good players seem to be missing the cut this week. It challenges a lot of -- what's the key of getting it around this place? What makes it tough?

JORDAN SPIETH: It's one of those rare weeks where you can't -- you just can't get away with firing at flagsticks. Precision is so key, but being smart and recognizing when even being precise still won't work out.

I mean, there's not much rough, but when you get in the rough it takes the spin off enough to where you can't get into pins, so if you try and be cute with it, a lot of times when you miss the greens it's harder from where you missed them, harder to get it closer than where you could have hit your approach shot. So you actually end up further for par than you would have had for birdie just because of where those short-sided misses go. So you just have to be so disciplined.

And it's such a different experience from what we normally have on Tour where you're used to 20 to 25 under winning, where you get away with short-siding yourself because guys' short games are so good, but here it just doesn't happen. You just get enough little corner sections where you've got to be coming from the fairway and you've got to hit a lot of shots that like Augusta requires, where you've got to work the ball the other way off of slopes that are, you know, either kind of ride the slopes into some pins and work it -- it's almost like when the pins are on the right or left side of these greens, you almost have two completely different holes because your approach shots have to be either a low draw to the back left or they've got to be this floaty high fade to the right. So it just requires a lot of -- it's why Bubba probably likes it so much, right, because of the shotmaking ability that he has and it just brings the feel out in his game.

Q. Jordan, obviously the last two weeks -- we're only halfway through at this point, but I'm kind of curious, can you be freer when you're chasing than protecting, so to speak, and obviously there's a ways to go until you get to Sunday, but --

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I mean I would imagine -- you could imagine that's obviously the case where you feel like you can be a little freer when it's not all on you but when you don't

feel like you're the one out in front, but I mean, the times I've won on the PGA TOUR have mostly come from in front.

I promise you I'm trying to get to the lead by the end of the 54 holes, but it's actually helpful on a course like this just not really -- like Phoenix I was like I've got to go make something happen on Saturday. Out here you just can't think that way, you've got to say I'm going to hit to this spot, I'm going to hit it to this spot, take advantage of these opportunities. All right, I've got a bad number here, play to the safe side. It's major championship golf out here versus a lot of times, again like I mentioned before, you just get away with your misses more on other golf courses.

Q. This is a little off the beaten path, but it's weird problem with the pandemic that there's no fans out here. You know you get a lot of support anyway. I wonder as you've been making this comeback at all, social media for the last few weeks -- I don't know how aware you are of it, but they're --

JORDAN SPIETH: Not at all, don't care.

Q. There's been a lot of "rooting for Jordan" sentiment going, you know what I'm saying? I'm just wondering if you feel that vibe at all because there's no fans out here.

JORDAN SPIETH: As just going off of Phoenix, I definitely enjoy having the crowds out more. I think we need it for professional golf.

Q. I just mean more specifically for you, what does it mean when there's a wave of people that are kind of rooting for you to get yourself back into that spot you're trying to get back to?

JORDAN SPIETH: I don't -- I purposely don't allow myself to expose myself to the good or the bad. Just made that decision a while back and it's been really good for me and allowed me to just kind of stay on my own path and not let any outside influences, kind of quiet the noise.

It's obviously great when you have the support, but when I'm out here, I mean, the momentum's nice when you make long putts and certainly if you've been in the situation more than other guys it's an advantage, but I still want it just as badly. I still feel the same adrenaline rush contending the last two weeks, one with fans, one without. There was really no difference in how I felt on the course with it, it's just kind of more enjoyable with fans.

I definitely obviously feel the support via just getting text messages from friends and family and stuff like that that I just haven't had in a while because I haven't been in position on Saturday and Sunday in a while. So I'm aware, but not exposing myself to much of it and don't plan on it forever.

Q. Two things off of your comments. One on text messages and all that, have you

been in communication with anybody back at home and kind of what's going on?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, quite a bit. I had a couple pipes in my house that were leaking last night, but that's hardly the problem that a lot of people are experiencing.

It's tough. I mean, I saw a post that they said the Texas power grid was only minutes away from potentially blacking out for maybe a week, which would have been obviously disastrous. Looks like today, tomorrow might be better, but there's a lot of people that are going to be struggling with home problems that they don't normally have. So it stinks.

On one side, I talked to my sister and she's excited that she's able to go shredding behind the car, but on the other side with kind of the difficulty that it presents, too. Very aware of what's happening, obviously wish the best to everyone at home.

Q. And on your comments about kind of the major vibe of the golf course, and forgive me if you've talked about this, but when you go back tonight, they put the hole locations out, will you start kind of going through, because there's a little bit of a wind forecast tomorrow that's a little bit different.

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah.

Q. Will you do a little mapping out tonight kind of on certain holes?

JORDAN SPIETH: No. I mean, I saw most of the dots, they have tomorrow's pins. I saw most of the dots if I finished the hole early, and I know having played this tournament, what, seven times, you know where the pins are -- when they're in the locations that they're going to be, where that miss is where you can't miss.

What I haven't continued to look at was that wind forecast. I think it may be out of that north wind blowing heavier, which is going to be very, very different. I mean, I hit sand wedge into 9 yesterday which might be a long iron tomorrow. It's going to be the opposite of what you see in the afternoon today and yesterday, which makes the par 5s and No. 10 probably harder. Then it makes some of those harder holes that you're going out, you can drive it further but that doesn't help the ball stop on the greens on those approach shots. If that's the case, if it's going to blow, then anything under par's going to be a great score.

Q. Without looking, Jordan, strokes gained off the tee, approach to the green, around the green and putting, what are you doing the best this week and what are you doing the worst?

JORDAN SPIETH: I probably evened everything out today from where it was after yesterday. Felt like my approach probably is probably the highest number. I mean, sometimes around the green I don't know, they may consider me putting from the fringes around the green so it's hard for me to tell on that kind of strokes gained, but I hit some really nice approach shots today and drove the ball a lot better.