

Travelers Championship

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Jordan Spieth

Press Conference



TRAVELERS
CHAMPIONSHIP



THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome the 2017 Travelers Championship winner Jordan Spieth to the interview room. Jordan, I hope you have some words, because I have, wow, none.

JORDAN SPIETH: Thank you. Yeah, it was a battle. It was a great start today. I didn't miss a shot the first couple of holes, rolled in a nice couple putts. Good up-and-down on 3, bogey is okay on 4, then got a little off for a few holes. Picked it back up. I just couldn't get a putt to go.

You know, No. 8 through 13, that range when I'm playing well, I normally play those holes 3- or 4-under, and I was at even par. I made a four-footer to stay at even par. So that was pretty frustrating through there. I was trying to hold steady knowing that when I'm not birdieing those there's at least one guy that is. I didn't look at the boards. Didn't know who was.

Caught a couple really good breaks today. My ball staying up on 13, and then the one staying up on 15, that definitely if the rough weren't grown out the way it was this year, it would have been in the water. So we definitely got the right breaks today, even though I was already in the lead, I also got the breaks. I feel very fortunate for that.

Came down to 18. I had a good number with the sand wedge in regulation, and I tried to kind of carve it a little bit and it got shot down. Not much wind hits it there when it's in that Dome, and I just didn't play the smart shot which is making sure it's on the green. Then in regulation I got fortunate to be in the fairway. Hit it right into that bunker which I told Michael, look, if it goes where we were earlier, that's fine. If it carries, then great.

Then from there put the same kind of swing as the other bunker shot, I was just at a little different angle and it took a little right bounce and cut spin and it rolled up the hole. I jumped up and saw it coming right down on the pin. And I went nuts. That was fun. I don't know how many or if I'll ever have a moment equivalent to that again. Something like that to win a tournament. But, yeah, that was very memorable, and I certainly soaked it in.

You know, Boge's has got ice in his veins. I knew he'd be tough. I didn't think 12-under would win today.

Between Boge, and Boo and Pan, those guys would be able to tear up the golf course, but it was just hard enough today to hold it to 12-under.

THE MODERATOR: Boge not to be confused with Boo is Daniel Berger.

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, sorry.

THE MODERATOR: Well, Jordan, you're a humble guy, but historic is also a word that seems to be following you around. Not only is this your 10th win before the age of 24, which only Tiger Woods has done. You're also only just the third player to go wire to wire here. First ever to do it here at this course. So talk a little bit about the week here at Travelers Championship.

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, we got off to a beautiful start coming off that last round at the U.S. Open. Took it easy for a couple days. My ball striking has been rock solid for a while now. It's just about when are those putts going to start going in, and they did for the first few rounds, and didn't quite today and that happens, but it's tough. It is tough when you don't have somebody ahead of you to chase. You've got to keep resetting goals.

I think this was my third wire to wire win worldwide, second one at The Masters, and here, and then Tiger's event. At each of those events on the green the other two events I was feeling fantastic around the greens and on the greens. This week, you know, it was like I said, it was getting there. It was moving in the right direction.

I just got off a little today, and Michael did a great job keeping me in. Could sleep good on the lead and trying to set new goals and kind of chase a ghost which is normally the goal when you're in the lead is chasing score, that can be more challenging than chasing somebody else down.

But we've got a good record of 54 hole leads. It's the position we want to be in. We're okay with chasing that ghost. Today was a little harder than some of the other times, but all in all, a win's a win.

Q. Finally this win moves you to No. 4 in the FedExCup standings. You've got to have your eyes

set on the second cup?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, sure. We were in a good position. I think we were six before this week, and with DJ, Justin, and Hideki being multiple winners and Justin winning three times, Hideki with a WGC and DJ with a couple of them, it's going to be hard to overtake those guys unless it's a major WGC.

Again, we've been through the playoff position now and been in the top 10, I think, the last four years. So obviously the goal is to get to No. 1 by the time you set foot on East Lake. That's your best opportunity to win the FedExCup.

