

# Travelers Championship

Tuesday, May 8, 2018

**Jordan Spieth**

**Tyler Backus**

**Jimmy Canton**

**Governor Dannel**

**Malloy**

**Nathan Grube**

**Chris Berman**

**Andy Bessette**

Press Conference

NATHAN GRUBE: At The Travelers Championship, we try to set the stage for best players in the world to do what they do. You help us set that stage, and when something like that happens, it gets amplified, so thank you for helping us to set the stage for what we're doing here.

I have the privilege this morning, Andy Bessette is going to come up and say a few words, but I want to say something about Andy because we have been interviews since 2017; how did that happen, what did you guys do, the field seems to keep getting better, what strategies have you put into place.

Andy and I have been working together for the last 12 years, and I would say the secret sauce of this whole ingredient is the fact that we have a title sponsor who is as engaged as any title I've ever met in my life.

Actually, can you pull up that 2018 commitment slide? It's Travelers that knows the players -- Patrick Reed, and his wife, Justine, are a delightful couple. Justin, he likes peanut butter sandwiches before he plays, absolutely loves it, on Wonder Bread -- and I'd like to thank Wonder for being a sponsor the The Travelers Championship. He knows Bubba loves to eat Chili's, and he will say, if you're not late, you're early, so don't ever be late for a meeting with Bubba Watson or he will call you out on that.

Bryson, he knows he loves to play Golden Tee in the caddie tent and figure out how the ball rotates so he



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can get the precise for the right shot. He knows Charley gives to multiple charities in San Diego and is a big supporter of JDRF.

The point that I'm saying is the reason we get the fields that we get, is because of the relationships that we've been able to build over the years, and the man driving that to help make that happen is executive vice president and chief administrative officer of Travelers, please welcome Andy Bessette.

ANDY BESSETTE: Thank you, Nathan. Okay. Usually I don't follow the script really well but Jennifer said I had to follow it but I'm not going to follow it.

So welcome and thanks for being here on behalf of Alan Schnitzer, our chairman and CEO and everyone else as Travelers. We're really happy to have you here. We're excited about Media Day.

I have to tell you, though, every one of those guys, has a fun story behind it and a fun story. Whether it be Rory and I sitting at the locker room at THE PLAYERS and I said, "I've got to leave now."

And he gets up, says, "I have to leave, too." And turns to me and said, "When is your event again?" I told him and he said, "In '16, I can't play you but in '17, I'll be there."

Stories go on and on. It's a relationship and friendship with each of those guys. Kevin Streelman and I fish together. It's that type of thing. These guys are great guys and they travel a lot, they compete, they compete very aggressively but they are also friendly.

I think that's the exciting thing about golf these days is that when you see the Jordans, the Dustins, the Rorys, the Rickies, all cheering each other on. That's what sports and golf should be about. I think we should celebrate that for many years to come with the The Travelers Championship, too.

You've heard Nathan and I talk about this; that we try to make this a bigger and better event every year. It's going to be tough to match Jordan Spieth's finish last year, and everybody says, what are you going to do to make that better, to do it again, to make it unforgettable.

It's the quality of the field. We work really hard at having a quality field and we are going to continue to do that for all of our fans and for the State of Connecticut and our communities and charities.

It's interesting the history of all this. 12 years ago, this tournament was dead. It was off the TOUR schedule, off. It had not date. They were thinking of making it an LPGA Tour event, they were thinking of making it a Champions Tour event, and it came back to life in 2006 and that was a really special time for all of us.

It wasn't going to become what happened to the Whalers. We stepped up to be the title sponsor, and we now think the The Travelers Championship is one of the best on the PGA TOUR. We're not happy yet but it's one of the best.

Last year we were awarded the Tournament of the Year by the PGA, which is great. The one that really got us excited was the Players' Choice Award. That's voted on by the players. It not voted on by anyone else on the PGA TOUR, and to have the players tell us we are doing something right and good is really important.

It's always been a goal to make this the best event in the world with the best players in the world, and this year at TPC River Highlands, here we go again we already have Rory, Patrick Reed, Justin Thomas, Bubba Watson, Jim Furyk -- Mr. 58, I don't think he likes that but still a good way to refer to him, and we're proud of that.

We're proud to be the title sponsor. This event has been around since 1952 as the Insurance City Open and we are proud as Jay Fishman has always said, and now his sister says and I say: We are so proud to be the hometown company sponsoring a hometown tournament that gives 100 percent of its proceeds to hometown charities.

