

U.S. Open Championship 2018

Tuesday, June 12, 2018

Patrick Reed

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good morning, and welcome to day two of the 2018 U.S. Open Championship at Shinnecock Hills Golf Club. Very pleased this morning to welcome the 2018 Masters Champion, Patrick Reed. He claimed his first Major victory two months ago with a one-stroke victory over Rickie Fowler at Augusta National Golf Club.

Can you talk a little bit about the last two months and sort of what the whirlwind of that's been like?

PATRICK REED: It's been a whirlwind for sure, but it's been so much fun, and, you know, it's just been -- it's been awesome to be able to reflect on, you know, succeeding at something that we've worked so hard and dreamed of, winning a Major. To be able to win the first one of the year and to become Masters champion, it feels great. But, you know, we can't wait to get back out to work and hopefully have a good week here and have a chance come late Sunday.

THE MODERATOR: Speaking of here, you just mentioned you've been here for a few days now, playing in your fifth U.S. Open. Can you talk about returning to the U.S. Open as a Major champion and, also, your first reflections of Shinnecock the last few days?

PATRICK REED: To be able to come to, you know, the U.S. Open, especially after winning the last Major, definitely gives me a little more confidence and gives me that self-belief as well as comfort level that whatever comes down Sunday, if we have a chance to win the golf tournament, I've done it before. So I'm able to kind of build on those experiences from the last Major and, you know, hopefully be able to apply them this week.

This golf course is unbelievable. Ever since I showed up and I got on property, I've loved it ever since. And, you know, the area and the weather has just been -- has been phenomenal, and any time you can do that, it allows the USGA and everybody to get the golf course exactly how they want it, and, you know, I'm just looking forward to the week and can't wait to get started.

THE MODERATOR: Excellent. Look forward to it as well. We'll open it to questions.

Q. Patrick, how do you compare, contrast the challenges you're going to face here to the ones that you faced in Augusta?

PATRICK REED: I thought, first off, I think the biggest thing is this place has hay and really thick rough. And at Augusta -- Augusta, it seems like they have more of the kind of hanging lies, a lot of not really many flat lies. So you're having to control golf balls working against slopes.

And a place like this, it's almost completely opposite. You have -- if you miss a fairway, it's thick rough, sometimes having to hack out and chip it back to the fairway. The big defense here is the wind. And at Augusta, the big defense is the firm, fast greens and sloped fairways with awkward lies.

Q. Patrick, could you give us some details on when you got here, what days you played, how many holes you've played, and is there one hole that really stands out for you?

PATRICK REED: I got here Sunday night. Last Sunday, right after Memorial. And I played in the member tournament on Monday, and I played every day except for Saturday. I took Saturday off and, you know, just been out here grinding, enjoying the area, and just having some fun.

And I would say the one hole that sticks out, of course, is hole 7. I've heard stories about it, and I've watched it from '04 but never actually got to experience it. So to be able to come out and play that hole for the first time, you know, it's a fun little par 3.

Q. Patrick, there are two challenges. First, winning a Major Championship, and then winning or coping with the inevitable surge of interest that hits you after you've won your first. How do you think you are coping with all the extra interest in you? And could you mark yourself out of 10, say, at that?

PATRICK REED: I feel like I've been coping it and handling it really well. You know, after winning a Major, there's going to be more obligations and more things that come besides playing golf. You really have to know how to manage your time and manage your energy level, and I feel like the way my team and I have kind of set game plans going on and everything, I feel like we've managed my time where I get the most out of my time as well as been able to conserve energy

when I need it. So then when I get to game time, I'm able to put all my energy at that point.

Q. We know how you've always responded to the pressure in the Ryder Cup. But now, when you look yourself in the mirror, how do you feel like you've changed since winning a Major? Just as a person and a player.

PATRICK REED: Honestly, I mean, I don't really feel like I really changed as much as just, you know, all the hard work and all the stuff that we've done to try to get to that point, to be able to win a Major, has finally paid off.

You know, the feeling you get walking up 18 and making the putt on the last hole to win a Major is unbelievable, and it's a feeling you always want to get back to. You know, I feel like it's just made me more hungry to go out, work harder, and try to succeed even more.

