

# Charles Schwab Challenge

Tuesday, June 9, 2020

## Jordan Spieth

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome the 2016 Charles Schwab Challenge winner Jordan Spieth. Thanks for joining us. Welcome back, more than anything. Start off with your history at Colonial. I mentioned the win in 2016. You've also had a couple of runner-up finishes. How much does coming back to a place like this where you've enjoyed so much success kind of soften the transition perhaps a little bit?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I think it does. I love this place. I'm really glad that we were able to play this tournament this year, given it's not in its normal place in May. But yeah, you know, staying at home this week and then having no fans here on a Tuesday so far and kind of the minor adjustments that this week is providing, including this interview itself, it's all a bit different, and it doesn't necessarily feel totally normal as it shouldn't. But I think everybody is very excited to get going. I know I am. It was a good break, and I'm glad that we reached a place where players, the vast majority of them felt very comfortable, and being able to stay here and start here in Texas is certainly a huge benefit for me personally.

THE MODERATOR: Jordan, what have you been doing as far as keeping your game sharp, your mind sharp? Can you run us a recap of what the last few months have been like for you?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, knowing it was going to be at least a couple months if not a few months off, I tried to approach it as an off-season, knowing that we're going to get pretty busy this fall all the way through really the next fall. I tried to take some time off from grinding the first month or so, and then was able to, as things started to open back up, was able to come back and work on some things I've been trying to work on, and ultimately been trying to play a lot of rounds as we got close to this tournament, try and get out there and just play, hit a lot of shots, kind of gauge where things are and what different shots or kind of where is my comfort level on certain shots and what needs to be worked on. So I kind of did a little combination of things, tried to just kind of have fun the first month, enjoy being home for an extended period of time, which is very unusual, and then my brother and his girlfriend were living with us for that first kind of -- maybe like eight or nine weeks, if not longer, which is actually really nice to be



able to spend that time with family. So I got to do that, and then started back on a normal off-week routine.

**Q. Can you tell me what the phrase "in the bubble" means to you and how you think that will play out?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I think it's those involved in this weekly testing that we're doing and the daily screening that we're doing. I think that's what it means to me is those that are involved in -- those two different processes, and I think it'll work out. I think golf is probably the most likely and best chance for things to be successful as possible over probably any other sport, just given the outside -- you're outside, you can social distance when you play, you don't have to have physical contact. And then this weekly testing should keep guys clear. I mean, it's really up to you. It's on the individual. I mean, if you're going to go out and go out to eat or go out to crowded places, you're going to risk potentially missing a few weeks, so it's on you. I don't think anybody really wants to contract the virus and have to not only deal with the health risks that apply but also miss time playing.

I have faith in the guys that are playing and that are within that bubble that they're going to do what it takes within the week to ensure that they stay healthy, and I think it'll work well.

**Q. Would fist bumping or handing the club back and forth between the caddie and the player, would that make you comfortable or uncomfortable?**

JORDAN SPIETH: You know, I think that -- I don't see fist bumping being something that guys will struggle to make the adjustment to, but I definitely think the handing a putter off to your caddie when you finish a hole -- it would be hard-pressed to say that we won't see any of that to start. I think there will be an adjustment period. But I'm very comfortable with what Michael is doing. We've talked at length about where we're staying, how we're traveling, pretty much doing it all together so that it ensures that we both have that kind of trust on each other as far as spreading the disease.

**Q. Without fans, without grandstands and in the heat, with what heat there is now, how difficult is Colonial going to play?**

JORDAN SPIETH: You know, today and tomorrow we have heavy winds, but then it's not forecasted to blow,

and it's been very, very hot, so the greens are very receptive. Without wind, with soft greens, I would expect lower scores. I'd look at Justin Rose's year in like a 20-under type scenario would be my guess. Guys are going to be able to -- there's enough wedge opportunities that guys that are in control of the golf ball tee to green there are going to have a lot of opportunities.

You can get away with -- the rough is high, so you've obviously got to miss on the right sides, but you can get away with playing out of the rough into the greens on a lot of holes because they are so receptive given how hot it's been. I would expect lower scores just based on looking at the forecast and how the golf course is playing right now.

**Q. As much as this break came at a bad time for people like Rory and Jon Rahm who were playing the golf of their life, it maybe came at a good time for people who want to sort of assess where they are and need to do better. How much have you used the last three months to reflect on where you are now in your career and how you get back to where you should be in the game?**

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, pretty much all of it. Yeah, it was a strong focal point of the last few months, how can I get better physically, mentally and within the mechanics of my golf game, and then what's the right process to start to put that in place, and it's not something that clicks and all of a sudden you're just automatically the best player in the world. It's certainly a process. But creating the right little habits that get me back on track was a big emphasis during the last few months.

