

2015 US Open Championship

Monday, June 15
Press Conference

Jordan Spieth

An Interview With:
JORDAN SPIETH

BETH MAJOR: Good afternoon. Welcome again to the 2015 U.S. Open Championship at Chambers Bay. It's my pleasure to have with us this afternoon Jordan Spieth, who a few weeks ago won his first major at the Masters at Augusta National. Jordan has a little local knowledge here. He played in the 2010 U.S. Amateur at Chambers Bay. He also won his second U.S. Junior nearby at Gold Mountain Golf Course in Bremerton. Jordan, can you talk a little bit about being in this area and being back at Chambers Bay and what it's like to be back?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, it's beautiful here; it really is. You can all notice that already. But brings back good memories. I remember the '10 Am a little bit. I spent a lot more time during the 2011 U.S. Junior. It really is nice to be back. I'm enjoying my time here so far and learning kind of the good local spots with my caddie.

BETH MAJOR: You've been here, you've played a few rounds in the last few days. Just your impressions on the golf course this week.

JORDAN SPIETH: I played 36 holes already. I played 18 Saturday, 18 Sunday. Just planning on playing nine today and nine tomorrow and nine Wednesday. I really enjoy it. I didn't remember it much from the 2010 U.S. Amateur, it was a short lived trip for me. I tried to throw out the round that I shot on this course from my memories. I was kind of going in with a blank slate, learning from Michael and what he walked in the last week. I felt like I got two really good solid rounds in. I really enjoy the layout. I think it's going to be a fun challenge. It's a beautiful challenge, as well. It's going to be nice to kind of -- I think it might be slower rounds of golf, given the size of the greens and the difficulty of the course. So at least we have some nice views, as well.

Q. I know you said that you come in with a fresh perspective on these last few days. When Michael got married and you played out here with his buddies, did that kind of give you a new feeling



about the golf course? What do you remember about that experience?

JORDAN SPIETH: I think so, yes. That was after there were a few somewhat major changes made from the 2010 U.S. Am. It was after it. I really liked the changes. I thought it made the golf course better. And, yeah, it played completely different. But from the back tees, it was still a really, really difficult challenge. And I was able to get out there and I think take some money off of Michael the day before his wedding, so that was nice. And we had a good time with it. It wasn't as much scouting as it was just being here for him and enjoying kind of the site that he was going to have a big day or the biggest day of his life on. It was a lot of fun.

Q. Hideki, from Japan, is with you a rival. He maybe thinks if Jordan could win the Masters, I could do it, as well. Can you talk about your rivalry between yourself and Hideki?

JORDAN SPIETH: I don't think it's a rivalry. I very much respect Hideki. I think that he could very well win this week. He's already shown that he's capable of winning on the biggest stage, his finish at the Memorial last year, and top finishes and certainly a lot of wins in Japan and worldwide. I've spent a good amount of time playing golf with Hideki. We've been paired a lot over the last few years. I think he's one of the best players in the world. It was cool to go over to Japan and see the following that he had there and to see what everybody thinks of his game there. We actually battled it out, and he beat me by a shot to win the Dunlop, Phoenix. I think that he's very capable of winning. I don't see a rivalry between me and him. I think it would be fun to get into contention again with him. It was a fun battle, it was a respectful battle, and that would be a lot of good fun to have here, along with a few other young guys in the mix.

Q. Have you met Cole?

JORDAN SPIETH: I have, yeah, we played nine holes today.

Q. Can you talk about what kind of kid he is and your impressions?

JORDAN SPIETH: Unbelievably nice. I think it's amazing that he's here. He's had a smile on his face every moment that I've seen him. I saw him going back to yesterday and the day before. He and his dad

couldn't have been nicer to me. That's what Coach Fields had told me ahead of time, anyways. I met Cole in the off-season. So really great to see his success, rooting for him. Nice to see a young Texas guy that's committed to the University of Texas, as well, having the success. So obviously I will not play a game with him today, because that is against the rules, but I'm looking forward to getting out there and seeing his game firsthand. I definitely heard about it.

