

# DEAN & DELUCA

## Invitational

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

### Jordan Spieth

#### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome J S into the interview room as here is here in town to make his fifth start at Dean & Deluca Invitational. You finished runner up here in 2015, and then you won in 2016.

Jordan, welcome back as the defending champion. If we can get some thoughts from you.

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, there are a few places we just have tremendous vibes throughout the year, and this is one of them. Even going back to 2013, I was fortunate to get I think champion's exemption and finished sixth or so. Then 2014 had a strong finish, and then obviously the last two years were great.

So coming in, this is a great spot to kind of start a new momentum train and get off the bogey train I've been on. I'm very excited about the work we've put in over the weekend and then first couple days of this week.

It's going to be tough. We have tough conditions coming our way tomorrow afternoon and Friday morning. It's going to be tough for the entire field.

Course will dry up a little bit. It'll play tough and we'll have to be patient out here.

THE MODERATOR: I know you love the history of golf. With Ben Hogan the only player to win this tournament in back-to-back seasons, I know you would love to add your name to that list.

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I didn't know that. That would be fantastic. This tournament has tremendous history. Obviously Mr. Hogan's name on it, this being one of his alleys. He has quite a few. Each one is a revered golf course and one that people like.

Colonial, it's an old-school club. It's a very cool club to be in as a golf historian. So getting your name on that wall a couple times -- my name is at the bottom of the row, and so you can't really see it during the year when the plants grow up. I need to get one on the top so you can see it a little bit better.

That's the goal this year.



THE MODERATOR: Great. Jordan enters the week No. 7 in FedExCup standings.

Raise your hand and we'll get started with questions.

**Q. Went back to 009 this week. Talk to us about the decision.**

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I was having a tough time aligning the ball up where I wanted it or getting comfortable with my setup with the 009, and that's why I made a switch to a putter that kind of lined itself up.

Just lost a little bit of the feel that I had with the putter I've been using for however many years. But what it did, was now I feel a lot more comfortable with my alignment and feel like I got my set up back to where I want it and I have that feel.

Michael and I played 36 holes on Sunday at Dallas National where I play and had a couple great putting rounds just as a day back to get going. That kind of made the decision that it was time, and I felt comfortable back on short- and mid-range putts with my alignment.

It's all been setup related. So I just needed to look at something different. I didn't know if it would be a week or a month, and ended up being a week and it feels good now.

**Q. Ryan Palmer yesterday said last year you made some putts that you just shouldn't make out here. Can you tell me how those positive images will help you get back on track this week?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I think certainly. The back nine I think I had something like ten putts. I was kind of struggling a little bit and I made a really long par putt on 8. Got a good break on the tee shot on 9. Once I made my birdie on 10, that's where we got under par, I think, 1- or 2-under for the round, and knew that I could be in the driver's seat again. Kind of wasn't in the driver's seat; just holding on before that.

So definitely great back nine vibes here. You can use that visualization positively as you go in year after year for sure. I've seen it at Augusta; I've seen it the way we play at Hyundai. Certain courses where we just kind of seem to work our way in contention no matter how your game is going.

So hopefully that's the case this week, too. But the entire golf course, I feel comfortable with the shots that are needed going into the greens, and obviously around the greens got great memories.

**Q. This is kind of a U.S. Open looking-ahead question. We're going to a first-year venue again at Erin Hills. Can you talk about the unique challenges of playing a major championship at a venue that guys don't know a lot about? Also, did you do anything special at Chambers Bay that maybe gave you a little bit of an edge, do you feel?**

JORDAN SPIETH: Well, out of the U.S. Opens that I've played in, every single one of them has been a new venue for me. It's hard for me to speak to going back to anything that's familiar.

I guess watching on TV makes a little bit of a difference, but not really. So every single venue has been new. When it actually is a new venue for other people too it's advantageous. Nobody has course knowledge.

I've played Erin Hills. I played the U.S. Amateur there and reached the quarterfinals. I've played a significant number of rounds on that golf course. Michael caddied for Justin Thomas there, so he's had some rounds as well.

So we've got as much experience as anyone other than Kelly Kraft, Patrick Cantlay, who were in the finals at that golf course.

So there are unique challenges in a U.S. Open, because obviously going in you need to prepare for even par being the winning score. That's usually not the case. Normally you're looking at where are my opportunities to take advantage of the golf course.

At a U.S. Open, it doesn't really come around. It just happens if it happens. You play the holes to hit it in the right spots, and when you make a couple putts or you hit a great iron shot, that's where you make your birdies.

