

DEAN & DELUCA

Invitational

Wednesday, May 25, 2016

Jordan Spieth

Press Conference

JOHN BUSH: Jordan Spieth joins us here in the interview room, making his fourth start at the DEAN & DELUCA Invitational. He has three top-15 finishes at this event, including a nice birdie on the last hole for a 65 to come up just short. Talk about being back here at Colonial.

JORDAN SPIETH: I love this place, love this course. You know, it's a spectator-friendly tournament with a lot of availability to see shots up close, especially around the greens, which you don't see every week, which is kind of fun for us, too, to have fans next to the greens and kind of be involved in the putts almost. It's just kind of a different feel but one that we enjoy. Everybody really enjoys this golf course that plays this event, and it's in fantastic shape. Really hope the weather holds up.

But always excited to be at one of the home events for me in the DFW area. Last week was just really incredible, the support that we had from the crowds, and with the pairing this week, expect some of the same if the weather holds up. It's a really exciting time for us.

JOHN BUSH: I know you didn't have the finish Sunday that you wanted, but you've still got to take some positives out of the fact that you didn't quite have your best game but you were right there going into the final round.

JORDAN SPIETH: Sure. Sunday I actually hit the ball -- I felt like I had better control of the ball than any other days. It's just funny how it works sometimes. But yeah, nice to see one of my better -- I would say it was the best I've played the Byron Nelson in the six years I've played it. I was closest to having a chance to win, so I can take that into a course that I have had success as far as where I've finished and try and take some momentum off of last year at this event and also off of last week. It's a good time right now to really step things into gear, really try and keep putting ourselves in contention these next couple weeks as we get closer to the U.S. Open, try and figure out where everything is performing under pressure. It's a lot easier said than done just to get yourself into contention, but I've had good experiences here at the DEAN & DELUCA, and



certainly expecting myself to have a chance.

Q. Have you ever played with Bill Murray before?

JORDAN SPIETH: I have, yeah. I've played a few holes with him a couple different times. I consider him a friend. Every time we see each other we come up and have a talk. It'll be a lot of fun today. I was really excited to hear about the pairing, so it'll keep things really light today. It's not like -- I've seen this course plenty of times. It's not like I'm out there really trying to grind. It's more to get into a rhythm, feel like I'm putting some good swings on it and getting adjusted to the golf course, and if I can have a really, really good time doing so on a Wednesday, it'll be a lot of fun. Looking forward to this afternoon.

Q. You wanted to smile on the course. Is this a good thing for you to have a fun pro-am pairing like that?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I think so, yeah. It'll be -- yeah, this is one of the best pro-am groups, and I get lucky every week. I get a lot of -- meet a lot of really cool people in the pro-ams, and this one is certainly different having Bill. I'll try and hold back on the "Caddyshack" references today.

Q. It's admittedly hard to compare anything to what you did last year, but when you start looking at things almost halfway through this year, is there a single element or factor that is different for you than maybe where you stood at this time last year?

JORDAN SPIETH: I'm not sure. I mean, last year I was, I think, making a few more mid-range putts than I have this year, but overall I feel like I'm still stroking it the same. I feel like the way I'm striking the ball has been the same. Recently I've been trying to get back to the consistency my swing was at last year, so I'd say maybe that's it. Just a little bit in the fine-tuning of the ball-striking, but it's coming around now. Started to figure some things out this week.

At THE PLAYERS I struck it nicely, just didn't have the putter. So once all the timing comes together, I feel like we'll be in good shape. We want to peak for the four majors. We say the year is almost halfway complete, but at the same time we still have three majors and an Olympics and the Playoffs and a Ryder Cup. It really is just starting in our minds.

Yeah, I mean, I've never been one to compare to any past years that I've had. It's all about how can we put ourselves in position to win the tournament this week and what's our goal going in the short future to get ready for the next major. It's kind of what we did last year. It wasn't trying to compare it to 2014.

Yeah, I mean, I'm looking for a strong week this week to keep momentum going into Memorial and then into the U.S. Open.

Q. How does having a pair of roommates benefit you, and how do those -- can you give us an example of how they keep you grounded.

JORDAN SPIETH: Well, I don't really want to live in my house alone right now, so it's nice to have roommates. I've lived with Mooner since I turned professional. Everyone my age that I know has roommates. And then Kramer I lived with at Texas when we were at Texas, and so when he was graduating, he was looking for a place to live, and I had a spare bedroom.

You know, so it's cool. It's cool because we all kind of have our own things going on. We're so busy individually but all still kind of chasing a common goal, which is to play and compete and live life on the PGA TOUR.