Q. Patrick, now that you're an expert on Shinnecock, being here this long, can you talk about what you've learned in the week you've been here, what are the attributes you think are going to be necessary to succeed here, and what you may have had to change in your game, if anything, over this week to be successful here?

PATRICK REED: I think the biggest thing is I finally feel like I'm playing a U.S. Open that I'm used to seeing growing up, where a couple under par is a good score.

I mean, I played my first one was at Pinehurst, which was changed back to the old, old way Pinehurst was. When I played there during the U.S. Am, it was really thick rough if you missed the fairway. Now it's kind of more waste areas. You could still play it if you're offline.

And then, you know, you have Chambers Bay, you had Erin Hills, and then Oakmont. Oakmont, if you missed fairways, you were in the thick rough. But Oakmont definitely wasn't a drawer's golf course. Every iron shot had to be cutting, and I kind of struggled there.

But I got to this golf course, and it seemed like it brought everything out. Even though it's a long golf course, you have to be able to work the ball both ways. You have to be able to flight the ball depending on wind. So any little detail of your golf game that's not on is going to be exposed.

And I feel like it's a complete golf course, complete place, and you just need to be sharp in all aspects.

Q. Some seem to think that today's pros, with the distance they have, are going to chew this place

up, despite the length they added. Are you finding that you can score out there during these practice rounds?

PATRICK REED: Yeah, I mean, you definitely can score. I mean, there's a couple of rounds when the wind lays down, and, you know, earlier in this week, it was really soft. So the balls -- I mean, on Monday, when I played, it had northeast winds, which is the opposite winds it's supposed to have. They put us on the back area tee box, and I had four 3 woods into par 4 and a 3 wood into a par 3. Even with lengthening it, if it plays soft, even though you're going to be able to attack the greens, you're hitting a lot of very long clubs into the green so it's going to be hard to get the ball close.

So it just kind of depends on how they want it to play. If it plays firm and fast, they can move around tee boxes. If it's firm and fast, you have to hit drives down the middle. You can't put it on the edges because it's not going to hold the fairway. If it plays soft, then all of a sudden, if they move the tee boxes back, you're hitting a lot of really long clubs into the green, so it's going to be hard to get close and make a lot of birdies. You're going to have to putt really well.

I feel like they have it in a situation right now that, depending on how the weather turns out or depending on the firmness or softness, they can make it as difficult as they want.

Q. Patrick, you chose not to do an equipment deal this year. Can you talk a little bit about that decision and what equipment's in the bag for this week?

PATRICK REED: Really, for us, we felt like all the companies make absolutely -- make great equipment. But to get all the -- all 14 clubs and a ball to match up perfectly with a player is very hard to do. I mean, there's always something in your golf bag that you feel like might be better with a different piece of equipment than others.

Being able to sign with Nike and join the Nike team, it allowed me to free myself up to really fine tune and figure out what I feel like is the best equipment and is going to allow me to go out and play the best golf. Before that, I was able to mix and match and find what I felt like is going to allow me to consistently play better golf, day in and day out.

Q. Patrick, wanted to ask you what drives you competitively. It's a little similar question that we heard before. But whether it's you against someone pushing you in a group, you against a field, you against a continent. Where does that come from? Has it been enhanced with a Major

Championship? Has that changed at all, or has the chip gotten bigger on your shoulder?

PATRICK REED: Really, it's me against myself. I feel like, if I go out there and I set a goal out for myself to go shoot a certain number, that's what I'm chasing, try to go beat my number that I throw out as my goal that day and try to improve on every, you know, every aspect of the game. You know, if you improve just a little bit in every aspect every day, you're going to improve overall.

And, you know, I'm out there to try to win trophies. The biggest thing is try to get trophies and, you know, I keep on promising my daughter that I'm going to bring her home a trophy every time I leave the house, and so daddy needs to get on track and bring her home more trophies.

Q. Patrick, have you had to, being a Masters champion, had to say no more than you have in the past to requests because you have to focus on your game and your time at home? Has it been more nos than you'd have liked to have said because of the crush on your time?

PATRICK REED: I wouldn't say there's more nos there is just we figured out how to get it where, instead of saying no, it's like okay, guys, like I'm going to practice now, and then I'll do interviews after I get done playing. Or I'll practice now, talk after. Or I'll do it before practice.