Q. Your thoughts, please, on playing with Justin the first two days?

JORDAN SPIETH: Justin Rose in the tournament? I think it will be my 35th round with Justin in the last year, so our games, we found a way to have them complement each other. We've had some success together. I played against him in a Ryder Cup match. I played with him in the final round of Augusta. We've had really everything. It's been the first two rounds of a TOUR event and it's been the back nine of battling it at a major, and it's been in a Ryder Cup against each other. It's good fun. I have a great time is with he and Fulchy. And to cap it off with Jason Day and Colin, who we've played a lot of golf with too, I was really excited to see the pairing. I like late-early, as well. I think that's going to be a good wave for me. I was hoping I would get that wave. So all in all, the weather looks like it's going to be pretty good, so I don't know if it's going to make much of a difference. You can kind of get those 36 holes in quick and then hopefully have a little break and tee off late Saturday would be ideal. But I'm pleased with the pairing.

Q. One word to describe this course, what would it be?

JORDAN SPIETH: One word. You know, I can't do one word. Inventive. That's one word.

Q. That's good. Okay. Congratulations. Secondly, if you didn't play again the rest of the year, you could look back and say this has just been an unbelievable year with what you've done so far, how do you balance or find the right balance between what you've achieved already with the Masters victory and knowing that you still have three more -- pushing yourself if it was January, if you know what I mean?

JORDAN SPIETH: I would look at it as I've now told myself, I have a chance to make history in many ways. But in order to do that, I have to really focus on this week, focus on the major championships and how I'm going to prepare for them. There are certainly a lot of goals left for the year. It's never even crossed my mind to let it kind of sink in that it's been a great year, and that it would be a great year at the end. If I didn't do anything the rest of the year, I'd be pretty frustrated at the second half. I felt like last year I had a down half of

the year the last half of the year leading into the last couple of weeks. I had a very -- I finished in 2014, but from about, I would say, around the Byron Nelson time until then, I was in a little bit of a lull. I want to try and prevent that this year. There's also -- you can't win a Grand Slam unless you win the first. So I'm the only one with that opportunity this year. So I'm going to go ahead and focus on this week and see if I can put myself in contention.

Q. Can you talk about your embracing of the golf course, because there were players prior to the event that were somehow putting distance between them, what they thought the golf course was about, or about comments that they had without playing the course? Discuss your mental approach and discuss how you think what will take place this week.

JORDAN SPIETH: This is my fourth U.S. Open, and even though that's not a ton of history, it's enough to realize that each -- it's enough to realize that courses can drastically change in this tournament from Monday to Thursday and from Thursday to Friday, Friday to Saturday and on. They're very different golf courses day-by-day. So the only impressions I think that you -- first of all, if you are going to talk negative about a place, you're almost throwing yourself out to begin with, because golf is a mental game. Plus, the U.S. Open is about as challenging mentally as any tournament in the world. So you have to go in positively. You have to go in with enough confidence to get yourself into contention. But understanding that what you see at the beginning, it's nice to kind of get a feel for how it's going to play and the greens. But you don't know. And we still aren't going to know. Today it's going to play very different from Thursday. We don't know where the pins are going to be specifically. So we don't know exactly what shots to play on certain holes. So it's just about kind of getting into a good rhythm here, saving your legs and having enough confidence in all parts of your game. And that's what I've adapted here this week at Chambers. I did a better job at Pinehurst than I did the first two. And I feel like I'm doing a better job this week than then.

Q. Can you talk about the elasticity in the golf course, and how much adjustment you have to do going into this week with the tee boxes?

JORDAN SPIETH: Not much. To be honest, I think it's more just to get in our heads ahead of time. I think if the wind is coming from the north, we're going to play as par 5 and 18 as a par-4. If it's the other way, it'll be the other way. 12, probably going to be a similar tee box every day. 15 has an opportunity to change drastically. But if the greens are where the USGA wants the greens to be, I don't think that 245 yard tee box can or should be played. But, again, wind

dependent. And maybe they play one box up and you're hitting a 5-iron. But the way that green pitches, it would have to be a back left pin or else we're never going to finish the round. And they know that. In the 2010 U.S. Amateur, there was a lot learned from us and from the USGA. And so I think they have a great grasp on what they're going to do with the golf course. But I don't think there's a lot of extra changes off of other ones. I think that that's more just to get in our heads a little bit.

