

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
MARCH 29, 2022



JORDAN SPIETH

DOUG MILNE: We will go ahead and get started. Like to welcome the defending champion of the Valero Texas Open, Jordan Spieth.

Jordan, thanks for joining us for a few minutes. I know being a Texas guy and having won here and played so well here even previous to last year's victory, it's a special place for you to come back to. So just some thoughts on being back here at TPC San Antonio?

JORDAN SPIETH: First off, it's a pretty easy week for us when we stay here. This is about as fun and easy as it gets, being able to just walk out and in three minutes you're at the golf course, and what a beautiful setting this place is.

And then the golf course itself is such a challenge. You normally have to play it in wind, you normally have to play it in different winds, so you almost play two different golf courses, north versus south wind. And it looks like we're going to get that again this year, so you've got to flight the ball, got to shot make, got to be really precise with your distance control into these greens. I really enjoy that challenge here. Fairway surfaces, green surfaces are money. I'm sure they'll be able to speed these greens up as this wind dies down as the week goes on, and it's in as good of shape as I remember seeing it.

DOUG MILNE: And I heard you talking a little bit ago talking about how this wind last year kind of erased that gap that you had gone through. How special was it to get back to form in the winner's circle here last year?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I had knocked on the door, I don't know, maybe four, five times from January until we got here in March, just hadn't quite closed. Even had a couple-shot lead a couple times.

I just did a really good job of staying patient and saying I'm doing the right things, I'm lipping out putts on Sunday, they're going to lip in one of these days. And then Charley Hoffman chips in twice on the back nine and makes things really difficult, but ultimately closed it out nicely on 17 and 18 just to get a win. I mean, it felt great.

I arrived back here and I don't think about the first however many times I've played this place; last year is really what comes to mind. It was just a really cool week because it was just a monkey off the back, less about what I put on myself and more about just having to answer the questions and I just kind of got annoyed with that, because I was playing really well and the difference in finishing third or fourth sometimes is simply a bad wind gust or a couple putts that you did nothing wrong on. I overreacted to that in the past and I didn't last year and I think it led to being successful on Sunday.

So I feel like this year I've been actually striking the ball better than I was coming in last year throughout this entire season, 2022 thus far. I've got a little bit to show for it, but not a ton and a lot of that just comes down to knocking putts in. So I've just got to get a little sharper on the greens.

Q. I wanted to ask, is it any different coming back as a defending champion in terms of your preparation for this week and maybe the confidence you have heading into this, and any changes as a result of last year's win?

JORDAN SPIETH: It's actually, my preparations look very similar. Last year I was knocked out of Austin on Saturday, took a day off, came down and practiced in the afternoon. Didn't play any holes, then played nine and nine. I know the course well enough to where I don't feel like playing 18, or sorry, 27 or 36 holes prior to this tournament is going to serve me much better and could actually wear you out a little bit with this wind.

The idea that, you know, obviously want to play well this weekend. I want a 10-day stretch of peaking from Thursday through the next Sunday, so I'm trying to save energy. I did that a lot last year, too, and I felt like I was primed by Sunday. I'm just trying to do the exact same thing, which is not very different from any other week to week as well. I would say maybe a little bit more dialing on a couple shots, thinking about next week, that could only help for this week.

Q. And this is the 100th anniversary of this tournament. As someone who played this event a few times, does that mean anything to you? Is that milestone significant in any way?

JORDAN SPIETH: Well, I think being the Texas Open and being a Texan, I think it was really special to kind of have that being an accolade for myself last year having won this event. That doesn't speak to it being the 100th this year, but just the longevity of it and the history of this tournament. You look in the clubhouse here and you look at the Texas greats, some Hall of Famers from, you know, Nelson to Hogan to Trevino, these guys that -- I call Trevino Texan, he's been in Texas long enough. Anyway, it's got tremendous history. And for a tournament to be around that long on the PGA Tour, there's only a very small handful of events like that. So I'm happy to be here this year, it was never in question, and I look forward to trying to repeat.

Q. Does the event today have any kind of specific identity or anything that sets it apart from the other tournaments on the Tour?

JORDAN SPIETH: I think it plays -- it plays very Texas. By that I mean you really, you have to control your ball in conditions more so than just about anywhere else. You've got to do it through the bag, too. Like there's very few courses that are this demanding off the tee with trouble on both sides of holes. So if you're just a little bit off, you could end up having a shot, but you could also end up having to play sideways. Without a ton of water on the golf

course, it's still one of the hardest tracks we play all year. So we don't get a lot of really tough courses anymore and this is one of them.

DOUG MILNE: Kendall, come on up here. We're saving the last question for you and you beat me to it. We've got a special guest today that Jordan's had a few minutes to spend time with and we've actually got a question for you. You want to ask your question first? Stand right over here.

KENDALL RAMOS: What is the best advice you can give to someone who's just learning to play?

JORDAN SPIETH: Just learning to play? I would say find a couple friends that also are just learning to play that are interested and play. I mean, or like we talked about earlier, like at Top Golf where you can go somewhere and like learn to really enjoy, you know, progressing into it.

For me, I fell in love with the game because I had half a dozen other kids my age and we all just wanted to go out to the golf course and we would play some and then we'd throw a football, then we'd go play some more, then we'd practice some. I'd keep it light and try and play as much as you can because that's where you're going to hit those shots that keep it coming back.

DOUG MILNE: I've got two questions for you. First question, who's your favorite golfer?

KENDALL RAMOS: Jordan.

DOUG MILNE: Good answer. Second question, you just had a chance to visit with him. Tell us, what was the favorite thing you did on the range a few minutes ago?

KENDALL RAMOS: I don't know, it was all pretty good. Just hitting the ball.

JORDAN SPIETH: I think it might have been the set of clubs she got. I don't know if it was the time with me, it might have been the goodies she got.

DOUG MILNE: Fair enough. Thank you for your questions.

KENDALL RAMOS: Thank you.

Q. Jordan, we just met your special visitor today. Just kind of want to get your standpoint on having an opportunity to make an impact, especially here in your home state.

JORDAN SPIETH: In what way? Just charitable --

Q. I know you love connecting with people, especially the Make-A-Wish Foundation,

things like that. What does this opportunity to give back mean to you?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I think I feel that it's so easy, you know, at times to just take time out of your day that could really make other people feel really good, and we get those opportunities sometimes and try and jump on them.

You know, I guess I could say I'm fortunate, I've grown up in a household to see with my little sister with special needs to see kind of, she gets to meet somebody she wants to meet and it just makes her day for a week or a month or whatever.

Just like you just sit back and think, man, was I really that frustrated about the way I putted last week? In all reality, where's the perspective on that?

I think just finding perspective as often as you can. We're just so lucky to be out here and play golf for a living. We all, as competitors, we want to win and I think sometimes we'll be, you know, not at our best at times as we're trying to grind and compete, but if you can find perspective as often as possible and kind of recognize where you can actually -- if I'm her favorite player, like how easy is it for me to go over and hang out and hear her story. There's opportunities sometimes and try and embrace them and I'm glad that this worked out today.

DOUG MILNE: Jordan, we appreciate your time as always. Certainly wish you the best of luck.