

**PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
NOVEMBER 3, 2021**

BROOKS KOEPKA



DOUG MILNE: We'd like to welcome world No. 13, Brooks Koepka, to the interview room here at the World Wide Technology Championship here at Mayakoba.

Brooks, thank you for joining us. We always do appreciate it and we won't take much of your time. You're making your third start here in the event. Just a couple comments on the decision to add this to your schedule. And I know you haven't had a chance to see the course other than the pro-am nine, but just some thoughts on that and being back here this week.

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, it's nice to be back. I think the course is even in better condition than it was last year. Not as soft, greens seem a lot better, just overall condition seems a lot better than it was last year, so it will be exciting. And good weather.

Yeah, just added this. I've been playing so bad for so long, so I'm just trying to play my way out of this thing and figure it out. You know, hopefully we come out the other side soon.

DOUG MILNE: Your comment on thinking of playing so bad that I'll skip my second question of how you feel like you're coming into the week. I did have one write-in question from someone who couldn't get online and his question was, how important was your experience playing in Europe early on as far as kind of setting the stage for you to become the world-class player that you are today?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, it was a big thing for me. I think maybe not so much as far as golf-wise, maybe more of just becoming a man and growing maturity-wise off the golf course and things like that. I think it was very, very important.

I mean, I got to travel the world and do what I love to do for the first three years of my pro career in places I've never been. I really enjoyed that. When I look back, I think that's part of why I've had the success that I've had.

Q. Brooks, with the news that Greg Norman's now going to be the CEO of this new LIV Golf Investments situation that is operating over on the Asian Tour, I'm just wondering what were your thoughts on that news and where do you stand on sort of the potential? Seems like there's all these different tours and things like going on.

BROOKS KOEPKA: Seems like there's a bunch of stuff going on, but at the end of the day there's only one tour I'm playing right now, so I'm only interested in that one.

Q. Just a quick follow-up, how important is it to you to be able to pick your own

schedule?

BROOKS KOEPKA: The freedom to be my own boss is nice, so I enjoy that.

Q. I'm writing about the evolution of golf and golfers. With that in mind, I will like to ask you what do you think about the way the introduction of new technological tools has changed the landscape of professional golf and what software do you use in your trainings and what do they track?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I really don't use much of TrackMan. I bought TrackMan years ago and I think after like two weeks I just gave it to my brother.

For me, that's just how it goes. I get too consumed in numbers and numbers that are unimportant in trying to make everything perfect. I've kind of done that even with like a yardage book, I can get kind of consumed in the information and want to know everything and want everything to be perfect. You know, golf, you can't be perfect in this game. So I've kind of learned that, so kind of put all the information to the side.

Yeah, I think it's a big thing. You see over the last maybe five years guys are relying on it week in and week out. It's not me, I'm more of a feel player. I think in all sports you're starting to see it. In baseball you've got spin rotation on their ball, fast ball, curveball, slider, all this stuff. It's the same in golf, the more information the better, especially if you know what you're looking for and know which ones to kind of pick apart and really focus on and which ones not to.

Q. Brooks, first off, welcome to Mexico. What do you think about this golf course in Mayakoba and this tournament that every time more players from the world rankings, top players are coming here to play this golf course in Mayakoba? And what does it say about playing this tournament out from the United States, it's attracting a lot of big-time players?

BROOKS KOEPKA: It's nice. I think you see from when I first came down here in maybe, if I had to guess '14, '15, '16, somewhere around there the first time I played it. Yeah, the field's getting better and better every year. I think that's what you're seeing on the PGA TOUR, guys are getting better and better.

The players, the field's deep just pretty much every week. It's cool to see. I don't want to say the smaller events, but a lot more bigger names are coming to events that weren't previously or didn't previously have the big names. I think that has a lot to do with the FedExCup, the wraparound season, guys don't want to fall behind. There's a lot of things that play into it, but it's nice to be down here and see guys like J.T. coming, myself. And also, too, it's fun for the fans to see because you watch on TV a lot, it's nice to see it in person.

Q. For example, can you tell us about have you seen if you have been able to watch anything from Abraham Ancer and Carlos Ortiz, who in the last year have won

tournaments, and what does that do for golf in Mexico to have these events and then winning?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, no, it's obviously big. If they're going to keep winning, you're going to see a lot of younger kids growing up idolizing them, getting into the game, becoming fans of the game and fans of them. I think it's cool to see.

It's definitely grown massively down here I think in the last two years with what they've done. I think it's very important for golf. We want to be a sport that's worldwide, known in every country, everybody's playing it. I think that's a big thing. You want these kids idolizing them growing up and come to play, exactly like I did. Everybody that's out here idolized somebody. I think you're going to start to see a lot more guys paving that way even in the next five years. Instead of two, three guys, you'll see maybe five to 10. I think that just shows the impact they have.

Q. I'm going to ask you the same thing I asked J.T. and try to do it better, which I seriously doubt, but we have a collection of top stars who kind of move the sport. JT put it at about 10 to 15, I don't know what you would think about that, who not only move the sport but are about to get more and more rewarded.