Yeah, we play a lot when we're home. The few times we're all home at the same time, we go out with other guys in the area and play some games, and you never know who's going to win. Anyone is capable of shooting 64 on one of the courses in the area and tearing it up that day. They're just good friends.

Q. How do you characterize the quality of your iron play right now, and how does that affect the rest of what you do? Obviously putting is a big focus of what everyone sees, but how does your iron play really play into all of that?

JORDAN SPIETH: You know, last week it was poor because I did put myself in really good positions off the tee, at least the first few rounds. I sprayed a couple shots here and there, but I ended up actually in pretty good shape for the most part off the tee, which is with the size of the greens and how soft they were, even my misses, I hit 33 of 36 greens feeling like I wasn't hitting good irons.

It's certainly an emphasis right now on trying to get the consistency back into the strikes. Really getting back to playing one go-to ball flight that I know I can have when I need it and I know that it's going to be there while still playing to my strength, which is being able to kind of work different flights into pins that help leave myself on the greens if I miss it. That's kind of the strength of mine is my misses are still in a position

where you make par at worst, so it may not look like Jason's high dead-straight ball that goes at the pins when he's dead on, it may not look that pretty, but we can get the ball in the hole, which obviously he can, too. That's not what I'm inferring.

The point is I don't hit it the highest or the longest, but we plan what shots we hit into the greens on our approaches to have our misses not hurt us, and that I think is very confident by the way we've played the Masters the last few years. I mean, that of anyplace is where a lot of people call it a second-shot golf course, and even though, again, it may not be the prettiest and I haven't had my best iron play or ball-striking that week the last through years when we really should have won three Masters.

I can look at it -- that's kind of how I would say we go about things. But it's getting there. It's very close. I'm kind of putting in a lot of work but not too much to kind of wear myself out at this point, but you definitely need it here. You need to be able to play smart shots out of the rough here, too. You get a lot of fliers and you need to be able to stay below the holes with these smaller greens.

Q. How do analytics go into your preparations and how do you avoid kind of information overload?

JORDAN SPIETH: I let Cameron, my coach, kind of take over the information overload, but I'm certainly involved in the analytics. I like to -- we get strokes gained reports every week from Mark Brody, and Cam kind of asks me more questions on -- instead of saying this is what your percentages were, this is your strokes gained, tee to green, out of the rough, proximity from the fairway, whatever it may be, he more asks a question, hey, on 14 on Friday what was your number, what were you trying to play. If it was a shot that really stood out that may be lower than average or really cost me a couple shots -- and it may have been a wind gust. It may have been in between clubs, I chose the wrong club but I put a good swing on it. By him asking me that question versus telling me this is what was off, it stays out of my head because it may have been a very good swing that I just caught a tough break on, and that's common. That happens to everyone.

I think that we have the right balance of that, and I think it -- I owe a lot of that to him by recognizing let's not overload it and let's really find out if there was an actual problem on these shots, and there always is. Every week there are certain shots that you could have been better at. Then we dissect and we go to the driving range and figure out why.

Q. You mentioned feeling like you made progress Sunday at the Nelson, score notwithstanding. Did you change anything, either mechanically, ball

position wise in your overnight approach between round 3 and round 4 and find something between the two?

JORDAN SPIETH: I wouldn't say I made any progress on Sunday. That was not a good day for me. I felt more comfortable striking the ball, but I wouldn't have turned that into saying that was progress because that was a day that I expected myself to come through, and if I did have control of the ball, I should have won that tournament, given I only had to shoot 2-under and it was not playing that hard.

But to your question, I just felt a little more connected in the swing. I felt less loose. By feeling more connected, I actually found out I was actually overdoing -- it's very tough to explain, but in feeling more connected, at least what I thought was more connected, it was actually overdoing what we had been trying to work on the past month or so. At that point it was 10 minutes before my tee time, so it wasn't like Cameron was going to be like, hey, don't do this because I was hitting it fine on the range and I could take whatever to the course and match it up that day and be fine. But then I went and saw him Monday -- actually I saw him yesterday and we started to figure it out, and I'm at a very -- much more natural feeling right now than I was this past Thursday through Sunday in my swing, much more kind of swinging with what my body wants me to do versus fighting it, which is what I felt like I've been doing. As hard as that is to explain and as confusing as I may have just made it, it seems a lot easier for me right now than it did this past week.

Q. This week is pretty cool at the tournament, they're displaying the 1904 Olympic trophy. Maybe just another reminder that the thing really is happening. Is it still surreal to you that you have a chance to be an Olympic athlete later this summer?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yes. Yeah, it's an opportunity that I never thought I was going to have. You know, I'm interested in checking out the trophy, and I'm interested in keeping a very close eye on what's going on around the Olympics, too, mainly off the course, and trying to figure out the safety concerns, figure out plans, but as of now, I'm extremely excited for it.