So in a great position this time of the year. It's been a solid year, and we've got what I look at second half, given a couple majors and the FedExCup left to really grind for them and take a little break here, little vacation time, and come back. Work my butt off to try to grab a major championship.

Q. Obviously your first start in this event, but how much do you know about the history here and specifically 10, 11 years ago when this was almost off the schedule to where it's come to today?

JORDAN SPIETH: I don't know much. I don't, to be honest. I see the names on this trophy, and that's about as much history as I know about this tournament. I think it might be the second longest standing, something like that. But it's a special tournament. It's one that had a fantastic field this year. The strength of field was way up there, and that's always fun. But it's always fun to play a really fun golf course, and this really is a fun golf course. We had a good time playing it. When it grinds you like that, I mean, that's why we play the game is for the nerves, the tension. If we didn't feel it, we wouldn't be in contention.

So there are positives to it. I try to embrace that today even when it wasn't quite going well. But this is a special tournament. It's extremely well done. We are pampered here, and guys thoroughly enjoy coming to this tournament. I never heard a bad thing said about it, and it was one of the very reasons why we're here.

Q. Jordan, I don't know if you know, but Justin Thomas tweeted that he wouldn't be surprised if you holed it from the bunker there in the playoff.

JORDAN SPIETH: Did he?

Q. So he called it; what do you think about that?

JORDAN SPIETH: I guess if you call something enough times every once in a while one of them goes in. Well, that's nice. At least I think this one had good speed going in. I've always taken some crap from my peers about the John Deere one potentially going off

the green or into the water or whatever. I think this one went in with good speed. I'll have to see it later. So I've got that going for me.

But that's funny that he called that. I'm sure if I missed it, he would have called Berger's putt and kept on going until someone actually made one of them. But it's cool that it worked out that way.

Q. Did you call it? Did you think to yourself that you were going to get it in?

JORDAN SPIETH: No, I knew it was actually one of the easier bunker shots you could have out here. If you chunk it, it kind of hits on the downslope and shoots fair, and if catch it solid it will hit into the upslope and check a little bit. I saw that in regulation and knew that was a good spot.

But you never think those are necessarily going in. You try to make the right contact to get it somewhere within a five foot circle, which is I think my expectation on that. And wait and see what Daniel does and try to force another hole, that's what was going through my head. Then when it went in, I mean, that was a tremendous bonus.

Q. Growler was sort of laughing about the reaction that you guys had crashing into each other. How would you give the play-by-play on that?

JORDAN SPIETH: I think I left-handed through -- I am left-handed, but I think I tossed my wedge not even like tomahawk, like from the shaft tossed it. I don't know if it was in the bunker or the rough or where it went. And Michael, I was actually a little surprised by jubilation from Michael. I looked over, I think he had kind of turned around and like screamed. Normally he'd just kind of have his hands up or something, right? He's more reserved. He was screaming and it made me want to scream louder and then he jumped. And fortunately we didn't like high five jump. We both went kind of for the little side bump. But it was cool.

I mean, the ground was shaking it was so loud. What an amphitheater. What a tremendous last four holes, finishing holes, where you can get the crowd super involved with an amphitheater setting. I mean, if I were a fan, I would pick this tournament. This one and Phoenix is kind of two that stick out to come to on the PGA TOUR season, just given the excitement of the closing holes.

Q. When is the last time you heard a roar like that?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yesterday on 15 was pretty loud, but that one was pretty ridiculous. That was as loud as I think I've ever created. It's up there. 16 at Augusta the year we won was really a loud one too.

Q. Do you have an explanation for why the golf course played so tough today? It wasn't the normal winds that we would think about weren't really here and the course was a bit soft.

JORDAN SPIETH: No, I don't. Like I said, I'm surprised 12-under won. Especially after the first couple of holes. I was rolling and thought we'd get to 16, which was the goal. But other than you really had to be in the fairways with where the pins were minus a couple of them today, and I think winds were up-and-down, and up-and-down, it was the normal winds. It was the winds that we experienced the first two days, and yesterday was the opposite wind.

