

Travelers Championship

Wednesday, June 19, 2019

Brooks Koepka

Press Conference



TRAVELERS
CHAMPIONSHIP



(In progress.)

BROOKS KOEPKA: This is one of my favorite events. This is probably one of the more popular ones on the TOUR. F excited for the week. The golf course is in great shape. Held up well with the rain yesterday. Looking forward to a fun week.

THE MODERATOR: Last year was a little bit of a whirlwind for you. Going home, getting prepared, and coming back, which was great of you to come and do that. How different is it for you this year coming in on the Monday after the tournament?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, last year I don't even think I knew where was at. Even coming in on Saturday, Sunday morning it was all kind of a whirlwind. It's a lot different when you win and you're trying to play the week after. It's a bit hectic, chaotic.

But I wouldn't have missed this tournament. This week obviously it's a little bit easier. It's difficult still. Today just kind of feel mentally exhausted from last week just being in contention.

But another day of rest today and I'll be fine for tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Just some thoughts on the golf course. Just played the Pro-Am. Any differences from last year?

BROOKS KOEPKA: No, no difference is what I see in the golf course. Like I said, it's held up pretty well with the rain we've had, which is a good thing. This golf course is tough enough. I mean, the rough seems to be penalizing enough if you're in it. It's not the longest golf course.

It's a fun place to play, because if you get hot you can shoot 9-, 10-under no problem. If you're just a little bit off you seem to shoot even par at this place, which can be quite frustrating, but that's the sign of a really good golf course.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Brooks.

Q. Do you sort of fall back on routine in this situation, coming across the country the week after a major championship trying to keep your energy

level up? Do anything different in this particular case to try and maintain your focus and energy this week?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I just took yesterday and obviously Monday off. Just don't touch a club. Come out today and you feel like more rested than you would have if you were out practicing. Like I said, it's difficult not just because it's cross country but because emotionally, mentally the toll it takes being in contention. It's a little different than it would be if it was another PGA TOUR event or another event where you're not in contention; not as draining.

Q. (Indiscernible.)

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, that helps. That helps. Not having to worry about sightlines, where the pin positions might be. Pretty much know after playing three years where it's going to be. You get an idea how things roll, the golf course plays. Seen it under softer conditions before so it's not a big issue.

Q. You made a habit of playing the week before a major to get yourself in form. What's the plan ahead of the British? Will you go over to the Scottish Open and tee it up?

BROOKS KOEPKA: No, I'm just going to stick with the same plan I've got. I usually go over to the British a little bit early, couple days before, and just try to get some work in.

I'm not planning on changing my schedule or anything. It's always been that way for me. I enjoy it. It's fun to get over, get acclimated a couple days before, and that way when I get there on Monday I'm used to the time change and feel like I have a good understanding of the golf course. Makes it a little bit easier.

Q. You committed in January, which I guess is unheard of. Why? Was it the change in the schedule? Did you commit to a lot of tournaments in January?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I like the golf course. I like the golf course. This tournament has always been a fun one to play. The fans are great. The golf course, like I said. It's so much -- it's enjoyable to play. We like shooting a bunch under par. It's fun for us.

I know that's why you see some of the best players in the world come back year after year. It's one that I'd

like to keep on my schedule for a long time. If you notice, most TOUR players play the same events year after year. They find golf courses they like, find courses they don't like, and they stay away from those and come back to the ones they like.

I'll be here for a while.

Q. We talked in Canada and you said you really didn't care where you finished that week. Just wanted to leave with some confidence. The week after a major where you're in contention and finished almost second, what are your expectations then going into the Travelers?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Let me set the record straight. It's not that I don't care about the event. Some people wrote -- took it a little bit differently.

Q. You said you didn't care if you finished fifth or 40th as long as you left with confidence.

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah. What I was trying to get at is it's about the process.

Q. I wasn't diminishing...

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah. Some people took that and ran with it. Can't believe everything you read. They will take a snippet here and go from the back.

But, yeah, every week, even last week it doesn't matter. I don't care where I finish. Last week it's about the process of how do I get into -- okay, how am I going to start it online, finish it online, and then make the putt?

I know sometimes it doesn't happen. I can't control the result. I wouldn't tee it up if I didn't want to win. Not everything is results based with me. It's about the process. I think that's why I'm able to play so well in the majors, because I'm not worried about winning.

I'm not worried about the pressure of being in first or trying to do something, accomplish three in a row, whatever it was. Even last week it's just about the process.

So if I can get the process down the result is going to come. That's kind of how I feel. Even this week. Just go back to the process. Same thing every week. Mentally if my process is there I'm excited. I even told my caddie today, We're going to try to take the mental approach we do at the majors this week. I'm going to try something maybe a little bit different and see how it works out.

Q. Could have been my imagination, but did it seem like you were in more divots last week than normal?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah. Yeah, probably more than

normal. I mean, we were in three last week in the first three days. I mean, made birdie out of two of them, so should've hit it in a few more.

