



BROOKS KOEPKA

SHARON SHIN: I would like to welcome in Brooks Koepka to the virtual press conference room here at the 3M Open. Brooks, you're making your second start at this event. Can we just get some opening comments about your return here to TPC Twin Cities?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yes, it's nice to be back obviously. It was a fun place last year. I enjoyed the golf course, I really liked it. I thought it was a bit of a bomber's golf course and if you drive it well out here, you can really take advantage of it. You can see with Matt winning obviously. I enjoyed it. It was a fun course. Obviously it will be a little different this year, but I'm excited.

SHARON SHIN: And you have back-to-back title defenses coming up next week at WGC FedEx Invitational and the PGA Championship. Can you talk about how important it is for you to have a good week here this week to have good momentum entering those two tournaments?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I just need to play good. I've played so bad lately. Yeah, just trying to find things. Every week I feel like the results aren't there, but it's getting better and better. My good shots are good, but I've just got to bring that bottom level up. I've hit some real costly shots. I seem to miss it short-sided every time and that's been kind of the downfall of why I haven't played well. I missed it in very costly spots and just trying to figure out why that is. If I can bring the misses up, I'll be fine.

Q. Brooks, when this tournament was first announced, and I know they made some changes from the course as it stood a few years ago, but a lot of people thought that the course might be too easy. Having played it and seeing how things went last year and then looking ahead to this year, what do you think of that statement?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I don't know. I challenge anybody else to come out and come play it. I can promise you, yeah, there was a lot of low scoring last year, but I felt like there wasn't much wind, the golf course was definitely gettable. But adding length, it will probably help it out a little bit, make it a little bit tougher, but at the same time, you grow the rough up a little bit -- I haven't been out on the course up, but you grow that rough up and you tuck some pins, it's always going to be difficult.

Q. Brooks, this is the first major sporting event in the Twin Cities since George Floyd. I'm curious how were you affected by the death of George Floyd and the events that followed around the country?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Well, it's tragic. I mean, it's pathetic what happened. To see

somebody's life to go and then you watch it multiple, multiple times, it's tough. You know, I get chills right now just even thinking about it. What happened is uncalled for and, you know, if there's anything good, we're starting to see change and I think that's important. As a world, as people, we need to continue to grow and I think we're at least bringing light to it now. Racism is a big issue and I think we're on our way now. People are becoming more vocal, everyone's becoming more vocal and I think it's becoming very important and it's definitely showing.

Q. Brooks, thanks for doing this. With what Bryson has done this year and even like last week with Tony Finau letting it out a little bit, are even the longest hitters like you going to have to adapt and try to kind of keep up in this arms race of hitting the ball long?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I don't need to keep up with anybody, I'm good.

Q. Brooks, I know you're playing a lot, chasing FedExCup points here. I guess I was wondering when was the last time you played this often? And mentally, physically, does that kind of wear on you eventually playing tournament after tournament?

BROOKS KOEPKA: You know, I think it would have -- you know, by the end of the PGA, I was going to see how I feel. I probably have to go back to Challenge Tour days playing this many in a row, going five to seven weeks in a row and then trying to take a week off. But that was, what, six, seven years ago, so it's been a while since I played this many in a row.

But at the same time, I've had some weekends off, so it hasn't been -- it hasn't been too bad yet. Just frustration, playing bad, but at the same time, every round I get to play I'm just trying to find that little something where -- I mean, it's one swing away, everybody knows that golf's that game where you make one good swing and everything clicks and it's like all right, back to normal. so Just trying to find that and keep battling through it.

Q. Question regarding the course. So, you have some pretty risk-reward holes out here, 6, 9 and 14. Do you have any kind of plan of action for those?

BROOKS KOEPKA: It all depends on the conditions. You never know. location plays a big part in it. Right now it's not blowing right now, but if the wind gets up, too, that will change things. It all kind of depends on where you're at. If you have a three-shot lead coming down, you're obviously going to play it pretty conservative and give yourself a good chance. It depends on the situation, the wind, the pin location, all these different things. At the end of the day, you've just got to assess where you're at and go from there.