But I am very surprised. There were some scores at 6- or 7-under today that went off a little earlier. But I don't think it was necessarily much easier, other than Poa Annu being better to putt on early in the morning.

Q. We've already seen you do some amazing things at various hole outs in your career. Where does this one rank?

JORDAN SPIETH: This is probably the -- I mean, the hole out at the John Deere and the meaning that that had is probably first, and this is close behind. To win a golf tournament, a shot that actually wins a golf tournament that's not a putt, it's something that not many people get to experience. There's got to be a handful. But to kind of have one to get into a playoff that when I was a rookie they gave me full status and everything that that propelled, that one will certainly -- I remember it. I can see it right now from my angle, the shot going into the John Deere. I've got a new one that's pretty similar here.

But, boy, I mean, I really wish that I didn't make it exciting. The goal was boring golf. Play the way we played the first couple holes. Make a bunch of pars, maybe slip in another birdie or two, and cruise in, hit the green and two putt. Walk off. Day's work is done.

I still wish I did it that way, but the way that it happened, sometimes you need a little fireworks. Next time I'll still be going for the boring golf route. That will be the goal.

Q. As someone who moderated your press conference at Pebble this year, I enjoyed this one a little more?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, thank you. I understand from maybe a fan perspective, but from mine, Pebble was ideal. It's cool. Couple cool wins this year at historic tournaments. Got a fun upcoming schedule.

Q. You seemed surprised by the putt going in on 15 today also.

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, yeah, I definitely was. I hit it, and I thought I -- I did hit a good putt, well, I wanted to.

But at the halfway point I thought it was going to miss to the right. I didn't think it was breaking back at the end. I could have stayed in it, but I've been kind of walking out of putts the whole day. I started walking, and it caught the lip. It was one of those happy surprises.

Q. At the John Deere, did that win outright? You didn't have to playoff?

JORDAN SPIETH: I was in a five-hole playoff with two other guys.

Q. Who did you beat in that one?

JORDAN SPIETH: David Hearn and Zach Johnson.

Q. Other than those, have you ever come close to anything like that before John Deere?

JORDAN SPIETH: Before the John Deere?

Q. Yeah.

JORDAN SPIETH: No. That was -- I hadn't been in a playoff on TOUR before that either. I think I've been in six now. I think we're 4-2, which is awesome. Again, not stress-free, but it's cool to have that record. The one that Patrick beat me on was just bogus though. He hit it out of bounds and the ball came back in. I'm still upset about that one, but it created excitement in each playoff. A winning putt at Tampa, and the bunker shot and then kind of punch through the trees to win the John Deere, and then obviously this one.

I can't remember my fourth right now for some reason. Oh, the other John Deere. Both John Deere wins. But nothing that was necessarily similar before that, and obviously there and here are the most memorable ones.

Q. It obviously takes a lot of skill, but did you feel you got a couple good breaks too when you were off a little bit, the bank on 13, the bank on 17?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, no doubt. 13, if I was in play I was going to be happy. That's weird for a professional golfer to say on an easy par-5. But, boy, that hole was in my head. I thought about it from No. 9 on. I was like, man, what am I going to hit off 13? Can I get it in play? Just some of those mental blocks sometimes. I was like I need the biggest head today. Yesterday I mis-hit it. I didn't mis-hit it that bad, and it was fine because it was a 3-wood and it went in the water. I thought I could hit a nice fade driver like Boo did and get it on in two. In mid-air I thought it was in the water, and it held up.

Same thing on 15. I was extremely surprised on both of those. This was probably my luckiest win for sure, absolutely, with the breaks I got today.

Q. Given the rowdiness and presence and the size of the crowd, do you embrace that ask kind of let it push you, or do you try to isolate yourself as best as you can as you go hole by hole and try to play through a tunnel so to speak?