That's what this is all about. You may know that Travelers is very engaged in the community. We give over \$22 million a year in philanthropic giving, and we have employees who are just engaged. We have about 150,000 hours a year of volunteerism from our over 30,000 employees around the world; and we have 13,000 independent agents who are part of this, as well, many of whom play golf and love golf, too, so that's really important.

Since we became title sponsor in 2007, we have really set a new standard for Connecticut's PGA TOUR event, and the charities that benefit are so important, and what we do for the community is so good and it support so many businesses around, as well.

But what's really interesting is that it's broadcast to over 200 countries around the world and you think of everybody that saw what happened last year here, and just think about how many times we've seen it replayed. It's in every commercial I've seen, and it's really terrific for the state of Connecticut, for all of us who feel so fondly of what's going on here.

Raising money for charity is critical. Last year we generated more than \$1.7 million for charities, for local charities, which is so, so important, and we benefitted over 165 local charities. Since we've been title sponsor, we've been close to \$15 million in charitable donations to over 750 nonprofits in the area.

So the impact of all of this is really incredible but none more incredible than The Hole In The Wall Gang Camp, which is going to return this year as our primary beneficiary, and I think as you know, which was founded in 1908 by Paul Newman in Ashford, Connecticut.

They do a great job. I have always described it as a hospital with a camp around it because it's really a hospital and they do terrific work. Jimmy Canton is here today, who is their CEO, and what you guys do out there is really second to none. It's inspiring and it's so important.

Nathan and I talk about status quo and we hate the status quo. Status quo is unacceptable to us and we are always trying to make things bigger and better in next year, a lot of you have heard about the 32,000 square foot clubhouse that's going to be build here. It's going to change the game. I describe it as the third leg of the stool. We have always had efforts to make the practice facility world-class, and so many of the players come here and say this is one of the top two or three practice facilities in the world.

Three years ago, the PGA TOUR spent \$3 million plus improving the course. Last year Rory McIlroy made it very clear in quotes after he left here that this is one of his favorite courses in the world, and he's so excited to be coming back here.

We just saw him at Wells Fargo last week and he couldn't say enough about being here and the fact that he was going to win this year. So that's a pretty good prediction going forward.

I think we couldn't do this as a title sponsor without all of you, without all of the many sponsors we have, all the commitment we have, without all the fans we have and most of all without the governor, Governor Dannel Malloy.

What the Governor has done, and the Governor is a

good friend and we have fun together, but the Governor is very well known to all of us at Travelers. What he's done to advocate and charge ahead to make this a state with a vibrant insurance industry is very, very important.

But he's also been an important part of the The Travelers Championship. We had a meeting about a month into his first office as Governor, began saying to Nathan and me, "Don't ask me to swing a golf club, but otherwise, I'll do anything you ask me to do for this tournament."

He has lived up to those words many times over. In eight years, the Governor has attended almost every Media Day, all but one opening ceremony and countless meetings and events. Under his leadership, Connecticut has been a great partner and when I say great partner, I mean great partner, and using the tournament to promote economic development in the state. He's been a great friend, a great partner and a champion of this tournament, and Governor, we could not have done this without you and having you behind us and as a teammate of what we're trying to build here.

So join me in welcoming Governor Dannel Malloy.

GOVERNOR DANIEL MALLOY: Just a couple of quick things. Other people know this but you don't. You refer to independent agents. My dad purchased an independent agency in 1946 and it paid for the education of Bill and Agnes' eight children, and then my brother, Bill, took it over and paid for the education of his 11 kids.

I have a special place in my heart for the Travelers, always have. It's a great company. It's done so much here in the State of Connecticut and continues to do that.

You know, this tournament has raised a lot of money but at one point, \$1.72 million having been raised last year for charitable organizations, it really is outstanding.

In fact, since the Travelers took on the responsibility of being the lead on this, in 12 years, well over \$14 million going to local charities.

If you want to know why this is one of the tournaments that's the most fun for everybody, including and most particularly the players, is because those volunteers from those agencies bend over backward to make those people happy day-in and day-out at this facility and that's not an easy thing to do when it's 101 degrees, which it has been, or when the weather is otherwise not too pleasant with rain.

But somehow and some way, that year after year, because of the Travelers and other sponsors, this thing comes together and is as great as it is.

And the film obviously pointed to the most recent great moment, but there are more great moments that will take place this coming tournament, as well.

