

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU

Q. Bryson, before we take questions from the media, if we can just get an opening comment here at your title defense at the Rocket Mortgage Classic.

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Yeah, it's always fun to be able to defend your title. I came close at the U.S. Open. I'm just looking forward to doing it hopefully this time.

Q. You had some more time to reflect on what went wrong on the back nine at the U.S. Open. What's your takeaway?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Just luck.

Q. Just luck?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: (Nods head.)

Q. Okay. Feeling lucky this week?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: I hope so. Hope I get a little lucky, it would be awesome.

Q. What was it that stands out about your performance from last year?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Here is driving. I drove it really well and I putted incredibly well. It's a little different conditions this year, but I think I'm hitting it straighter, hitting it actually a little farther than I did a year ago. If I can take advantage of the wedges -- wedges weren't great last week, but hopefully I can take care of that this week. If I can do that, I'll give myself a good chance.

Q. When you think back to that week where you won here, how important was that in validating everything you were trying to do?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Yeah, it was very important. It was a milestone to show everybody that this is a different way that I can do it and still win, so I was pretty proud of that. You know, used it pretty well throughout the year. I won again -- I won the U.S. Open, won Arnold Palmer and come close a few other times, but just again, not everything being on my A-game allowed me not to win. Hopefully I can have that that week.

Q. Bryson, expanding on that, when you look at the last 12 months from the win at Rocket Mortgage to now, what would you say have been kind of the best practices with the changes you made, what surprised you and what's next?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Just trying to hit it farther. Still looking for a way to hit it farther. There's still a massive advantage to be had if you can do it right build the right equipment, but then combining that with controlling the wedges. I think that's something that's very difficult to do that not many people can do. I still struggle with it at times, but I'm okay with that. I realize that that's a part of it and nobody's in this threshold, this area, trying to control wedges, trying to control putting, trying to control how you're hitting it and I look forward to the challenge.

Q. Adam mentioned the validation you got within the golf world with the victory. Did that change anything for you inside the ropes to tangibly see those results going forward in an emerging post-pandemic?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Absolutely. It gave me the confidence to win the U.S. Open knowing that I can play a game that's not normal or is a little unique and different. You look at the U.S. Open, it was a prime example. Everybody thought I was crazy by saying I'm just going to bomb and gouge it, but it worked out that week. Didn't work out at Torrey, but that's okay. Life goes on.

Q. Bryson, you mentioned about wanting to hit it further. How much does that help in conditions like this this week when it's so wet?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: It's huge. Being able to carry certain bunkers, being able to fly to certain areas where I can have irons in where people are going to probably struggle a little bit even though they're still going to play great. It's not like somebody that hits it short out here can't win, they can, absolutely. If they iron play well and putt really well, they can beat me. Hopefully this length gives me an advantage that you don't have to be so perfect to allow myself to be up next to the top of the leaderboard come Sunday.

Q. And when you come back to a place as a defending champion, what's that like? Is it fun? Is it more stuff you've got to do? What's the atmosphere like now that you're the guy?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: It's definitely cool. It brings back great memories Obviously looking back and seeing some of the holes that I played well. Some holes I didn't play well on, some holes I played really well on. Trying to say to myself, hey, you can do that again this year with those memories makes me feel good.

Q. Bryson, what did you think when you got the information about the procedures at The Open, the new procedures that you have to go through?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: I don't even know what they are.

Q. So you can't go to pubs, restaurants, grocery stores.

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Yeah, it is what it is, man. It's just a part of the life that we live in right now.

Q. I'm assuming the answer's no, but do you have any plans for like are you going to rent a house?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Yeah, we're renting a house for sure. We'll just be staying in the house probably. Hopefully there's a ping pong table or corn hole boards or something I can do by myself.

Q. Will it just be part of your team, no family?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Yeah, just the team. No family unfortunately.

Q. Can you just expand on the luck explanation of what happened?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Okay. I mean, I slipped on 13. Everybody was apparently slipping on 13 and I didn't know that. I slipped two days in a row, then got in a bad lie, which you're expecting, it's the U.S. Open, but it's a part of life. I could have hit it five more feet to the right across the cart path and gone for the green. So it's just one of those things that a little bit of luck there.

And then a streaker, that was fun.

Then just laid up into a bad lie in the right rough, had a bad line. And then, you know, I just feel like my driver's kind of a bit of luck. Sometimes I pull it, sometimes I push it and on 17 I pulled it into a bad lie or in the hazard and then hit a great wedge shot and it spun off the front edge into a really bad lie and just hit it off the hosel and went over the green. That's what it is. It's just things compounding on each other that you just can't necessarily control fully. You hit a great shot, nothing happened for you. That's luck.

Q. On the flip side, when you won the U.S. Open at Winged Foot, was luck a big factor?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Yeah, huge factor. I mean, On 14 I hit it left. I think it was 14. Yeah, 14, hit it left, into a dead spot where the pin was left as well. and I was kind of on an upslope and I was trying to hit it 20 feet past but I chunked it. It came out dead just on the front edge and trickled to 10 feet and I made the 10-footer to have a flip flop again with Matthew to give myself a four-shot advantage. You're going to need those to win. Every golf tournament has that. People don't realize how much luck plays a big factor. You can control a lot, but at the end of the day, still luck is a huge component of it.

Q. And coming here where you've obviously had success, the field on paper's not really strong. Is this a good week to build confidence even more?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: It's still a strong field. Anytime you've got players in the top 50, 100, they're still great players. We're all really good, we're within a couple shots of each other, so anybody can win. It's just going to be who's going to be the most patient, who's going to play the best over the course of four days, who's going to make the most putts. That's really honestly what it is every week.

Q. Bryson, a couple questions from media on the line here. What athletes are you most excited to meet at the Olympics?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: I don't know if we can, really.

Q. Under normal circumstances, who might you be looking forward to see?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Well, Ryan Murphy's a swimmer. We've been talking online so he wants to meet up. That would be fun. I would love to meet some of the professional ping pong players. I'm a huge ping pong advocate, I love it, but unfortunately things are going to be a little more difficult. So hopefully I can some way somehow.

Q. Can you talk about the decision to play the Olympics in light of those logistical challenges that you're referring to?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: I mean, anytime you get to represent your country, you can't miss that opportunity, at least for me. I want to experience it once in a lifetime even if it is going to be weird. I don't know, just always weird events, weird things just happen to me and situations that I can't explain. Just how I won two NCAA -- I won NCAA Championship and U.S. Amateur the same year, never expected that, how that changed my life. Playing in a world amateur team event, not expecting to make the team but people dropping out. There's just weird things happened in my life that I've had to experience and this Olympics is going to be different but for me, you know, again, I'm okay with it. I love the opportunity to represent my country.

Q. Seeing in person how the Rocket Mortgage team has implemented the Changing the Course initiatives on and inclusion, how much more can you get behind their efforts as a face of this tournament?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Yeah, that's why I'm a part of the Rocket family. They've done so much for Changing the Course initiative in the 313 area, it's something that from the technological divide that we have here and everywhere around the country, I think it's an important issue to get behind it and I certainly look forward to helping in any way I can. That's why I'm here this week.

Q. Last question on the wedge play as an area to address, what's the strategy going forward? Have you looked at a different length, type of wedge? I saw the changes you made with the putter, so what are you going to look at doing specifically?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: I've tried different lengths. It's not the length, it's the way I swing the golf club. There are times when I wedged it really well, so I don't know yet.