

**PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE**  
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**STEPHAN JAEGER**

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**MODERATOR:** We are joined with our defending champion, Stephan Jaeger, here at the Texas Children's Houston Open.

Stephan, welcome back. Want to start off with some comments what it's like to be back as the defending champion of your first win?

**STEPHAN JAEGER:** Yeah, it's a first one for me. It's been nice, yeah. Obviously the golf course looks very similar to last year. Weather doesn't look quite as good this year, I think we may get some rain.

Excited to be here. Obviously having the parking spot and over the locker was a really cool touch. So I'm excited to be here, good memories obviously from last year.

And the golf course, like I said, looks very similar. I haven't seen some of the changes, I think they added a couple tee boxes so I'll see that tomorrow in the pro-am. But yeah, I'm super excited to be here.

**MODERATOR:** Mentioned good memories. Any specific memories from on 18 green or family there to congratulate you?

**STEPHAN JAEGER:** Yeah, absolutely. I mean, that one I won't forget ever. First win and have my family and my little son there, it was really a special moment.

It kind of, you know, I've said this before, it was kind of one of those where I didn't -- in the moment you know having Scottie miss that short putt, you don't really want to be overjoyed because you know I don't ever wish bad on anybody, but after I didn't really care too much after that, but it was definitely a memory I won't forget. Some of the shots, I remember we just played five and I think either they lost a tree or they took the tree out, I'm not sure. Just some memories of some shots you hit and some putts you made maybe definitely came up today for sure.

**MODERATOR:** First title defense on Tour, how does this kind of differ feelings wise than a regular normal week on Tour?

**STEPHAN JAEGER:** Yeah, I mean, obviously this, I don't really get asked very often to press conferences so that's a new one. I'd love to get used to that, that means you're doing well and you're doing things pretty well during the year.

You know, obviously people that watched you last year and watched you win, all the



Houston Astros Foundation and all those guys that I might not remember but they remember me because I was their champion last year. Anybody that's going to come up this week, I hope that I was a worthy one from last year and I hope to do just as well this year and play well again.

**MODERATOR:** Making tenth start of the season coming off a very challenging Florida Swing, what have been takeaways of playing some very difficult golf courses the past three weeks?

**STEPHAN JAEGER:** Yeah, not even golf courses, it was the weather, too. We had a bunch of wind. Honestly, the three events that we played, there was at least one or two days that it was very windy. So, like you said, it was a very challenging month with hard golf courses, hard conditions.

But you know this golf course isn't a cakewalk, either. Obviously with the weather coming in it's going to be soft, it's going to play even longer, the greens won't quite be as maybe firm or fast, but I think I won at 12 under last year. The scores won't be super low. It's a different challenge than, for instance, last week. The views are wide open off the tee, but it's definitely a second shot golf course to where you have to miss it in the right spot.

Like I said, it's a different challenge. It's not quite as claustrophobic as maybe Bay Hill or THE PLAYERS or even last week at Valspar, but it definitely has its teeth around this place, for sure.

**MODERATOR:** I may have a few more then, but Cameron, if you have some.

**Q. When you remember that final round last year, how much did you find yourself scoreboard watching, because I think you had five people who finished a shot behind you? How much do you remember just the chaos of that final round?**

**STEPHAN JAEGER:** Yeah, honestly, chaos is a great word because chaos is when you know you're around the lead on Saturday or Sunday, chaos comes up all the time. So you've got to almost embrace that a little bit because your mind's racing, but then you're like, oh, crap, I've got to focus on what I'm doing.

That chaos is awesome because that means you're doing something well and your body feels that, right?

I do remember, I remember 13, little short par 4. I had gotten a pretty bad lie and I hit it over the green, which is just a terrible spot, so chaos there like, God, I could make a 10 there. I end up making like a 20-footer for par, which kind of calmed -- once again, you calm that chaos down a little bit.