Q. After 54 holes last week, you were obviously still frustrated but you're solo second. I'm just wondering, do you ever feel like sometimes you're too hard on yourself, or is this the constant chase of perfection?

JORDAN SPIETH: I don't think I seemed too hard on myself when I was talking to you guys, either. I was just saying I'm very frustrated with the way I feel over the ball. I think that's fair. I don't think that's -- I mean, I wasn't sitting there really bothered by it. I said, this is a positive because if I find it, it's going to feel really

good. I was a bit surprised at my position, given the way I felt.

No, I think I'm finding plenty of balance. I don't think Sunday was any reflection of me being overly frustrated or concerned with ball-striking. I think it was just an off day, and I think that the constant questions of me being too hard on myself is not necessarily making it easier for myself.

Q. I'll retract my question.

JORDAN SPIETH: It's okay. I think -- it's like I still like playing golf. If it doesn't seem like I do, then someone let me know, but I didn't think I was that hard on myself. I was just saying, hey, look, I'm frustrated over the ball right now because I had a two-way miss, but it's nice that I'm still in second and I can find something for tomorrow, which I feel a lot better about the way I played the golf course this week than TPC last week. Yeah, I'm looking to bring -- this week, too, given the forecast, is going to take a lot of imagination. There's going to be 20-plus mile-an-hour winds. I think that's really going to help me. I think less focus on the swing and more focus on -- results focused and kind of imagination, paint a picture, work different kind of trajectories and just be an artist out there I think is going to be really good for me. That plays into a more natural state for my ball-striking.

So I'm pretty excited about the tougher conditions that are predicted for this week.

Q. Of all the Bill Murray movies, what is your favorite and what is your favorite scene in that movie?

JORDAN SPIETH: Out of all of them? I don't know. I mean, it's easy to go to "Caddyshack", when he's smacking the plants and pretending he's at Augusta. You know, that's good. But I don't know what my favorite Bill Murray movie is. He's got a lot of good ones.

Q. You talked many times about how difficult it was to give that Masters jacket back to Augusta National. Your reign as U.S. Open champ is kind of coming to a potential end. What have you done with that trophy, and how much are you motivated to try to keep that?

JORDAN SPIETH: I already had to give it back, so I already went through that process, so that's good. It's over with. I went through it maybe Saturday of last week. I think Friday or -- what was it, Thursday or Friday? Yeah, I had to give it back. I had a last few moments with it and said, don't worry, you'll be back here. Yeah, took a last drink out of it, and then we cleaned it up and sent it back.

Q. How do you become content with your game without becoming complacent about it?

JORDAN SPIETH: How do I become content without becoming complacent? Well, I would say it all comes down to just kind of -- complacency in like my ball-striking I think is fine. I think if you get to a point where you're very content with it, I think it's going to be pretty similar, but as far as scoring and kind of the mental side of things, you can always improve.

You know, I was very content with my statistics from last year over the break and looking back and saying, okay, this is where we were at, but at the same time, how do we improve. I guess for me it's just kind of natural to, as a type A and I would say perfectionist in a sport that can't be perfected, I'm not worried about complacency. I think even looking back at last year, we said what did we do well, but where are the little things that we can get better at.

So to answer your question, I'm not sure. I think it just kind of comes natural to me. I feel very fortunate for that because I don't think that's with everyone, but it sure is a with a lot of people in a lot of different professions.

So I mean, I think it's really, really important to get to a level of being content, but it's very difficult to get to a level of being content for me.

Q. You spoke last week about being motivated by Jason's move to No. 1, and since then Rory won a big event in Ireland. Do you feel like your game or your results, the perception of them, are impacted by those two guys specifically and the wins that they're racking up?

JORDAN SPIETH: By the questions that I get asked in here, I think so, yeah. But at the same time, you know, it's no lower than my expectations for myself. I think it's normal, and it's tough when it is being asked, and my results aren't showing, it's tough, but it also is a motivator to get back on top and thoroughly enjoy and to work really hard when we are back on top because I don't like giving back that position. I had to give it back a week, two weeks after I gained it in the first place after the PGA Championship, and we retained it then at the TOUR Championship. So I've been on both sides of it.

Right now I'm on the side where I've given it back, and both of them are coming off wins, and I had a chance to win and didn't. At this present moment, I feel exactly what the questions that are being asked, I feel the same way, and I feel like I need to work my butt off to get back, and I feel like I can.

JOHN BUSH: Jordan Spieth, thank you, sir.