Like I mentioned before, I approach that first really -- really first third to first half as an off-season to kind of regroup, and I trained as if it was off-season, but then I didn't hit a ton of golf balls while I was trying to kind of look back on the first five tournaments I played, the only five tournaments I played this season and say, okay, now we've got kind of a good time frame now to make adjustments going forward for this next stretch where it's a really good time to get hot as we head into August through the next August when you've got seven majors in a 12-month period including a Ryder Cup and a couple FedExCups.

Yeah, I looked at it as a big-time opportunity for myself and didn't take it lightly. I was certainly grateful for the time. Certainly it's not a positive situation in general, but for me personally, I tried to look at how can I make this an advantage to myself.

**Q. You mentioned the Ryder Cup. A few players have their opinions of having a fan-free Ryder Cup.**

**Are you still confident you will be in that team, as well?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I mean, I certainly am on the outside looking in, so any kind of solid play through the end of this year I think would be -- I could get myself into a position to get a pick. I feel like I'm in control of my own destiny, which is great, but I'm on the outside looking in, which is a place that I haven't been for Ryder Cups in the past. You know, certainly that's an added goal.

As far as a Ryder Cup without fans, that would obviously be extremely unusual, and I think every single player and everyone involved certainly wants them. I would still -- I'd still like to play in it, even if there aren't fans. It's still a competition, you still have your teammates and you're playing for your country, and there's certainly plenty of interest in people watching it. But it would 100 percent not be the same.

**Q. Without the fans, without the stands, without the hospitality suites, it feels like today's practice round might be the same sort of atmosphere you will have once you tee it up on Thursday. How different do you think it will be playing in that sort of environment?**

JORDAN SPIETH: It will be odd, especially given I'm paired with Rickie and Justin and we're used to being paired where we get a lot of people and you can feed off the crowds and all that. It's going to be very unusual, but I will tell you we did play faster today in a practice round. In general I think Monday through Wednesday will feel easier to players, and then once the tournament starts, I think it'll be weird because we're used to being able to use the energy of the fans and feed off of them, and we love having the support. When you get to see all -- especially in this DFW area for me, you see so many kids show up wearing kind of the same hat I wear. It's really fun. It's a really fun week. In that sense it's a bit of a shame. But I'm really happy to be back playing golf.

**Q. You kind of mentioned it, but what is it about Colonial that you like and suits your game, and the theory around here is you've got to be in the fairway to score, but even if you're not driving it as well, it seems like you're still able to put up some pretty good numbers here.**

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I think being in the fairway is very key, just to be able to control your distances into the greens. But a lot of it is picking apart the golf course. It's just a golf course where it forces you to hit to certain areas and play from there, and each pin location has kind of a place you can miss and a place you can't. So it's just learning it and missing in the correct spots when you're out of position, and then being able to kind of try and dial in those wedges to

take advantage when you are in good position.

It's a par-70, and typically these fairways are so small, the fairway percentages go down for everybody, so I think it's kind of just about staying patient, not trying to force anything on this course, and letting kind of 3-, 4-under do the trick. It's a solid round of golf out here even though you get done and you're like, man, I felt like I had a lot more opportunities than that. But that's just the way it is around good, old, classic tracks like this.

**Q. You mentioned this earlier about shaking hands or taking the club from your caddie. What's been the most uncomfortable part of this as far as the new normal, not high-fiving, whatever the case may be?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I think the swab test was probably the most uncomfortable so far. There was nothing comfortable about it.

But as far as the on-course stuff, you know, it's actually -- I've only played nine holes. I only came out today. So everything went smooth. You're getting your own range balls on the range and you're scooping your bucket, but nothing is totally crazy. I think what'll be weird is when you stand on the tee boxes trying to separate yourself a bit from your competitors. Just normally when you're on the tee box everyone is crunched up in the same area, so I think it'll be a little bit unusual just trying to actually focus on social distancing on the tee because the rest of the hole, it should be pretty easy.

**Q. Do you feel a responsibility or do you think golf has a responsibility to make sure that this goes off well?**

JORDAN SPIETH: A hundred percent, yeah. I totally think that we all as players have a responsibility for it to go off very smoothly, given it's the first -- I guess NASCAR started. It's the first sport that's starting, and with these other ones kind of having an eye on how things are going, if we can get off and running smoothly the first month or so, I think it does a lot of good for the game. Well, let's say running smoothly for good, but at least getting off to a good start.