So I wanted to be here to say thank you on behalf of the State, which benefits so greatly by the presence of this tournament, including over \$68 million of financial activity just generated by the presence of the tournament itself over those days.

I want to say thank you to everyone who participates. I want to say thank you to those of you who donate money so that all of the profits can go to those great charitable organizations represented here and others.

Andy, keep up the good work. Now, one other thing, Andy. I have heard you talk about how you play golf with people and how you have lunch with people and how you have dinner with people and you have frequently invited me to play golf but you have never invited me to go fishing with you.

So when I grow up, I want to be Andy Bessette and have a job that allows me TO play golf and go fishing. Thank you very much.

NATHAN GRUBE: Thank you. For the record, I haven't been inviting fishing, either.

Next we are going to have somebody from Camp come up and speak, a very special guest. We try very hard to remind everyone involved with the tournament about why the PGA TOUR is different and unique. It's one of the most unique models in professional sports. If we do what we do well, we are going to raise MORE money for charity and if we raise more money for charity, more families are impacted and more communities are impacted. We never want to lose sight of what we are doing.

Jimmy, the CEO of The Hole In The Wall Gang Camp, and if there's one word I can use to describe Jimmy, it's belief. He believes in the power and magic of Camp and everybody that goes out there buys into that because to start at the top level with the CEO of that belief.

Jimmy Canton, come on up.

JIMMY CANTON: Good morning. Allow me to first thank Andy and Nathan for your steadfast faith in Camp over all these years, in your belief in our mission, and the kids we serve and the families truly has been a

game-changer for our growth and allowed us to continue to reach more families, so our heartfelt thanks to the The Travelers Championship and Travelers.

I wanted to sport this beautiful tie today because it was made by a Camper and just given to me. She's a brain cancer survivor, and she said what got her through treatment is being surrounded by color. She just sent me this and a bow tie, and each one is totally, uniquely made but she's an artist and she learned about being an artist at Camp. Just wanted to share that with you.

And that just allows me to share with you, thank you for saying that, Nathan, about belief, because I am so inspired by the children that we are privileged to serve, and I am so touched by their families and the stories of courage and perseverance that they demonstrate over and over again.

It is truly a blessing to be associated with Camp. It grounds you in perspective and reminds you about what is most important in life, and that life is fragile and we have to take every moment right now to be as loving and kind as we possibly can be, so Camp brings out the best in all of us.

We are going out and just preparing for our 31st summer and about 40 percent of our staff is made up of former Campers, which is another really powerful testament to the impact that Camp has on those we're so lucky to touch.

We're finishing up a spring of family programs, and something that's up ahead for us is continued work serving children with rare disease, and that's something that Andy said about status quo, and something that we believe strongly at Camp is to those who are given much, much is expected. And Paul was a fervent believer in that in trying to pay it forward and recognize how lucky we are in our lives, and if we are in those lucky positions, how can we make someone else's life easier that doesn't have it as good as we do.

We are doing more work in the rare disease world, and that's really exciting because these families are incredibly isolated and are trying their hardest to make their way in communities that just don't understand because they are not surrounded by other people like themselves.

So as Camp continues to grow, when we thought about Camp 30 years ago, we wanted to find those who are really isolated and have a diminished quality of life and those are the populations we served, and thinking who those populations are. And we have got an inspiring young man who is going to talk to us right now, Tyler Backus, who also lives with a rare disease in Camp and has been really lucky to reach out to his family and

get to know him.

Without further ado, Tyler, is going to come up, and ask you to share your story.

**TYLER BACKUS:** Hi, my name is Tyler Backus and I'm 16 years old. I was born with something called glycogen storage disease, this is when my blood sugar needs to be monitored 24 hours a day and I get fed every three hour around the clock through a port in my belly called a G2 to keep my blood sugars up.

It's not bad during the day, but during the night it's a real hassle. My parent and I set multiple arms for 11:00, 2:00 and 5:00 a.m every night so we don't miss a feed. If we did, my sugars would drop, and I would have a seizure or even worse. I also get shots every day to boost my immune system and keep me from getting sick.

I've gotten so used to my routine, it almost seems normal to me until the summer comes. That's when everyone I know talks about their plans to go to Camp, grandparents' houses or even on vacations with friends and families, none of which I can do.

I've even never been to a friend's house for a sleep over before. Then when I was 13, I heard about The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp and everything changed for me. The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp meant I could do something normal in my world that usually revolves around chronic illness and adversity. I never thought I could go overnight somewhere and feel comfortable in my own skin.

