

PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE
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JOHNNY KEEFER

MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Johnny Keefe here to the media center at the 2026 Valero Texas Open. Johnny, a little bit of a home game for you this week. I guess just to open it up, what are you looking forward to this week at TPC San Antonio?

JOHNNY KEEFER: Yeah, just excited to be back here. It's a place that I grew up watching the tournament and playing all the time in high school matches and all that stuff. Just really excited to be here, definitely sleeping in my own bed.

MODERATOR: Between high school and college, how many times have you played this course? I know it's the first one for the Valero Texas Open, but you're familiar with the course itself.

JOHNNY KEEFER: Yeah. I mean, I've played it a million times. Both courses, Canyons and the Oaks. Played it in college as well. We had one tournament in college and yeah, have a lot of really good experiences out here. Just super excited to be out here.

MODERATOR: Last one from me before we open it up for questions. Top 3 last week in Houston, best finish you've had on Tour so far. How gratifying was it to see that result and do you think you can kind of carry that momentum moving forward?

JOHNNY KEEFER: Yeah. I mean, this is a really tough course regardless of how you're playing. The wind can get up as you guys can see this week, and you've just got to hit a bunch of really good shots.

It's really nice to have some sort of momentum. Houston was a great week especially after the Florida Swing where I kind of struggled a little bit. Just yeah, really excited for how last week went and going into this week how the game's feeling. But it was just a completely different test and super excited for it.

Q. Johnny, congrats on the year so far. What's been the most surprising thing that's happened to you in your rookie year so far?

JOHNNY KEEFER: You know, honestly, the most surprising thing would be I actually hadn't missed many consecutive cuts. I don't know how many that would be, but I think I missed only one consecutive cut in a row and I missed three in the Florida Swing. That was a little bit surprising. The game felt really good, but at the same time the third place in Houston after those cuts felt really awesome. It just shows how unpredictable this game is.

Yeah, I mean, you've just got to realize that each week is a different week. Regardless of



how you played the week before, just keep trying to improve. Just the constant grind that some of these guys have and the mental resiliency of some of these guys is really impressive.

Q. Johnny, what have you learned about this course from playing it thousands of times that you can kind of leverage this week and how does that help you, if at all?

JOHNNY KEEFER: You've got to hit the ball really well. I think everyone out here knows that, so I wouldn't necessarily say I have too much more experience out here other than maybe just a few green reads, just some comfortability off the tee.

But outside of that, you've just got to hit a bunch of really good shots. There's no faking it out here. Can't really manage it too much compared to some other courses. You've just got to go out there hit a bunch of fairways, hit a bunch of greens, give yourself a lot of chances just like any other week.

Q. And the process of preparing for a tournament and this week in general, how is it different when you're on family ground?

JOHNNY KEEFER: Yeah, I've got a great support team. I've had a lot of weeks in a row already. This week I kind of was able to take it a little bit lighter. I played three holes yesterday, practiced for just a little bit.

Mostly just trying to relax the body, relax the mind, come in super fresh and feel a little bit more relaxed about this tournament than others but in a way like in a good way. I'm not beating myself up, I'm not grinding, I'm not out here for four or five hours every day. Especially in this wind, a lot of tendencies can come out and just kind of you want to keep practicing, want to keep going, but kind of slowing myself down and understanding that I'm going to be more mentally and physically prepared this week than maybe some others.

Q. Coming off last week, your best result on PGA TOUR, I think that came with a new putter in the bag and potentially a new one this week. Just tell me what you're testing, what you're liking, what you're seeing with those.

JOHNNY KEEFER: Yeah, it's not really much of a secret, the putter's been really good in the past and just recently, you know, wasn't quite working as well. Just wanted to see something a little different just comfortability wise. Probably the worst thing that I could do is go out on the course feeling uncomfortable with a putter. So just trying to get super comfortable out there. It was nice to start seeing some of the putts start to drop, especially on Sunday last week, which was a big day.

This week it's going to be the same thing. It's a little bit of a recency bias, but I putted somewhat well last week. I feel like I'm trending in the right direction. Nothing's set in my bag, nothing's irreplaceable so far as you can see. Yeah, I think I'm making a lot of the right decisions just comfortability wise on the greens.



Q. Any extra pressure you can get from being local? Can you describe how does that feel? Are you looking forward to that? Is it also motivating? What's the feeling?

JOHNNY KEEFER: Yeah, I kind of had to do that in college a little bit, we had a college tournament out here. You have a lot of friends, family they're just like, oh, yeah, big week, like you can win this week, you've got it, you've got it. I just keep telling everyone, and I think they're all super supportive and understand it too, a lot of my friends understand that golf's really hard, you can't take experience for granted but you can also lean too much on it sometimes.

Just being out here having a support group that whether I do good or bad, they're out here for me and they're out here cheering me on. It's really an awesome thing. I'm really excited for it. I'm going to have a lot of people out here, friends, family, but that doesn't change the fact that I've still got to come out here and play, do my job and have some fun.

Q. San Antonio fans are unique, some of them even describing them as crazy Hispanics. Do you expect or are crazy Hispanic fans welcome at Valero Texas Open supporting you?

JOHNNY KEEFER: It's San Antonio, you know, we have a really passionate crowd and fans. I actually went to a Spurs game the other night and it's just so much fun. I always love going to Spurs games. I can only imagine what they're like this week. I've been a part of the fans, so now it's kind of fun to be inside the ropes.

Q. Along those same lines, you said earlier you feel comfortable sleeping in your own bed this week. You're not that far out of -- not that long ago since you lived here. Are you talking about TPC San Antonio or are you actually talking about the house you grew up in?