**Q. Can you give me a little color on what you've found in your golf swing during this time off, and being in Dallas, did that allow you to spend more time with Cameron McCormick, or did you do more of this work on your own?**

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I've been working with Cameron at a pretty usual rate, and then it's all been progression. I mean, even earlier this year it was progression from things that got off last year, and then continuing to just move along, and then like I mentioned before, it was about playing a lot of rounds.

It's about getting the feel back, kind of finding it in the ground, finding what shots are uncomfortable and know how to figure out my tendencies because a lot of times when you're on a driving range you can kind of really stripe it, and it may not be a total tell on what's being produced on the golf course.

So there's a little bit of education on myself, on what I've done really well historically that I didn't necessarily realize I did, and then a little bit of retraining. It's not to say -- things are feeling better than they have in a while, but it's not to say that everything is -- that everything is back to the best ball-striking I've ever had, but I feel like I'm progressing in the right direction, and the things that I'm working on are working towards getting things looking and feeling as good as they have in the past for me, and that's different, I would say, than a lot of the last couple years where I would be working on something and it wasn't necessarily moving in the right direction.

**Q. When do you feel like you wrapped your head around what it was that you needed to do?**

JORDAN SPIETH: You know, it wasn't really wrapping my head around what I need to do, it was more how to do it, like what feels accomplish it through the swing, and really it's just in the last month or so or even less than that as I've been playing more golf and making adjustments to what I am feeling on the golf course, not necessarily even results, just how it feels. Because I know once things are feeling in control to me and the timing element kind of comes back into my game, the rest of it, the results will take care of itself.

**Q. Just two questions: One was kind of your reaction to what the TOUR is going to do with the 8:46 tee time and with regard to George Floyd and whatnot. I don't know if you saw that memo, having a moment of silence and vacating that tee time. What's your reaction to that, kind of how cool you think that is?**

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I think -- I just saw the message. The TOUR had not made us aware, board or PAC or anything with it, but there's been a lot of great notes put out by Commissioner Monahan and so on and so forth. And so I think it's really cool. I think it's -- I think it'll be something that hopefully we can kind of stick with however long we need to. But I think it's certainly a really nice thing to do with the way things have been.

**Q. Golf doesn't really have an opening day, so to speak, because it's a cycle all year-round, but with this pause for three months does it feel like a little bit of an opening day for you and the players and maybe kind of a fresh start, if nothing else?**

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I feel that way to an extent. At

the same time, guys are looking to get off to a fast start because it's actually a fast finish to the season. So it's kind of weird. Depends on how you look at it. I like looking at it as a fresh start, personally, as an opening day almost. It would be nice if we could get like some fighter jets flying over the first tee shots, something like that, that you'd see at an opening day stadium, but yeah, it's got a little bit of that kind of excitement to it. Like I come back and there's a few guys that I remember talking to or whatever, and now I kind of forgot their names. It's been so long that it's -- that's a long time. It's the longest I think probably anybody who's playing in this tournament has gone in between golf tournaments in their career unless they were injured.

THE MODERATOR: Jordan, we appreciate your time, as always. It's great to see you, and have a great week.

I think everybody has got a little bit of those kind of opening day jitters is the easiest way to say it.

**Q. Have you been apprised at all that CBS plans to have a little tent where you talk in and speak to a camera briefly in the middle of your round and their aggressive desire to have more players mic'd up? Are you aware of that? Would you be one who would be interested in being mic'd up? Is there any concern if you were, there wouldn't leave any time for them to talk? Just your thoughts on that.**

JORDAN SPIETH: Sure, you don't get any more questions ever again (laughs).

I'm not aware of the camera during the round. I am aware of players being mic'd up. I am aware that there is a player in my group that's mic'd up this week. Am I open to it? Sure, I'm open to it, but I think I would kind of want to see how things are going first personally with it before, and just kind of getting back into the routine before throwing that on there because it is something that I don't necessarily see as -- I think if anything, could be a distraction personally to your play, but I also see what an advantage it could have for the game if you're able to mic some guys up, especially given there's no crowd noise, so you get a little extra commentary from the players.

Yeah, I mean, for me, I'd probably be quieter than I normally am if I'm mic'd up so I don't keep on rambling, which might be a good thing for me.

**Q. You mentioned a fast finish to the season; what do you have planned for the first month or two?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I'm going to be playing a lot. As of now, I'm playing at least five out of the first six and then go from there. And I think that schedule is pretty on point with the vast majority of the membership right now. Guys are looking to play a lot, and I think we'll see some really strong fields certainly in the first -- I think through the end of the FedExCup.