

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
February 14, 2023



SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER

HALEY PETERSON: Afternoon, everyone. We will get things started. We would like to welcome world No. 1 Scottie Scheffler to the media center here at the Genesis Invitational.

Scottie, less than two days ago we were talking to you after capturing your fifth PGA TOUR win. Haven't had much time to probably celebrate or let that one sink in because you were at the Collegiate Showcase yesterday, but just open up with some opening comments on capturing that win in Phoenix.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, it was a lot of fun, definitely proud to be able to defend my first win. Then first win of the season, so it was definitely a lot of fun. It was a good battle with those guys down the stretch yesterday, or sorry, Sunday. Yeah, it hasn't really sunk in yet, for sure. It was definitely a lot of fun and was proud to be able to beat those guys. They both played really good golf and I'm looking forward to battling with them more again in the future.

HALEY PETERSON: You're making your fifth start here at Riviera Country Club. What are some initial thoughts coming into the week?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, the golf course is in good shape again just like always. I would say there's probably a bit more rough this year than there has been in years past. I guess all the rain they had a month or two ago probably had a pretty big effect on that, but excited for the week. The golf course is a big challenge, it's one of our favorite stops of the year and you've got to be playing really good to score well around this golf course, so looking forward to the challenge.

Q. Scottie, Nick Taylor gave you a pretty good battle. He was ranked 223rd I think in the world. As these events as are rumored to be going to be smaller fields and if there really is going to be sort of a bifurcation of the Tour where the top guys are playing these events and the other guys are playing these events, will something be lost?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I'm not really sure because if we do go to those smaller fields it's not going to be an unaccessible event. Just because you go down from 120 guys, let's say you go to 70, there's still going to be avenues for people to get into those tournaments, like the eligibility to get into those events is still going to reward good golf.

Let's say a guy like Nick Taylor would have played good -- what's another event, like American Express, had a good start there, maybe had a good fall, then qualified for the event, you'd still see guys like that in the field. Yeah, even if the fields are small, you still get



rewarded for good play. You don't want to lose a story like Nick. He's won twice out here, he's a good player. I think that's one of the strengths of the PGA TOUR is our depth.

Q. Like you said, it was a battle all the way down Sunday, but you kept your composure. How are you able to stay so calm on such a big stage?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, those situations are what you prepare for as a player and so when you get into those situations, it's a lot of fun. I knew it was going to take a really good round on Sunday to get it done, and it was exciting that Nick was playing so well, he was making basically everything he looked at for most of the day. I think really the first putt he missed that was of some importance was on 16 and that was kind of the hole that flipped the tournament. You want to beat people when they're playing their best. I don't want somebody to fold down the stretch and just get handed a win. It's more fun when you can go out there and kind of take it and fortunately that's what I was able to do on Sunday.

Q. Awesome. And how do you think your composure will help you win at such a difficult golf course this week?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I think good golf translates well on this golf course. When you're hitting it really well and you're playing good golf, this is a place that you can score on. And the opposite is said, when you're not hitting it well, this golf course will punish you. It's one of the best tests of the year and it should be a fun week.

Q. You touched on it briefly last week about your improving iron play last year and the stats show that too, but what specifically did you change, was it technique wise, strategy wise or what happened to become a better iron player?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I think I improved my practice. I've always been really competitive and becoming more focused in my practice has really helped. So whether that be getting my technical stuff down and then working it into hitting and creating shots and hitting numbers and stuff like that, and bringing more of my focus into it, versus where I'm not just relying totally on my hands and just kind of messing around. When I'm out there practicing, I'm envisioning more of what I'm trying to do and envisioning myself in those situations. You can feel like you're hitting it really good on the range, but the level of precision that you need to actually hit it really close on the golf course is significantly higher than what you need to hit the ball well on the driving range.

Q. Was there someone that -- is that a realization you had yourself, that you weren't focusing at practice or someone told you you weren't?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: No, I think I've always been focused in my practice, it's just taking it kind of to another level of intensity, because you can be focused but you can't really try to simulate the amount of pressure that you feel going down the stretch of a tournament. It's something that's hard to simulate, but the more and more you can put yourselves in those kind of uncomfortable situations when you're at home preparing, the better off we've been.



Randy and I have put in a lot of work over the last few years just trying to improve that aspect of my game. I struggled with my swing a lot in college and I was a really, really good ball-striker for most of my career growing up, and when I had some injuries I sort of lost it. And as I've continued to improve how my body functions I've been able to spend more time working on shots versus working out of bad habits, if that makes sense.

Q. How many times this year have you been asked about what you're going to serve at the Masters dinner and how many more times are you going to say, still working on it?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I'm going to assume a few more probably. Yeah, I don't know exactly what I'm going to do, but it will be fun. It's fun kind of planning it out. My wife, Meredith, she's very creative. She's been helping me kind of think my way through it because I'm not really good at that, so she's been helping me out.

Q. I wanted to ask you about your lone victory here at Riviera. What do you remember about that, winning the showcase?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I remember playing with Jordan, played with a couple UT alums that were our sponsors for the day and I played really good that day. It was a lot of fun. Jordan helped me get around the golf course. I don't think I played here before that day. I'm trying to remember what year the U.S. Am was. May have played the U.S. AM here, but maybe only a couple rounds, can't exactly remember, but definitely good memories from the day and then the week. Just being able to play in a PGA TOUR event when you're in college and it's a good opportunity for guys to come out here and get experience.