Q. Didn't seem like it bothered you. When you do the calculus of eliminating part of the field...(indiscernible) it doesn't bother you and you see conditions or bad luck might bother somebody else, is that part of how you eliminate some people?

BROOKS KOEPKA: You're going to get a bad bounce, a bad break, one that lips out and comes back at you. It's going to happen all week. Everybody is going to run into a spell where you're maybe in a divot. Might have any of that happen. It's just how you move on from it and take it.

But then obviously there is going to be one guy getting a lot of good bounces. That's usually the winner.

Q. (Indiscernible.)

BROOKS KOEPKA: When I see people what?

Q. (Indiscernible.)

BROOKS KOEPKA: I mean, it's one shot. Not like it's the end of the world. I mean, yeah, you can see them freak out and get upset, throw a little temper tantrum because they're in a divot or whatever it may be. At the same time, they're obviously hitting into a spot where there is a lot of divots. Like No. 1, for instance, last week. Everybody hits it in the same spot. You can actually lay it a little further back or go a little further forward if you want to be a little bit more aggressive.

But at the same time, I chose just to lay it up right where everybody else was. I'm taking that chance.

Q. Do you think your naturally more process oriented? Is that something you had to be taught or learn to accept on your journey?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I think I that's been more of a learning thing. I look back from college I had to switch -- I was a hot head. I couldn't understand why to hit a ball 15 feet right of the flag with a 7-iron. Just bugged me.

Now I learned to understand that even if I hit it in the water or out of bounds, I'm not trying to do that. I'm human. I'm going to make some mistakes. I can get over that.

I think that's part of why I'm not afraid to take chances and go at pins, like 18 last week. I mean, yeah, would've stunk to hit it in the water, but at the at the same time, I'm not trying to hit in the water off the tee.

I felt like the process was good going through it, and

that's all I can really do. I committed to the line, see the line; all right, that's what it is. The yardage; not second guessing anything. You're just human. You're going to make mistakes.

Q. Does that help you relax sometimes in those kind of situations?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I mean, I know there will be times I'm going to screw up. I can't help it. Everybody screws up. Once you get over the fact -- I mean, every week -- every shot is a miss if you're going for the flag. If you look at it that way you're missing almost every shot you hit.

So, I don't know. Just break it down a little bit simpler and make it one shot. It might be bad, but if you hit a great one behind it it's just as good. Guys let one shot affect them too much. We're never trying to screw up. We all know that. Nobody is trying to.

Q. You mentioned the course being a big reason why players like playing here. Can you speak to Travelers as a sponsor and the overall player experience in helping this field grow over the past years and seeing the strength of it grow?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, they've done an unbelievable job with the event. I mean, from how they treat us as players, it's first class. Then you look at even what they do for the caddies. I think I've sometimes forgotten how well events treat the caddies. Sometimes they don't have a tent to go eat in and things like that. This week the setup is unbelievable for them.

The whole experience for girlfriends, wives, I mean, you can see they just redid the clubhouse. Everything they've done for this tournament has been first class, from the fans to everybody. They get support out here. Obviously being so many people from here it makes it very -- just an enjoyable tournament to be a part of. It really is.

Q. How big a motivator is maintaining world No. 1 or is that a by-product of the process of where you are?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I'll probably have a different answer than I did six months ago. After Korea I was just focused on maintaining No. 1 and trying to grow the lead; where now I understand. It kind of consumed me. I was so focused on it and I couldn't focus on my golf.

Now it's just, listen, if I play good golf it's all going to take care of itself. If I go out and win and do what I'm supposed to do, I can grow the lead over Dustin or Rosey. Yeah, so I can grow that lead if I just play well.

It's just a by-product of playing good. Just want to keep going, keep the pedal down.

Q. Just said it consumed you. When did you turn the corner on that and get back to the process and put No. 1 aside and let it take care of itself?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Well, being that it was my first time at No. 1 last year, last fall, didn't really know how to handle it, I guess, going into an event. Trying to, Okay, wow, it's starting to slip. It's really close between me and Dustin. Okay, I've got to finish 10th in this tournament just to maintain it.

I've never once thought about finishing 10th in an event. I explained to my brother quite a bit now. It's funny how when I first turned pro, okay, I want to make the cut. Then I found myself right around the cut line and then I got out here on the PGA TOUR and it was kind of the same thing. Went back to, okay, I'm just trying to make the cut the first couple events.

You find yourself around that cut, the 35 mark, and all of a sudden it's, okay, I want to get in the top 10. And then all of a sudden I'm hanging around top 10, and now I'm actually trying to win the events or believe that I can, I'm not worried about cut lines. I'm not worried about -- just worried about getting my name up there at the top of the leaderboard.

You're not focusing on the top guy if you're focusing on the cut. It's a different mentality. It started back over when I got back on the PGA TOUR. Now I'm just focusing on winning. That's it.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Anything further? Brooks, appreciate your time. Thanks for coming in. Hopefully we see you at the top of that leaderboard.

BROOKS KOEPKA: Thank you.