That's kind of how it's always been. You know, when I go to the golf course, I get inside the ropes, I put my headphones on, it's time to work. Once the headphones come out and I'm done with practice, then I have no problem giving time to everybody because I enjoy giving the time and talking to everybody.

It's just as long as I'm able to get the work done while I'm inside the ropes, then after that it's still the same. I mean, nothing has changed before winning Augusta, compared to afterwards.

Q. Patrick, at what stage during the final round of the Masters (no microphone) would come from someone you couldn't see?

PATRICK REED: I mean, Rory -- I mean, with watching at Augusta in the past and stuff, I mean, the lead can't be big enough going into the back nine. It's just, you know, through experience, watching it on TV, no lead there is safe. So I never counted Rory out throughout the entire time until the putt was done on 18.

But, you know, I knew when the lead got close, when I made the putt on 12 because -- for birdie. I felt like, okay, that's where I won the golf tournament, and, you know, once that happened, as long as I don't -- as long

as I continue playing the golf I've been playing and not just catastrophically implode, that's what kind of sealed the deal for me.

And, you know, I was able to just kind of par in and make a birdie on 14 to be able to close it out, and I didn't feel like I had to play any more aggressive or really any more safe. I was just playing the middle of the greens, just trying to get the job done.

Q. A few of the players have said they've made their peace with the fact that par on the par 5s is a perfectly fine score. And I'm wondering, the way you're wired, as aggressive as you like to be, does that resonate with you? Do you see it differently?

PATRICK REED: I don't like any 5s on the scorecard, whether it's a par 4, par 5. I mean, I try to make 4 or 3 or even 2 on every hole.

So, you know, to me, it's not -- I mean, when it's a par 5, it just means I have one more shot I can hit in order to make a birdie. And, you know, I've always been -- I've always been, you know, wired to be aggressive, to play par 5s, to treat them as par 4s and try to go make par that way or a birdie on a par 4.

So I try to stay as aggressive as possible. I do not like 5s on par 5s.

Q. Patrick, for the viewer watching at home, this golf course looks like a British Open course. In what ways is it actually like a British Open course? In what ways is it not?

PATRICK REED: I mean, there's very little trees out there. So, I guess you could say it kind of has that linksy style feel by looking at it, having the high fescue.

It's not as firm as it is, you know, at a links style overseas because there you can hit 3 irons, 330, 340. You know, you're hitting iron shots with wedges landing short of the green to get them to the middle of the green. So it's not as firm.

But, you know, the wind blows here like it does over there, and I would say it's kind of a mix between an American and a links style golf course because it's not quite as firm, yet at the same time, you know, you still have kind of the characteristics of it.

Q. Patrick, it's a little unusual to come to a site and stay there for the week and play it. That used to be done when Nicklaus and guys used to do it years ago. Why did you do it? Is that indicative of how much you want to win this tournament? Is it indicative that you thought you needed to get more study in at Shinnecock? What was your reasoning behind it?

PATRICK REED: Really, the biggest thing was, you know, we were going to come up right after Memorial anyways to play and probably go back Wednesday. But then our team sat down and realized, well, that's a lot of flying to fly Wednesday all the way back to Houston, then turn around and fly all the way back, you know, a couple days later.

So we decided to stay. We flew up the family, and, I mean, I basically prepared the same exact way I would at home, but instead here. And it's always nice to get a couple more rounds on a golf course you haven't seen before.

Q. Patrick, what's been the most unusual, coolest thing about being a Major champion that you maybe didn't expect to come your way?

PATRICK REED: I would say probably -- oh, I'd probably say the biggest thing would have been now no matter where you go, whether you go to a restaurant or whether you're out walking around -- you know, in Houston, I used to be able to just walk around our hometown in my normal golf clothes all logoed up, and you might get one or two people to say hello. Now, if I go in jeans and no golf whatsoever on, everyone still seems to recognize you and kind of come up. And so that was probably the biggest thing that I didn't quite expect.

But, you know, it's awesome. You know, especially around home, whenever you have all the people and all your friends and stuff that come out and support. You know, you're able to see some of the people out on the road and like, oh, yeah, remember when we saw you at this place. You're just like wow. So it's pretty neat. I would say that would probably be the biggest thing.

THE MODERATOR: Patrick, congratulations again. Thanks so much for joining us today. We wish you well throughout the week.

PATRICK REED: Thank you.