Q. And lastly, have you ever had any doubts about how good you are?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah. I think when I grew up, I always wanted to be on the PGA TOUR and you wanted to make it out here, but you never really know if you're good enough to do it until you make it out here.

It's funny, I always wanted to be out here and I believed that I could do it, but I never expected that it would happen, but I also didn't really plan for anything else, if that makes sense. You don't really expect things to come to you in life. You've got to go out there and earn it and work hard and see what happens. Yeah, when I turned pro, I didn't say I'm going to become No. 1 in the world, I'm going to win X amount of tournaments, I'm going to do these things. It was like actually I'm going to go to these Monday qualifiers, I'm going to try and take advantage of the couple starts that I had, and when I wasn't able to do that I was like, OK, let's go to Q-School and it was just kind of step by step.

Q. (No microphone.)

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I was hoping that I wasn't going to, but I'm glad that I don't right now. Maybe I will in the future, but who knows.



Q. Scottie, it's been a few years since Tiger's actually played in this event. For you and the other players on Tour, what do you think his return here signifies?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Well, I think for us as players it's a lot of fun. Tiger means so much to us as players out here on Tour and he's done so much for us out here that it's fun for us to be able to see him still continue to do what he loves. It was pretty scary a few years ago when he got in that accident and we didn't know if he was going to be able to do this again, and so just to have him out here on the grounds and to see him around doing what he loves to do is a lot of fun for us.

Q. You obviously hadn't won since the Masters when you got that win last week. Was that something that started to weigh on your mind a little bit, added to that incredible run that you had when you won four times in the space of a couple months?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I'm confused. What's the question?

Q. Was it starting to wear on your mind a little bit having not won obviously in 10 months I think it was?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Not really. It's not easy to win out here. There's a lot of talented players out here on tour. I did a good job last year of putting myself in position a bunch of times. I think I had four wins but I also had four runner-ups. The ones that quickly come to mind are Colonial and U.S. Open being just a shot away. It's not easy to win out here.

I think what frustrated me more was kind of being on the outside looking in on Sundays, not being in position to win in the fall and to start the year. I was kind of just on the outside looking in to where I didn't really have a chance on Sundays. Maybe if I shot a crazy, crazy round, but after about five or six holes, it was like, all right, now you've got no chance. That was a bit more frustrating than looking back 10 months ago.

Q. You spoke about how nervous you felt before the final round of the Masters last year. I'm just wondering how do the nerves compare trying to close out a PGA TOUR event like sleeping on the lead last week, for example?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I think the Masters is always going to be a bit different just because it's the Masters, and I'd never won a major before. It's not to say I wasn't nervous Sunday morning, I was definitely very nervous because I don't like to lose and I really wanted to win that tournament. So I was definitely, definitely nervous, but I get nervous to go out and play with my buddies, I don't want to lose to them either, so it was nothing new.

Q. A year ago obviously things were a lot different in the professional golf world. What feels like the biggest difference from this event last year to now the pro golf landscape a year later?



SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Well, first of all, I felt like last year there was so much talk surrounding LIV at this event. As you guys know, there was just a lot of noise. This year I feel like we're kind of more settled into the ecosystem of golf. I think our tour's doing a good job of improving and continuing to benefit the top players and all across the board with our membership. I think that's really what we're focused on now. Last year it was a lot of drama, it was like who's going to go, I'm not going, now this guy's going, and it's like all this stuff is going on around us and was kind of hard to focus on the tournament, but now I feel like we've settled in a bit, but it's still weird that certain guys aren't here.

Q. Scottie, you're going to have to choose a dinner that is going to appease everybody at the Champions dinner. I don't think everyone is anticipating a very light mood that night. Are you thinking about basically what you will say to those guys when there's going to be a bunch of LIV guys in attendance?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I haven't looked that far ahead. I definitely, I don't know exactly what you're supposed to say that night. I haven't really gotten too much info. I've got to talk to a few of the guys and figure out what actually goes on that night because I'm still kind of clueless. I'm hoping that it will be a fun night. Gathering all those guys together in a room, I mean, it should be a lot of fun. It's an historic group of people, Masters champions and I'm sure that week all put our personal opinions aside and just have a good night and just kind of enjoy what the night really is.

Q. Your record with the lead going into Sunday, I think it's probably 2 out of 6 or something like that. What do you consider to be a good percentage closing streak for a player out here to be a good closer?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, I don't know. I didn't know that was my record, either.

Q. I didn't, either. I've got it on my screen, though.

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Good job. That's a good question. I mean, you can look at Tiger's streak, that was pretty good. He was a pretty good closer.

Q. Jordan once said, and Jordan can be a pretty good closer and he thought 50 percent might be like a good record, but when you stack it up to what Tiger did, it doesn't seem all that good. What's real and what's Tiger?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: When you stack it up against Tiger, it's not very good. Realistically, it's all situational. Let's say I have a 54-hole lead and I'm 10 under, there's three guys at 9 under, and there's five guys at 8 under. It's like, well, if I go out and shoot 65, I could easily lose. And last week was one where I went out there with a two-shot lead and I was playing very good golf and I wasn't extending myself. It also just depends on what happens around you.

So it's tough to put a specific number on it, but I mean, it's all very situational.



HALEY PETERSON: Perfect, at that we will wrap things up. Scottie, thank you for taking the time to join us. Good luck this week.