Not one other kid stared, whispered or even cared what was going on with me medically and it felt great. I'm also small for my age and for the first time, I didn't get a questioning look when I told people how old I was. The people at the Camp were very interested in who I was and didn't care about anything on the outside. I ziplined, fished, shot bow and arrow, swam and did everything I imagined all my healthy friends did at Camp. I felt unstoppable, like I could take on the world.

My best memories from Camp was hanging out with another boy in the Moose Lodge. The Moose Lodge is a home base for doctors and nurses where kids sleep if they need medical care throughout the night. My new friend and I hung out talking every night about our lives, and I realized, we actually had something unique common. He had trouble eating and was fed through a port in his stomach, too.

We were strangely excited to have this in common. It made me feel like I wasn't this strange with a tube sticking out of my belly. At home I spent a lot of my

time and energy trying to hide from the world, and now by chance, here was another kid who didn't care at all what was open and not self-conscious about it.

As I said, we talked all night at night when no one else was around. He shared all his medical conditions with me. I tried to make him feel better and like he wasn't alone. I still stay in contact with him today and it brings a smile to my face whenever I think about him and how happy we both were to hang out all week.

Camp helped me see that even though you have diseases and things that are not perfect about you, you are still welcome in the world. Today I am excited to go to school, see movies with friends and going to the pool and just having fun in general.

Camp is still a big part of my life because I was able to be myself with my disease and feel comfortable with kids who have never felt the same stuff I do. It changed me. I will never forget Camp.

Thank you to everyone at the The Travelers Championship and special thanks to its title sponsor and for helping make Camp possible.

NATHAN GRUBE: Bravest person in the room. Chris, you can actually start to make your way up, because yeah, you can come on up here, because we have everything I think ready to be hooked up.

So we have been very fortunate over the years to have Chris, obviously, be a part of Media Day, the tournament. I was with him doing radio last week and then I saw him as a fund-raising dinner on Saturday and then he's here today. This is personal for him. He cares about the event. He cares about where it's going. He cares about its health and he has played a key, key role in the success of the tournament and I think everyone in here would realize that and we are actually very lucky to have him.

I think we are going to give Chris a mic and I think we have somebody that's about to pop on the screen.

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome our 2017 champion, Mr. Jordan Spieth.

CHRIS BERMAN: Jordan, good morning. It's Boomer. How you doing?

JORDAN SPIETH: Hey, Boomer. How you doing?

CHRIS BERMAN: Warm down there, Jacksonville?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, beautiful golf weather. Just like we're going to have in a month or so in Hartford.

CHRIS BERMAN: Before we get to golf, pretty major event. You and your long time sweetheart, Annie, made a little commitment at the beginning of the year, huh. So congratulations.

JORDAN SPIETH: Thank you. Appreciate that, Boomer.

CHRIS BERMAN: You got a date for that yet?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, yeah, it's going to be the end of November, late fall.

CHRIS BERMAN: Well, we look forward to that. We're thrilled for you.

Speaking of dates, you had never been up here before, and you made a lot of friends last year, many of whom were at the 18th hole late in the afternoon, but they have been asking me, as a resident of Connecticut: Will we have a chance to say hello, have a beer? When do you think Jordan might be able to come back to Connecticut?

So do you have a date for that?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, yeah, I think the week after the U.S. Open this year, maybe for the 2018 Travelers. I'll probably be in the area. I'll hang out for a week and hopefully have the same result.

CHRIS BERMAN: Well. The tournament will spring for the ferry from Shinnecock.

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah.

CHRIS BERMAN: By the way, in case you missed it, that would be a commitment from our defending champ.

JORDAN SPIETH: That's right.

CHRIS BERMAN: We're slow up here. We're kind of just getting into it. The coffee is kicking in.

Jordan, look, you've won three majors. You've played in Ryder Cup. You've hit shots, unbelievable.

But describe the sound of the crowd. I know it's almost a year ago, but can you just describe the reaction? You're a big sportsman but that took you out of being at a golf course, didn't it.

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, that was -- the only, I don't even know if I've ever even heard something like that, including a game-winning shot in an NBA arena. That's as loud as it kind of gets. I felt the ground shake there on the 18th hole.

I've watched the shot, I don't know how many times, a thousand times, and just on replay, especially the next week or so, and then it kind of pops up here or there and brings some amazing memories. I get chills every time I see it.

I remember looking down. I remember looking at the shot. I remember right after I struck it, you know, hopping up, just in time to see it go in and then I don't remember anything. I just totally blacked out.