Obviously on 18 I was pretty calm. It was the first time that I really knew it was either going to be me or Scottie that are going to have a chance to win. After I hit the second shot, I had,



what, 25 feet maybe for birdie. I knew some of the guys had finished. I think Tosti made a bogey I think on 18 that dropped him one back. I actually hit a really good putt on 17 for birdie, I remember that, and I missed it. Probably one of the worst strokes I made that week.

I remember I was close. I didn't know exactly where I was and I looked at a scoreboard on 18 and I saw that he made bogey. I think I was leading by one at that point and it was just me and Scottie left on the golf course. I knew if I could beat him on the hole or tie him I had a good chance.

There definitely was a little bit of scoreboard watching the last couple holes. Before that I just -- you know, the golf course played pretty hard last year so I just kind of stayed in survival mode and tried to make as many pars as possible.

**Q. Are you a player who's in the past been able to handle emotions in those situations or how much did that win over the past year, because I know you've been in contention a couple times even this season, how much has that win kind of helped you in those moments?**

**STEPHAN JAEGER:** Yeah, you know, I think the more you're there, obviously the more comfortable you get. I felt really good the two times I had a chance this year to do something on Sunday and it didn't pan out the way I wanted to, but that doesn't -- it definitely kind of ingrains that belief like, hey, you know what, it didn't work out this time but I know you're good enough to do it, right?

Golf is such a hard game and I think we forget sometimes how hard winning is. When you get -- see those guys that are winning, Rory won twice in four events, right, but winning is really hard. I think if you tell yourself that, you kind of get a sense of relief over it. We just try our best on every round, every shot and if the last putt drops and you have a chance to win, that's great.

But it's more like the fun is more the chase rather than the trophy in the end. That chance to make a putt on 18 or make a birdie on 18 or even have a chance for the back nine, that's really where the fun begins, for sure.

**Q. Like you mentioned, kind of coming off a pretty difficult stretch in Florida, how much were you anticipating getting back here just to kind of relive the memories of just pulling in the parking lot and just whatever floods your mind?**

**STEPHAN JAEGER:** Yeah, you know, I added Valspar late because I felt like I needed a little bit more reps. I took some time off last year and I wasn't playing good. I felt like I was close, but I played decent at THE PLAYERS. I went home for a couple days after Valspar. I went home Sunday night and I got here this morning, so that refresher was huge for me. I feel like two nights in your own bed kind of refreshes you.

I wanted to be fresh this week because I knew there was going to be a lot of chaos, like you



called it, right? Like the media is going to want more. Obviously on the first tee you're going to have more emotions. I wanted to be kind of mentally there this week, mentally refresh for this week.

It really worked that I got to go home for a few days and be here mentally, be present and really enjoy and also take everything in. That's my first one, so defending is a high privilege and I'm happy to be here, for sure.

**Q. Are you much of a superstitious guy? Are you staying at the same place this year you did last year, are you going to eat the same food? What's kind of your routine for the week?**

**STEPHAN JAEGER:** No. I have a few I wouldn't even call it super -- I try to stick with the same routine, golf routine, which has changed from last year. So no, I would not say I'm doing the same thing. We have a different house this year. My wife's not coming in till Thursday, so it's a lot of different things.

There's a couple things that I'll do the same that I do the same every week, but I won't do anything the same as -- I can't even remember what we ate last year to be honest with you. I mean, my kid was there so the chances are we got takeout a lot and ate at the house I would imagine.

Yeah, my wife's coming in. The little one's going to stay at home this week. We're going to have a couple nice dinners with some friends this week and enjoy kind of being around everybody and having I guess the spotlight on you for a little bit for this week, for sure.

**MODERATOR:** Is there anywhere special you have your trophy displayed from last year?

**STEPHAN JAEGER:** I have a trophy room at home. We just moved in our house last year and that was one that's kind of front and center. I have some of the Korn Ferry and Web.com ones kind of tucked away on the side and this one definitely is in the center. Obviously it's my biggest win to date. So I would love to kind of add a few more this year, maybe another Houston Open trophy, who knows.

**MODERATOR:** Perfect. Thanks, Stephan, for the time.