Q. And unrelated, the FedExCup Playoffs are just around the corner. Do you have any kind of plans as to what you're thinking about doing for the next couple weeks here?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I mean, hopefully play good. It's been a while, so I just want to play good. Right now, if things ended today, I'm not even in the Playoffs, so I need to step it up

and start playing well and get back to what I know I can do.

Q. Brooks, what's the status of your knee? How are you feeling going into this week?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I'll be honest with you, Sunday was the best my knee's felt in a really long time. I worked with my physio, Marc Wahl, quite a bit over the week. I don't know. It was the first course we played where it's actually been hilly. Going downhill it bugged me a little bit, uphill's fine, and that was the hilliest golf course we played.

So to have two weeks back to back, I didn't think it was that bad, but, you know, obviously having an MRI on Monday of Memorial we did just to kind of see where things were at and it really hasn't progressed. But it feels a lot better. Just walking downhill's a pain. It's where that patellar extends and just try to adjust going down hills. Sunday was the best it's felt. It feels good right now, I don't see it being an issue. I have my trainer coming in, he's helped work on it quite a bit over the past eight months and I think it will be just fine. It's not an excuse of why I've been playing bad, I can promise you that.

Q. Have you gotten used to the nasal swabs yet and do you feel safe traveling around and playing even without fans present?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I feel safe. You know, I've kept it pretty strict in our bubble. It's myself, Claude, my caddie Ricky and my trainer will come in every once in a while. He gets tested before he even comes out. And then our chef. Nobody's really leaving the house other than coming to the course. It's been pretty simple.

Obviously Ricky kind of had some unfortunate circumstances where his best friend passed away and, you know, what are you supposed to tell someone when somebody passes away, that they can't go to the funeral. So Ricky went to that and then unfortunately caught it either traveling there, at the funeral. We don't know where, it's very hard to trace. But other than that, nobody's left the house. We leave the house to come to the golf course. Noelle, every time she gets food delivered to the house to cook it, so there's been no issues on our end.

Q. Have you got used to the swabbing by now?

BROOKS KOEPKA: It depends who does it. Some of them are a lot worth. Gentle Steve, I guess one of them's got a nickname, so yeah, you try to find him.

Q. Brooks, I'm sure you've been asked this every week, but can you just tell us -- we saw at the Ryder Cup what Minnesota golf fans are capable of, it was a heck of an atmosphere last year. Just the experience, what is it like playing on crowdless courses throughout the course of the year so far?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I'll tell you what, it's very weird. You're used to so many people following your group and cheering, and even when you hit a bad shot, the little gasp they do, you're used to that. It's a weird feeling. Sometimes when you hit one offline, you can see the

crowd kind of scurry over there so you know where it is and it just now becomes a little bit tougher. I've had to do it a few times, but you're searching for a ball over there, that three minutes comes up rather quick. You don't have as many people searching for it. It is weird when you make a birdie and there's no applause, no cheer, no anything. It's kind of an eerie feeling, but at the same time, just happy to be back playing.

Q. This is another course where there are houses on the course and people can kind of see the action in their backyard, I know they did that last year for the Fourth of July and everything. Have you had previous experience with that in the past few tournaments, any interactions with them?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, Hilton Head was kind of the first one where -- because they have the same setup, so many homes right there on the golf course. It's fun to have them in their yard, I guess that's as close as they can get. It's nice to see them out there, it's fun. They'll cheer for you when you walk by. Even last week a few people with homes right there on the golf course, whether guys were renting them or their families, it's nice to see people sometimes. We're so, I guess, in our -- my team is so in our own bubble right now that we really don't see anybody other than at the course. It's great, but it's also nice to see other people sometimes.

SHARON SHIN: Brooks, thank you so much for your time and good luck this week.

BROOKS KOEPKA: Thanks.