Chamber's Bay we got there on the Saturday before. I did a tremendous amount of getting used to the greens, the way that they were in my speed. I remember it being my best putting practice prior to a tournament I've ever had as far as getting the speed down.

So when the tournament started and the talk was about how the greens were inconsistent or bouncing or not looking good, we had been there enough and I had hit so many putts from the Saturday before until

Wednesday evening that I already knew what was going to be there. I knew you were going to hit some good putts that were going to miss.

As long as I got the speed down and I could tap it in, I didn't have to grind on the three-, four-footers. That was a game changer for most of the week for me.

I made a couple mid-range putts because they died in. When they have die speed, you know, some of them that you hit perfect putts are going to miss there. I also hit a couple that I thought were missing that went in.

So that's what happens sometimes when you get that kind of situation, which was the situation at Chambers Bay.

At Erin Hills, you know, I'm not sure what to expect yet, but I plan on doing the exact same kind of preparation that we did for Chambers.

I think we'll get in at some point that weekend before and spend a lot of time getting adjusted to the green surfaces. They're big surfaces where the wind will play a factor if it is windy, because there is not much protection.

When U.S. Open greens get to the speeds that get at and there is any kind of breeze as we saw last year at Oakmont, it could make a significant difference on what it does to the golf ball even from five feet.

So your speed putting at Augusta, U.S. Open, extremely important.

**Q. If for some reason Michael wasn't able to caddie for you and your brother was able, would you consider using him?**

JORDAN SPIETH: Where?

**Q. Just on the tour.**

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, sure. I think at some point that would be a fun week to have. Michael and Ellie have a baby due in October. You never know what that could entail in the future. May have another one.

Obviously family is more important than being there for a certain week at a golf tournament. So I'll bring in my family if that's the case.

Be a fun experience to see him on the bag. Don't know what his schedule is going to entail. It looks like he's be in Europe playing professional basketball. Maybe on a week off at a European event if I go over there.

I would definitely consider it.

**Q. That was sort of a setup. It was Dustin's caddie, his wife having a baby that led Austin to caddie for him on an interim basis that obviously turned into a full-time job. When you're around those guys, what do you see that makes that partnership work? Siblings could be difficult.**

JORDAN SPIETH: I think they understand the communication with each other. I think they both have a pretty similar mindset of go out there and play aggressive. If we're on, we're going to have a chance to win. If execution is off, we're playing to win. I think that's the way Dustin plays.

Dustin has done a phenomenal job working on his wedge play and even his kind of sawed-off wedges and his putting that has taken him from a really good, awesome player on the PGA Tour who won every single year to somebody who you expect to have a chance to win every single week.

He's done that through his practice. You see him with a TrackMan working wedge distances more than he does anything else in practice right now. A lot of that is on just his on-course work.

But the ability to communicate and kind of understand each other and when to take chances and when not to, I think Austin and DJ have that down. They worked on it for a little while. Kind of had a couple tournaments I remember playing with them where it was a little off.

I remember being paired with them as a teammate, and they figured out exactly what's going on.

**Q. Obviously you feel very comfortable out here. If you were designing a golf course, how closely would it resemble Colonial?**

JORDAN SPIETH: Certainly have a lot of similar characteristics. It's great, because we have quite a few golf courses on the PGA Tour that are some of the shortest golf courses that produce some of the highest scores. It just shows you that you don't have to keep adding length.

You can carve it a different way. This is not -- Phil has won here twice Phil hits the ball is long ways. There have been bombers who have won here and there have been guys who have played for positioning and short game that have won here.

So, yeah. I love those kind of golf courses, so if I were to design one, I would like to have a lot of similarities to a course like here, Hilton Head, Sony. These golf courses, if you hit it really long and you hit it straight you have an advantage. It's not like it gets narrower the longer you hit it. It stays consistent the entire way.

As long as you're in the fairway, whoever is hitting it further obviously then has an advantage from there. I think that's useful. When you have a course open up significantly once you hit it further, that doesn't make much sense to me.

If you had it really wide early and then get narrower as you go, I don't like that either. You know, it can be an advantage to hit the ball far. Don't take that away and don't make it even more of an advantage.

In my opinion, these golf courses don't and they produce phenomenal finishes, and scores can be 16-under, but they can be 8-under. I think that's great. I think either way it's phenomenal for the player and the fans because it's tough but fair.

**Q. Hypothetical question: If you were (indiscernible) next week, would you ready? In saying that also, how important is the next few weeks for you before the U.S. Open?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I wouldn't say I -- I would go into it and I would tell you absolutely, but I would really like a couple solid weeks to feed off of leading into it.