The coolest part about it was the wedge throw that coincided with Michael's rake throw that was just perfectly timed, and then what I loved was the fans's view. I posted on Instagram, kind of encompassed the different videos that were taken by the fans and crowd and had a reaction was just insane.

I don't know if I'll ever have a moment like that in my golfing career. It was really, in a span of, you know, 15 seconds, it was as cool as anything I've experienced.

CHRIS BERMAN: Who out-jumped who? You or Michael Greller, your caddie?

JORDAN SPIETH: I think I jumped higher. I was pretty impressed he didn't fall back. I feel like I went into him with quite a bit of force, but he's a stable dude. He's a big dude. He was fine.

I think he ended up taking the rake, so I apologize for that. I think you guys might need to replace that rake on 18. I think it's at his house. But what a moment it was.

CHRIS BERMAN: Is that sand wedge still in your bag? Don't tell me you changed it. Or is it now like in case?

JORDAN SPIETH: No, it's not in my bag anymore. I have to change my 60-degree. I hit it so often, I have to change it quite a bit. But I know exactly where it is. It next to the trophy in my house.

CHRIS BERMAN: It's lore; for you, for us, for golf. You almost holed a similar shot on the 72nd hole. I know we're going back 10, 11 months, but did that help you in any way hit the winner?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I was a little further into the bunker. I actually hit a great drive and just hit a really poor wedge. I was further into the bunker but the shot that I hit, I saw the reaction on the green and it went about three feet past. When I got into the bunker in a playoff, I knew kind of the break of the green because of that bunker shot I had to hit prior.

Trying to judge the break of a green while hitting a

bunker shot is a little absurd, but you know, I felt pretty good about the lie I had and I felt pretty good about the shot. I felt there was some room for error, nip it, spin it, hit it fat and it would all go to about the same place. It was all about the line.

It rolled in. Fortunately fell down right after it hit the pin and it was a class act by Daniel Berger right after, and then I just stood on the side of the green. I'm like, okay, don't do what I just did to you, to me, please, Daniel. Just go ahead and cruise this one up there. We'll walk off, give you a tournament a different time, but don't ruin this for me (laughter).

CHRIS BERMAN: He came close, didn't he. He was close.

JORDAN SPIETH: He did. To know surprise. He's got ice in his veins. He almost made it about halfway. I'm like, you've got to be kidding me. It just glanced by and that moment became that moment.

CHRIS BERMAN: So you know the down part about it here for the groundskeeper. We all drop a ball in there and try to sink it and we're like burrowing the hole halfway to Asia. Thanks a lot from the groundkeepers here.

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, fair enough. It's not a good miss anymore. Especially if you were in there, Boomer.

CHRIS BERMAN: Yeah, well, if I were in there, I'd still be in there, that's my point.

JORDAN SPIETH: That's right.

CHRIS BERMAN: We also try to shoot 58 like Furyk, and that usually is about 12 green, our 58th shot.

You had never seen this course until Tuesday afternoon after The Open last year. Understanding that when you won your Open at Chambers Bay, Jordan, you know, you had not seen that, but then again nobody else had.

Royal Birkdale last year, the British. The veterans had, but most of the players had not seen it, either but a lot in the field had seen this many times. How did you get so comfortable, so quick? You had 63 right out of the gate.

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I was striking the ball incredibly well coming into it and it was just a matter of on and around the greens, just getting back to where I know I can be, and I took Monday off and half of Tuesday off just to kind of regroup, get my mind right and I just did very limited, basic work. Stick to the basics on the greens.

And I really, really kind of fell in love with that back nine. I thought it was such a fun back nine to play. You could shoot 29. It's a reachable, really reachable par 5, another drivable par 4, a lot of wedge holes.

It was just, you know, a nine holes where anything can happen, and after I played that back nine on Thursday afternoon, I thought, man, this course fits me really well right now. Let's just kind of dial in on and around the greens, and I just had a great first round with it, got off to a good start, and cruised from there.

Yeah, it's not uncommon in the first, you know, few years to be a little behind the 8-ball when you arrive at a golf course. Guys have played it for 15 years or so, but some of them just kind of, you have a knack for. My only regret is that I had not started playing the Travelers sooner.

CHRIS BERMAN: You got time, pal, don't worry.

JORDAN SPIETH: True.