My question is, how do you reach that level? Is it strictly winning? Is it winning big tournaments? Is there more to that? And if you're kind of a young college kid coming out, what does it take to reach that upper kind of elite level? I think that sucked, but good luck with it.

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah. Obviously winning cures all. I think that's the big thing. If you can come out, come play well, it's going to take care of everything.

With that being said, I think I kind of get your question. It depends, I think the world's changing so much with, you know, internet, Instagram, TikTok, all this stuff. If you get some kid that becomes famous on that come up and he's a hell of a player and he gets out here, he could be more famous than any of us, the following that they have, bringing different people into the game, stuff like that. I think it would be really interesting to see the next 10 years this next generation come through.

As far as golf-wise, winning's the ultimate cure.

Q. I guess with you I always think back to you and Jordan, both kind of missing the cut in the second stage there in Dallas. He had a little bit more, I don't know if pedigree is the right word --

BROOKS KOEPKA: Um-hmm.

Q. -- but certainly profile.

BROOKS KOEPKA: No, you're right.

Q. Not to single out Jordan here, but would that make it easier for someone like that compared to someone who really just has to go out and I don't want to call them a journeyman at age 20, but someone who doesn't have that type of recognition, is it harder for that person?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I think so, but at the same time they've proven themselves week in -- I don't want to say week in and week out, amateur golf, you're not playing week in and week out, but you've still got to prove yourself. To be flat out honest, Jordan won a hell of a lot more than I did in junior golf, even out here (Laughs.) He was a big name. Everybody loves Jordan. He's a nice guy, does all the right things, says all the right things. I think you can see that's why he's so well loved by not only guys out here, guys he plays with, sponsors, all these different things.

Yeah, I think it just comes down to playing good, that's really what I think it boils down to. Like I said, it would be interesting to see how crazy the social media stuff is and how famous you can be as a 12-year-old on TikTok or something like that. One of those kids gets good out here, I think he could be probably bigger than the rest of it, and he doesn't even need to be as good, to be honest with you.

Q. Your brother's playing the Q-School for PGA TOUR Latinoamerica this weekend. Each year more and more players come the route from the PGA TOUR of America to winning on the PGA TOUR. What do you think is the best route to get eventually to the PGA TOUR?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I don't know if there's a right route to do it, I think it's so individualized. I don't want to speak for my brother, but for me, I love the way I did it. I wouldn't want to do it any other way. I grew so much as a person, a player. Really just kind of was able to focus on golf for three years and really kind of devote myself to it. If I didn't do that, I wouldn't be where I am today, I don't believe.

Now, my brother, he tried it and I don't think he was as fond of it as I was, or didn't embrace it or enjoy it. I don't know that for a fact, but I'm -- like I said, I'm not speaking for him, but I'm assuming that's what it is because he did come back here and wanted to play Korn Ferry, got his card over here. It's going to be a different route for him missing out on Q-School, I felt real bad for him, but he played well yesterday, shot 6 under.

You know, one of those things where you've just got to pay your dues I don't want to say on the lower tours, just keep grinding away and hope every week's going to be your week or the next week's going to be your week where it's a breakthrough.

There's a lot of guys who deserve to be out here just aren't out here. They just haven't caught the break. It's all about timing, whether you play good one week. Whether it be Q-School or Monday qualify, whatever it might be, there's plenty of different routes, which I

think makes this sport so beautiful. There's plenty of different ways to get here.

Q. Brooks, you mentioned at the beginning that you feel like you've been playing so bad for so long. Knowing that you're not a range rat, how do you go about trying to play your way out of that? Is it hoping something clicks or are you working on something specific?

BROOKS KOEPKA: No, I'm a range rat, I'll sit on the range all day. I'm healthy now, so I can practice and do everything I want to do.

I've just been grinding, man. You go through periods where you just feel like you've got no control of the clubhead or you don't know exactly where your swing is and what you're doing. It's just frustrating.

I don't think I'm playing as bad as probably I've let on, but the consistency's just not there, there's certain shots that just aren't there. Not what I'm used to seeing I guess is a good way to put it.

Look at it, it's been tough. I mean, injuries for two years. I've got surgery on the right knee. Left knee's, I mean, better now, but it wasn't good for a while. You start making compensations because you can't -- I mean, like I still, when my knee bends a little bit, I still don't know how far it's bending. If everybody's ever had surgery, you still don't know kind of where you're at for a bit and maybe hesitant to get on the left side when the left knee was hurting. Right knee, you're kind of playing this yo-yo game and trying to find a balance.

It's been a little bit more difficult, a lot more work's been put in. Like I said, I'm just trying to play my way through it. Originally I wasn't going to play this event, but I just, I'm not going to get any better sitting at home. I'd rather come out here and, not saying I'm trying to miss the cut, but if I miss the cut, at least I've put in work and maybe found something. Sometimes I've left tournaments with a missed cut and found something, or that one golf shot on the 17th hole, you hit it and you've got a feeling. That's all you're looking for, that one feeling and you almost seem like you're on your way and just going on the right track. You never know, you could rattle off a good year, a good couple months, whatever it might be just from that one swing.

DOUG MILNE: Brooks, that's all we've got. We appreciate your time as always. Have a great week.

BROOKS KOEPKA: Thanks.