**Q. Quick follow-up question: There is young 21-year old guy playing this week. He got the invitation. Just wondering what advice would be to give someone making a PGA Tour debut at this event on this course?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I would tell him to look back historically. You've seen quite a few guys come in here as their first start. I remember Franklin a couple years shooting next to nothing in the first couple rounds. Have fun with it obviously. That's what people told me, but it's a lot easier said than done in your first couple starts.

But have a good time. Kind of embrace everything the week entails. Embrace the locker room, the practice rounds, whatever it may be. The facilities. It's not normal. We're very blessed on the PGA Tour to have the best in that situation.

So to have just a great time, but then also recognize that you can go out here and compete. It's been done. It's been done on this golf course, too. You hit the ball in the fairway out here, that is such an advantage, especially when it's going to get windy.

You don't need to shoot very low scores to climb up the leaderboard the first two days of this week is what it looks like.

**Q. Is there any similarity to the state of your game now as opposed to last year? Can you take me through last year and how you felt going.**

JORDAN SPIETH: I feel more confident in tee-to-green right now than I did last year. I feel more confident tee-to-green than I have probably in my career. I feel very comfortable over the ball. I've had a really good ball striking year where I've been putting myself in position to shoot low scores. Just haven't quite converted to the level I have in the past.

I have converted for some really good finishes for this year thus far, but not to the same level that maybe I have going back if I have this many opportunities.

So I feel good about the state of my game. It's hard to compare years. I don't really remember three years ago, two years ago, or last year what my exact feeling was here. I know what I was working on in my swing here last year and I know that I feel better about it right now. It's about knocking that short game down.

**Q. In your way searching for putter to fix your setup and alignment, did you ever try center shaft putter?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I didn't, no. I didn't. I just tried the one putter that I used last week. It was a welded neck that allowed it to still not be face balanced. It still allowed for rotation, which is similar to my putter. A little bit less, but still allowed for some rotation.

That's the only one I tried. Center-shafted putters I feel are very useful for alignment, for fixing alignment, but I found it in the putter that I used last week and went with that.

**Q. Can you talk about holes 3, 4, 5 and what makes them unique to the PGA Tour and also your preparation for those holes.**

JORDAN SPIETH: Sure. We get some famous stretches of three holes on the PGA Tour. Typically you have at least one birdie hole in there, but you also have trouble around the corner on those.

You think of 16, 17, 18 at Sawgrass.

You think of 11, 12, 13 of Augusta.

But those holes, you know, there is at least one very easy hole that you would expect to almost birdie in that, 16 or 13, and then you have a really tough one and normally a par-3.

In this stretch, I don't find any of them birdie holes at all. 3 is a really hard fairway to hit. The wind has to be coming into you I think in order to hit it, which it plays for that wind. If it's not, it kind of stinks.

Yesterday straight downwind I hit a perfect tee shot that landed just over the last bunker at 295 and flew into the

rough under a tree.

So it plays for the wind we're going to get, which makes the drive into the wind, which makes you have a longer club into the green.

Then you go to a 230-yard par-3, and then you're left with No. 5, which is one the hardest holes we play all year.

It's one of those stretches that everybody knows about, but it's not one where you find a birdie hole. It's also unique because it's early in a round. Typically you find them on the back nine.

This is early in the round on the weekend, which allows you to make a mistake and be able to return from it, or to obviously play them well and gain on the field on the weekend, which is nice early in a round. That will give you momentum you can feed off.

It's pretty cool.

**Q. Any part of you surprised at some of the reaction last week to your putter switch?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I've been off social media for a while and media in general. I'm not even really sure what the reaction was other than the players on the putting green, which was significant. Like, Why in the world are you switching? Which is probably what it was elsewhere.

No, I mean, it was personal. I did things for what I think is going to make me a better player. I felt like it was the right decision. I wouldn't change it going back at all. It needed to happen.

Just because I putted well with my putter now doesn't mean I couldn't have been putting better with a different one. It's not the putter. The putter just allows me to have the same kind of feel for my speed and the confidence looking down knowing I've made big putts.

I used to putt extremely well with a Teryllium one with a different neck before that one. I switched because Adam Scott and Geoff Ogilvy used the putter I use now way back when. I thought the putter was really cool. I didn't know if it was the best for me or not, but I thought the putter was cool so I started using it. That was when I was probably 15, 16.

It was just kind of checking something out to see what I would think. I didn't really let anything else bother me. I think what happened was what needed to happen.