CHRIS BERMAN: I never asked a golfer this question. So when you haven't seen a course, do you study more the green charts? Is it like a homework assignment? You can't play at ten at night, so when it's a strange course, how much -- I don't want to call it book study, Jordan, but how much is there to something like that?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, quite a bit. Fortunately we are able to gather four or five pin locations on each green from previous years. You can get it from other caddies. They have it marked down on the old books.

So at least in the practice rounds, you have an idea of where the pins are and you can build a game plan with a couple of the tricky pins, but a lot of it's just being out there, getting the shape of the holes, finding out which bunkers you can carry, where the fat parts of the fairways are.

You can do a lot on 18 holes with the kind of information we're able to get on our yardage books and green books. It's not quite as difficult as maybe it used to be back in the day.

CHRIS BERMAN: I know you try to gather as much as you can, and somebody told you about a break on 12 with the river down below, I don't know who that was, but hopefully that came into play at some point (laughter). Just trying to do my part for the locals.

JORDAN SPIETH: Yes, thank you, Boomer. I even walked off the green telling Michael, "You won't even believe who told me this."

CHRIS BERMAN: Well, a blind squirrel finds an acorn as long as you're putting, not me.

You talked about the course and of course defending champion, you're coming back and it's Media Day here but you're not going to say, well, I don't know. But the The Travelers Championship as a whole, having experienced it before the unbelievable Sunday, what is it about this whole event that really hits you, in addition to the course.

JORDAN SPIETH: It's on a different level than most of the PGA TOUR events in the sense that the fans are just absolutely incredible out there. Obviously we're treated like kings out there with the golf course being as pristine as it is, with the food that we have. It's just amazing.

But then the difference-maker I think is the people that come out. The golf course is tailor-made for a fun back nine that can also be challenging but you have a lot of vantage points. You have a lot of kind of man made amphitheater-type settings around the greens, where you can -- especially the last four holes, where you can gather so many people that are able to kind of be in the shot with you.

Instead of it being four or five deep, you deal like it's four or five up. Everyone is kind of on top of you and you feel like you're putting in a stadium. It's just unique in that sense. You don't have that many, if any, places. That's what allows for these exciting roars and that's what gives this extra energy guys play with where you can take a 62 and turn it into a 58 or have these amazing finishes that Bubba and Russell Knox and myself have had on the last hole. You just have this sense of really wanting it in front of the stadium.

CHRIS BERMAN: With all the wins that you've had, and we should remind folks, you're not going to be 25 until July. You've won three of the four majors and Ryder Cup, and, what, 11 wins overall.

So by being at the top, and winning like you do, what's the pressure you put on yourself? All of a sudden, oh, finish fourth, third, played great, but that's not a win. How do you make that real, you know what I'm saying? Like you can't win every week. How do you make that -- how do you channel that for you?

JORDAN SPIETH: A lot of it comes down to trying to pick a plan to peak for the major championships and in the meantime, you know, I have certain goals, goals of trying to win a tournament before you get into Augusta or have a chance to win before Augusta, and then doing the same as you lead into the U.S. Open.

As we're trying to peak for those weeks, still grinding

and very much looking at, okay, if I can give myself a chance to win, then that is the best practice I can get for a major. If I look back at the Travelers last year, I then had -- the next tournament I played was The Open.

So I'm running off this extreme confidence high from the finish of the Travelers to a nice break where I can rest up, still have those great vibes. I'm still on with my swing. Fine tune the putting and the short game and go into Birkdale and make that happen.

I went through some adversity in the finish at the Travelers. I missed some short putts. I was in control of the tournament and lost the lead and had to get it back at the end and I went through that same situation in my next tournament and I think without the Travelers, it could have been a situation there at Birkdale.

So I know how important every tournament is, especially as a lead-in to majors.

CHRIS BERMAN: Again, with the pressure, Jason Day just won a second time this calendar year -- I'm not even going back to the fall. You know all this. Bubba Watson's won twice, Phil, your buddy, Justin, Jon Rahm, Patrick Reed, Rory McIlroy. It's a roundabout way to say, not are you next, because you're certainly hoping this week, but do you feel your game is -- and New Orleans, the pair thing -- the last time we saw you was Masters Sunday which was great.

Do you feel it's coming real quick, real soon?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I think I went through a lot of year this year, I was pretty sick to start the year, so I'm giving myself some leeway on not being full strength until the last, you know, really two months, and those have been progressing nicely.

I feel I am on the right path. Everything is there. Tee-to-green and around the greens, everything is as good as it's ever been. It's just a matter of converting those ten to 20-footers that I just haven't been converting on the level that you have to win golf tournaments, and I believe that's coming. I believe I'm on the right path now. It was some setup issues.