JORDAN SPIETH: Try to go in the tunnel, and then when things are going well or if a putt goes, you can feed off kind of the momentum of the roar. You kind of feel like everyone's behind you. I feel fortunate we have a lot of fans and guys and girls out there of all ages that want us to do well and want us to win, and cheer or try to pick you up when you're not doing so hot. You hear that. As much as you want to be in a tunnel, it does help to hear that positivity from people. That you're not only just hearing it from Michael, but you're hearing it from everyone else who wants you to. So a little bit of both.

Q. Everyone's going to remember the highlight to win the whole thing. But you had been pretty consistent in chipping and kind of saving yourself. I'm wondering from all the tournaments you've won from an historical perspective, Jordan, have you ever been this good with your short game chipping to kind of save yourself to help win a tournament prior to this one?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I think, yes. I have. I have been. Colonial is a good example. I was kind of scrambling there. I hit a really good flop shot on the 14th hole. I chipped in on the 17th, essentially, to win to get a two or three shot lead to go in the last hole.

So, yeah. I think that I felt my short game has been as solid as this before, definitely, as far as around the green, my chipping. Yeah, but it feels very good right now. It's something that this year has been maybe a little bit down. I've put in a little bit more time in the last two months on my chipping to kind of feel like I've got all the shots back and I'm kind of shot making versus searching for technique.

Q. There were a couple times, I think, on 14 it looked like you yelled at your club. On 15, you seemed frustrated with your drive. Are you usually that demonstrative? And how do you keep your emotions in check and don't lose your focus how well do you think you did that?

JORDAN SPIETH: Well, yeah, I was competing. I'm intense out there. It's just kind of who I am. I was getting frustrated because I felt so uneasy on the greens and then I was kind of getting it into spots that tee to green were not going to be stress free. They were going to be more difficult. So I was frustrated by that because I couldn't control that. I was just trying to do a little bit too much.

15, I thought I actually hit a really good hybrid. I

thought it was the right play. It is going to roll just short of the green, and that's a simple pitch. I wasn't trying to hit it on the green today. It kind of hooked and there was no wind. There wasn't any wind when we played the next hole either. Fortunately, I hit the hybrid and it stayed up.

But I didn't know if it was up and if it was, I didn't know how playable it would be. So I thought at that point that I had not thrown the tournament, but at least given up the entire lead and was now coming from behind. So that was frustrating given the control I had earlier in the day.

Q. If you were watching yourself out there today, what would you have been sort of most impressed by in your performance?

JORDAN SPIETH: I thought through -- I think composure through the middle of the round. I thought from 5 through really getting to the tee shot on 13, I thought we were -- given the fact that I had so many -- through 13, I should say, so many easy opportunities and them not go in. And I've been through that many times where you're putting yourself in position, and the ball just won't go in the hole.

I've been more animated the last time and talking more, and I felt the composure was more there. Maybe that was because I felt so uneasy on the green, so my expectation wasn't as high. But I hit a couple really good putts in there that were either just misread or just under or overread. I thought the composure at that point was really good. I thought as we went from 15 to 16, and I could see Daniel, and I knew where I stood and I watched him kind of make that putt on 17, standing on 17 tee box, I would have been very pleased with the body language, which is very important.

Q. Just to follow up, what was the conversation with Michael going into the first bunker shot on 18 and then the one in the playoff?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I think we were both surprised at my wedge shot into 18 in regulation. I didn't mis-hit it. I didn't hit a poor shot at all. I had 109 to cover the bunker, and 117 to the hole. A little downwind with some adrenaline. My sand wedge is 110 max, but obviously with adrenaline and a little downwind, it plenty of club to get there, sand wedge. It's going to stop quickly.

I couldn't have been in a better position with a better club. I just tried to hold it a little to get it to go right at it instead of playing it to where Boo had hit it. That was just partly I didn't feel that great on the greens. I wanted to hit it tight versus give myself in mid-range. And it just kind of dropped out of the air. It kind of held

off the right to left slope. I hit a little cut and it just dropped into the bunker.