Q. You mentioned Cole Hammer earlier. He said once he qualified for this tournament that your Masters win inspired him. How did that make you feel hearing that?

JORDAN SPIETH: That's the first I've heard it, but it feels -- that's really, really cool. It's cool to see that that can have an impact on somebody, and somebody that's kind of got the same ambitions that I had at his age. He's getting better experience than I had at his age. It's great to see the outreach that that tournament had and it's cool that these young junior golfers are looking to us young guys on Tour and working their tail off to get out here. And all of a sudden you see one that -- he maybe didn't expect himself to be out here testing his game this soon, but it just shows how the game is growing, how much better it's getting at a young age, and Cole's the living image of it. And I'm interested to see how he does this week. I think with really no expectations, it could help him. And a golf course like this, you just never know. The ball is rolling, he may get some drives out there farther than he normally would hit. And I know his short game is really, really solid. So U.S. Open, you just kind of got to scrap it around. And sometimes it doesn't matter how far you hit it, how short you hit it -- shoot, I haven't even see his game, he may fly my ball by 20 yards, so I may be speaking too soon. It's such a cool week, and it's cool the impact it has.

Q. You talked about how the trip here in 2010 was pretty short lived. What was your reaction to your coming back here for the U.S. Open?

JORDAN SPIETH: I was excited to get here. I was excited for the Major Championship venues this year. I think they're cool. They're interesting, given here and Whistling Straits, they're going to play different than typical U.S. Opens and PGA championships, being on linksy golf courses. So you almost have three Open championships-ish and a Masters. But I was excited to come back. I was excited for Michael, too, such a cool week to him to come to a place that's close to his heart. I feel like if there's any advantage given, it would be towards us with his knowledge of the place. Other than that, I know Seattle is beautiful in the summertime and just wanted to get back to some cooler weather. It's a little hot in Dallas right now.

Q. Where is the Green Jacket this week and when is the last time you slipped it on and where was that?

JORDAN SPIETH: It's at home. I didn't bring it for this stretch, for this week, here. I think I put it on last week at some point. But it's at my house right now and it's perfectly content there. And I hope to keep it there for many years to come.

Q. Why did you put it on?

JORDAN SPIETH: Why? Just to make sure it was still in the case (laughter). No, I think I was just kind of watching TV and wanted to slip it on, just kind of felt like it (laughter). Why wouldn't I put it on, to be honest with you?

Q. Just going back to the specifics of the holes, the 9th looks like one of the most interesting. How do you prepare for something like that?

JORDAN SPIETH: For the 9th hole?

Q. It could be two different holes, and what challenges does that throw out for you?

JORDAN SPIETH: I think the 9th is just a spectacular hole from up top and that's what I know it as. I think it's one of the cooler holes that we'll play all year. You've got bail-out, you've got ridges. I played both tee boxes now. I played -- the first round I played up top. Yesterday we played down below. Down below it seems from that yardage that there can only be one pin and it's back left from that angle, which would be front left from the top box. And that's actually going to be a really exciting hole location if that's where it is, because that brings hole in one into play. You start turning it into that green, it's going to run past that hole and come back off the slope. We were trying to hit it to a front pin from that angle, and three of the four of us hit it right next to where that pin would be on the other side. It can be an extremely exciting hole. It could be a very pivotal hole on the weekend, you can make different numbers there depending on how solid of a shot and what tee box you're coming from. It is weird to have two completely different looks on a hole in changing tee boxes, and that's the first time I think I've ever seen it.

Q. You've had a huge amount of acclaim for what you've done in a very short time, and you are the golfer at the moment, the American golfer at the moment. Are you comfortable with that? And when you come here, when you pick up a copy of Golf Digest and you see it's not just an issue with a story about you, but it's called the Jordan Spieth issue, how do you feel about that?