Do I feel anxious because my peers are winning and I haven't this calendar year? Sure, absolutely. I would really like to get in the winner's circle and feel like I can take a deep -- exhale, take a deep breath and kind of feel like you're playing with house money and I don't necessarily feel that way right now, but I'm not going to force it.

I'm going to be patient with it. I've got four exciting tournaments in a row coming up and if I have a chance

to win in any of these, I feel like, you know, it will be my time and I'll have that utmost confidence.

CHRIS BERMAN: You know things even up. Here is a plus to put in your back pocket. The tree that you clipped in 18 in the playoff here, but it wasn't that bad, like it went to the fairway and it allowed you to go to the bunker, etc.

So the even is the Masters tree on 18. Now you're done with that. You got that back.

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, that's right, we're even. It worked in my favor at one place, worked against me at another. I think we're even, and no more trees.

CHRIS BERMAN: That's why they call it golf; the other four-letter words were taken.

Got a couple of questions from here, and then we're going to wrap it up in a minute, so not going to keep you forever. I know you want to work there, so I'm going to be like a UN translator here. Do we have any questions for Jordan?

**Q. Can you ask Jordan how many tournaments he's going to play this year? The first year was over 25 tournaments worldwide. What's the schedule look like this year?**

JORDAN SPIETH: Somewhere around 25 to 27 has been consistent the last few years. I think that gives me the opportunities that I want, but it also gives me the rest and recovery.

2016, I overloaded. 2014, I kind of overloaded. It's always trying to find the right balance and certainly things can adjust throughout a season, as well. There's a chance this year I might even add another one, just given I haven't felt like I've been at full strength on top of my game for more than a week or two this entire year, and it's fun when I get to that level.

So if I start to really progress nicely, I might throw in another tournament or two if I really feel like I'm able to play, while still having the right rest and recovery.

**Q. We're a month out from the U.S. Open. The top guys out there on TOUR, yourself included, we all know shoot for those majors. How do you feel about Shinnecock and your game as we approach another U.S. Open?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I've never played Shinnecock but I'm planning on getting there early before the tournament and see it a couple times. I know it's one of the most difficult tracks we'll play; Oakmont, to name a couple of the ones that are notorious for frustration levels from golfers.



I know the greens are wicked fast and slopey and I think that actually plays into my favor. That's similar to Augusta. But I really need to have great control of the ball off the tee. I know they are bringing in fairways and that's going to be an extremely important stat for the U.S. Open to even have a chance, is to be driving the ball well. So that's kind of where I'm at right now with it.

CHRIS BERMAN: You weren't here at the 1896 Open at Shinnecock, I get it.

**Q. I wanted to ask you about the Masters Champion. I was wondering why and how or when you nicknamed him Captain America and what kind of guy and player you see him as.**

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I think that nickname was given by fans, and it doesn't matter how his game is trending as he goes into team events. He shows and plays at the highest level, which is really cool that that gets him going, playing for his country. It's been a lot of fun being by his side in these events and feeding off of him.

What do I think of his game? I think he's got ice cold veins. I think he is somebody that putts with extreme confidence, which is honestly, among the few, even out here on the PGA TOUR, the way that he stands over putts. If you're against him, you're nervous when he's over the putter. When you're on his team, you can see that nervousness in the other players and it kind of feeds into confidence for us.

I've enjoyed it. It was a matter of time for him. It was a tremendous performance that he had.

Somebody, other players, you know, that would have been a difficult situation where you've seen people falter a lot, and he stood strong and finished the tournament off like the Masters Champion that he is.

CHRIS BERMAN: The only player to ever win a PGA TOUR event by holing a bunker shot in the playoff. You know that by now, right?

JORDAN SPIETH: I don't, no.

CHRIS BERMAN: There you go. That's what we're here for, man, information. (Laughter).

JORDAN SPIETH: That's great.

CHRIS BERMAN: You also know, I will say this as an aside, that Jordan happened to see Tuesday night, along with a couple other players, and U.S. Open, played really well in relation to par at Erin Hills.

And I said, we were with Jason and Patrick, I think it was that night, I said, if you guys win, keep the score closer to par than minus 16 because that would be another feather in our cap. I don't think we've ever beaten The Open, and you did a hell of a job with minus 12, so thank you very much.

JORDAN SPIETH: Absolutely. That's what I'm here for. I didn't want to get to minus 17. That would have been too easy. (Laughter).