So going up to the green, Michael wasn't really saying much. He was looking at up-and-down pars and whatnot. But I remember saying I took a look at it, knew I was okay, and I kind of walked back and said something like, All right -- something like that -- I'm like, All right, let's get this up-and-down and we'll go from there. He was like, Absolutely. I had about three feet and I missed two of those already on the 9. The hole was trampled down on Poa Annua, and I thought that was the best putt of the day.

Q. I don't know if you consider it a break from where you were in the playoff, but how far left was the ball going before it hit the tree?

JORDAN SPIETH: Oh, I think it was right at Daniel's. I lined up right where I hit it, and I did every single round. I play a fade off the left side of that bunker, and the wind is down left to right, as long as I get it over the tree, which I did the other four days.

If it stays straight I actually hit one of those balls where I kind of tugged it in the practice round and I was left of the bunker, and I thought it was a better position than the fairway. There was no rough there. It's straight up the green. So I didn't have any trouble left. It's one of the easier tee shots as I'm standing on the tee.

I just mis-hit it off the neck, and it was a little low on the face, and it didn't have enough climb in the beginning. But it wasn't very far left. It wasn't a hook by any means. It was going to cut back probably into the bunker.

Q. How far did you have?

JORDAN SPIETH: I had 208 front, 229 to the hole on my second shot, and 219 to cover the bunker in line with it. I hit a 5-iron. My 5-iron's a 205-yard club typically, and then again adrenaline adds a little bit if you strike it well and a little bit downwind. The miss being that bunker is actually a pretty good club to have. I just slightly hit it maybe a groove low that prevented it from carrying to the top of that bunker and bouncing on.

Q. (Inaudible)?

JORDAN SPIETH: Well, Boge's a good friend of mine out here. He's a guy, like I mentioned earlier, I've grown up playing with him. We have, I think, something like ten to a dozen guys out of our class that are on the PGA TOUR at 23, 24 years old. We all played against each other in these junior golf events. We've known each other since we were 14, all of us.

Those fields back then were so much fun to compete in because there was so much talent. It's nothing

different. So it's like playing a peer. It's a guy I've played against for ten years, which you don't see every day. I've been in a lot of playoffs, and most of the time it's guys who I've only been playing against for a year or two.

But, yeah, to no surprise. He played well. What a phenomenal birdie he made on 17 when he knew he needed it, and a good up-and-down on 18, the same way we did in regulation.

But it was a class act on the green. I thought the crowd did a great job after the roar, of calming down and allowing him to go through his process. From where he was, he had an unbelievable putt because he had to get it there too, and he still put beautiful speed on it at about the halfway point. I'm like is he really going to make this? Which is just terrible for me to think because I was so much more out of position than he was. But at that point I'm like, okay, nothing crazy, Daniel. I need this to be over now.

But, yeah, he gave me a high five, said nice putt. Grant, his caddie went over to him and kind of got in his face and was reading it, calming him down. Saying, hey, put a good effort on this. It was certainly lucky. He'll give me crap about the break off the tee and the bunker shot going forward. I fully expect it and fully deserve it.

I guess I won it in style, but didn't win it the proper way for competing against a buddy.

Q. You've won tournaments, you've won U.S. Open at 5-under. You've won tournaments at 10-under, 20-under, you've won another at 30-under. What's it say to your game that you can win on so many different courses and so many different levels this scoring conditions?

JORDAN SPIETH: It's cool to look at the different places around the world we've won and the differences in the golf courses and similarities as well. I think we've won on very different golf courses. It says that, other than that we add a little bit of belief that no matter where we go, we don't just say this course isn't for us. I don't believe we've said that anywhere, except for Doral.

Doral wasn't a course for us. But I just don't carry the ball far enough with the driver. But now we're in Mexico City. I think it's very cool. It gives us confidence when we arrive at a place, especially a new place, to say no matter what we can get accumulated quickly.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, Jordan. Thank you for the time.