JORDAN SPIETH: I think it's cool. I wouldn't say I accept that title, because I don't think of titles. I just -- I

go out and try to do what I do. I have another goal to achieve, the next goal that I'm working towards. Anything that comes with it is interesting. It's a lot of fun to do these shoots, to do these interviews and give some of the knowledge of how I got to this position to others that maybe are growing up learning the game and want to learn maybe how to take the next step, from junior to amateur, pro golf. I don't put a title on myself as the American guy, necessarily. I think the last American to win was Chris Kirk, so I would consider him the most recent American to be on top. And then Rickie won the PLAYERS. The game is in great hands. It's in young hands at the moment. Phil is saying otherwise right now. He's starting to ascend and really spike up this week a little bit with his finish last week, and the way he's been playing this year, coming into trying to get his career Grand Slam. There's just a lot of factors going on. I don't think much of titles, I just try and work towards the next goal.

Q. In what facets of this golf course is Michael's knowledge most important or most valuable? And secondly, he's now fending off media left and right this week. Did you guys kind of talk about that? Did he kind of talk to you about, hey, I don't know what I'm going to do with all these guys asking me questions, how did you guys talk about that?

JORDAN SPIETH: First part, I think it's going to help driving the ball, sight lines and understanding when things get firm he's going to know where it would run off to a little better, maybe. I think off the tee it's really going to help. Into greens, I don't think he's seen where the pins are going to be and he's certainly hasn't seen the greens the way we're going to play them this weekend. So we're going to have to adapt to that. Putting, I pretty much call my own anyway, bring him in for some reassurance. So I think driving the ball mainly. As far as Michael's fame, we were putting and joking around saying -- people were screaming out, "Greller, Grellor," and we were just practicing on the green, so Cameron -- it was either Cameron or Jay yelled over at Michael and said, Mike, is that hole an autograph line for you this week? We're giving him some smack for it and he's taking it from his caddy buddies too. I think he's on the front page of the sports section, and I just saw a picture of that, so he's really good going to take heat from that from us. It's really cool. As far as interviews and all that goes, he just tries to stay out of it. He wants to kind of stay under the radar. I have nothing against him -- I trust anything that he'd say. He's certainly done stuff for media before. But I think this week he's got so much on his plate, he's going to throw it away and focus. It's a major week, so we try to limit everything we do this week off the course.

Q. You were asked about the course, itself. You

said one word, inventive. I was on the putting green watching them, the structure when they get close to the green, do you think inventive may be the players choice or mindset to win this tournament?

JORDAN SPIETH: I'm going to keep things simple. I'm going to use clubs that I know. I'm not going to adapt different shots for this week. I'm going to stick with my putter and my two wedges that I use to chip with, I'm not going to do much else. I can get it close with one of those three with the right shot. I'm just going to take away the complications and try and completely simplify things around the greens. You can use your imagination a lot here. You can take different lines on chip shots to get the ball fed closer to the hole. But you don't have to do that using a shot that you've never practiced. So I've only been working shots that I know.

Q. If I can ask two quick questions, I suspect satisfied is not a word you use very often to describe yourself or your game. But looking at your game, the way it stands now, are there any particular facets of it that you're pleased with that you do something that you think, I'm pretty good with that. Post-Masters, heading into your first major since, do you perceive yourself differently or your game differently because of that win?

JORDAN SPIETH: First question, I'm pleased with the way my ball-striking has come on in the last month. I've been working really hard on it and working a certain ball flight and being able to just kind of go away from that the other way, but having a go-to shot. We've done a great job, I wish the tournament started two days ago, I'm striking the ball really well. It's about continuing to do so. And then, no, I don't look at myself or my game much differently since the Masters. I think it was a life-changing event for me off the course. On the course, when I get in the ropes, I don't feel any different. And I've got another goal. My goal this week is to give myself a chance to win again, see if we can duplicate what we did, whatever, two months ago. I don't think much has changed. But I'm going to need to putt a little better than I did the last couple of weeks. I feel more comfortable putting after a lot of work on it last week. All in all, it's just about getting my speed control down and finding the fairways out here.

BETH MAJOR: Thank you so much for joining us. Pleasure to have you here today, wish you well this week.

JORDAN SPIETH: Thank you.