CHRIS BERMAN: You know, you're part of Connecticut now. I know you're Texas and you've won everywhere, but you're a Connecticutian now to add to that, thanks for your time. Play well down there. We'll see you in a few weeks. Thank you for what you sent up to me.

ANDY BESSETTE: Thanks, Chris and thanks, Jordan. Hope all is well.

We have a tradition at the The Travelers Championship to thank our champion with a personal gift. We've given away things, as crazy as it sounds, cricket bats, fishing poles, ping-pong paddles and we even gave a pop-a-shot basketball arcade game. Do you know what that is?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah.

ANDY BESSETTE: We know that your sister, Ellie, is an inspiration to you, as she is for all of us, so in your honor, we're going to make a \$2,500 contribution to the Jordan Spieth Family Foundation to help support educational opportunities and experiences for kids with special needs. And it also happens that the \$2,500, it's your 25th birdie in, July so it has a double meaning.

JORDAN SPIETH: Thank you.

ANDY BESSETTE: Thanks for your support of the tournament and play well this week.

JORDAN SPIETH: Thanks, Andy. That's too kind of y'all. Appreciate that.

CHRIS BERMAN: That's our defending champ, Jordan Spieth. Thanks very much, man.

JORDAN SPIETH: All right. See you soon. Thank you.

NATHAN GRUBE: Thank you very much. Yeah, it's exciting stuff. You never know, we were talking about this, that you have Jordan win and you always think, okay, what's going to happen with these guys' schedules. The tug, international tug, the national tug on a player of that calibre, and we're thrilled that he took some time today and then also he's going to be

back here in 40 days if you're counting.

A couple things I wanted to make sure that -- Andy touched on this when Travelers said as a title can do so much, but it takes a community to come behind it to support it. I mean, from a financial standpoint. And I would be remiss if I didn't take a minute to talk about our partners and our sponsors and what they give us the ability to do.

And our presenting sponsors, we talked about this before in the fall at our charity event that Stanley Black & Decker came on as a presenting sponsor this year and they are going to be with us for I would say all the right reasons. It's good for the community.

When we sat down and talked to them, they said: We liked what this is doing for the community, and being a presenting sponsor is a significant commitment. Joining Trinity Health of New England, we just simply could not do what we are doing with the tournament without our presenting sponsors.

Again, they didn't sit down and say -- they didn't start off with -- and they ended up here. They didn't start off with, what's the return on our investment on this; show us how this is going to work.

They started off with: This is the right thing for the community and now let's work from there to make it happen. We thank our presenting sponsors.

Our founding partners, this is a category we started. It is, again, not an insignificant commitment to becoming a founding partner with the event. It's financial, it's your resources, it's your time, it's volunteering. It's a whole scope of things. To have these partners stay committed with us, many of them, if not all of them, for multi-year commitments to get to this point it gives us a runway to do a lot of different things.

People ask us, what are you going to do to get better what are you going to do to change every year? The resources they put in allow us to do some things you're going to see this year.

Last year we introduced a brand new facility for fans, free to general admission ticket holders, got into the Stanley Black & Decker venue right there on 18. Because of the popularity of that, we are launching three new venues with three additional partners for free to the fans. You'll see one on 15, you'll see one on 9, you'll see one on 17; continuing to enhance the general fan experience on what we have happening at the tournament. We've added an additional parking lot. We changed our food partner. We changed our tent vendor.

What do you do when you win PGA tournament of the year? You change everything. But no, we wanted to continue to make the event better and better every single year, and to partner with the right teams to get us there is what we have done to get us there. The fans will see a completely different experience when they get on property.

The sponsors, making the ticket they hold in their fans is what makes it valuable to their partners, we will do that every single year.

Outside of our founding partners and presenting sponsors, so many people to thank. The First Tee of Connecticut which we share real estate with, this is their headquarters. What they are doing, Mark Moriarty, and his team is phenomenal, how many kids they are reaching with such valuable -- it's like golf is the sucker to get you in, and then they teach you about life. It's an amazing place and program.

TPC River Highlands, David Corrado and his team; you hear what the players say about it. If you do not have a facility that the players like, good luck trying to recruit them to come play. They love this golf course and they love this facility. So thank you to their team.

There's so many people that it takes to do what we do and to get to where we are.

Thank you again to everybody in this room. It's going to be a tremendous day out there today. Enjoy the golf course and we will see you very, very soon in 40 days at the 2018 The Travelers Championship. Thank you very much.