JOHNNY KEEFER: Yeah, a lot of people don't know this, but I still live with my parents. My fiancée's still in med school, she's kind of traveling around, I'm traveling around, and right now we haven't settled on one spot that we're going to move to.

Yeah, as of right now I'm sleeping in my own bed in my parents' house. I really enjoy it, save up the money and we'll see and go from there.

Q. Johnny, first off, go Jags. My kids went to Johnson just like you did.

JOHNNY KEEFER: Yeah.

Q. Secondly, kind of back to what his question was regarding maybe a little pressure but is it more of an inspiration that you, Mac Meissner, some others are in that next wave of Texas Tour pros and kind of want to carry that torch that Scottie, Jordan and others sort of have laid for you?



JOHNNY KEEFER: Yeah, it's something that we all dreamed of. I definitely have imagined myself playing this tournament a lot of times, and it's something that I've always dreamed of. I can't take for granted. It's an awesome tournament, it's an awesome venue.

Me and Mac grew up playing high school golf, and Mitchell, his older brother as well. And some of these other Texas guys, we've always paid attention more to the Texas Swing, that's just how it is. We live here and we're really passionate about it. Obviously looking up to guys like Scottie Scheffler and some of the other Texas guys out here. Being on the same tour as them, competing against them, it's a dream come true.

Q. Johnny, envisioning yourself in this position you mentioned also with a potential auto bid to the Masters on the line, what does that mean to you and how much are you thinking about that?

JOHNNY KEEFER: Well, the nice part is I've got that behind me. Last winter I should say, at the RSM I secured the top-50 in the world invitation with seventh place. That was my best finish at the time, so it was kind of nice just to have the momentum I think is big. I said last year if I didn't get in, I didn't want to put too much pressure on myself. I just wanted to play well going into the Masters whether I was in or not. It's nice because last week was big for momentum and hopefully I can carry that momentum into the Masters next week.

Q. We're curious, obviously there's a big week this week but do you follow the Aon standings at all and are you aware that you're projected to qualify for the RBC Heritage with one event left in the swing?

JOHNNY KEEFER: I'm not going to lie to you, I don't follow that very much. At the same time, like it's great. I tell my parents all the time it's like I don't really like to pay attention to the rankings or anything like that. I know good golf's going to take me to some really good places and some bad golf, you know, probably won't. It's really simple. You play well and you get to go to some pretty cool spots. You don't and you might miss out on some cool opportunities.

Yeah, just looking forward to it. And now I do now, but again, it's just more motivation, more fuel to the fire.

Q. A quick followup, too. What would you say is the benefit of earning spots into some of the strongest fields on Tour?

JOHNNY KEEFER: I mean, I think it's just a continuation. It, one, validates that I'm meant to be there, I'm meant to be here, I'm meant to compete against the best. It's just a great opportunity and something that I've always dreamed of, something that I can be really happy about. But also motivate myself and continue to put myself in those spots so that maybe I don't have to worry about that because I'm already in it. It's something to look forward to.



Q. Johnny, how many times would you say you've been here as a spectator when you were younger and did you have any particularly memorable experiences?

JOHNNY KEEFER: This was my first real big event that I went to. I went to Torrey Pines when I was really young. I lived in San Diego for a little bit, so that was another one that I was really passionate about.

But this one was one where I was actually big into golf at the time. I had just focused and switched sports, my main sport to golf. So coming out here, getting to see some role models like Jordan Spieth, Jimmy Walker and some of these other Texas guys that I had followed pretty closely and see them in person. I've been out here probably five or six times because in college, it's usually during the season so I couldn't come down, but also followed it really closely anyways.

Q. Apologies if you already talked about this. Are you still living here?

JOHNNY KEEFER: I am, yeah. Yeah, still living with my parents. It's nice not having to worry about when I come home, going to get groceries, going to take out the trash as much, just doing my regular chores. But that's more just them being nice and letting me stay in the house for a little bit longer than most.

Q. Do you know what your career low is out here? Do you have any fond memories of playing the course?

JOHNNY KEEFER: I'm hoping it's going to come this week. I'd have to say it's probably like 61 or 62. I can't say for certain.

Q. And do you practice much with Jimmy? Has he taken you under his wing a bit as you've come out on the Tour?

JOHNNY KEEFER: Jimmy actually, we went and took a little scouting trip to Augusta. We both have the same Insperity sponsorship and we went during the Bay Hill week and we played 36 holes. He was kind of slowing me inside the ropes, kind of told me the small nuances that you kind of learn from playing there over the years.

Yeah, he's a great guy. Just gotten to really know him. But there's a lot of other great guys out here as well.

Q. You mentioned Spieth earlier. Has there been any moments this year especially in pairings where you've been starstruck with any sort of pairings or just on and around the course?

JOHNNY KEEFER: I think early in the year I got some pretty cool weekend pairings. In Hawaii played with Hideki, which was really awesome. Played with Webb Simpson, and then the next week I think I played with Adam Scott, Nick Taylor. I've actually played with Adam a



decent amount on the weekend this year, probably three times now.

Yeah, just a lot of really cool guys. I think the biggest thing that I've learned is they're just normal guys. They play golf for a living as well, and they've been really good at it for a long time. It's something that maybe makes you change your mind about them when you're outside the ropes, but then when you're inside and you're actually talking to them, they're just normal dudes. So it's been really cool to kind of learn and talk to them.

MODERATOR: Johnny, thanks for the time. Best of luck this week.

