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Heart of Texas

The Jordan Spieth Family Foundation benefits from the golfer's global success—but it also plays a significant part in his daily journey. // *By Peter Swain*

JORDAN SPIETH IS USED TO overcoming adversity. On the 13th hole of Sunday's final round at Royal Birkdale in 2017, his chances of winning the British Open were hanging by a thread. A horribly sliced tee shot saw his ball land behind a monstrous sand dune, buried in the heavy rough—a double bogey beckoned. After an escape act Tiger Woods, or maybe even Harry Houdini, would be proud of, he dropped just one shot on the hole and went on to win by three.

The triple major champion is blessed with extraordinary golfing ability. But it's his steely determination to surmount life's obstacles that sets him apart, and which makes The Jordan Spieth Family Foundation (JSFF) so remarkable. For the amiable Texan, the

inspiration for his off-course charitable work is personal. "My younger sister Ellie was born with a neurological disorder, and my family's focus has always prioritized her needs. My passion for supporting individuals with special needs is because of her role in my life, and the perspective she allows me to have."

Founded in 2014 and based in the Dallas-Fort Worth neighborhood that Jordan and wife Annie call home, "the Foundation provides financial support for the four philanthropic areas that mean a great deal to us: individuals with special needs, junior golf, military families and veterans, and pediatric cancer," Spieth says.

"Ellie and her friends have struggles and joys that are so different, and it's very

ALL-ROUND EFFORTS

The hard work Jordan Spieth puts in to his success on the golf course is mirrored in his Foundation's efforts.

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grounding in light of what we do for a living. Junior golf provided me with incredible experiences and propelled my career. I've always considered myself patriotic and felt the military members were some of the most selfless people. And our final pillar, pediatric cancer, was chosen because of Annie and I knowing and watching childhood friends who battled cancer and seeing the great toll it has on families.”

To name a few of the 100-plus unique charities to have benefited directly: the 1 Million 4 Anna Foundation College Scholarship program that supports and honors young adults

who fought Ewing sarcoma; RISE Adaptive Sports, a program that assists people with physical challenges, from amputees to those with spinal-cord injuries, by offering adaptive recreational sports programs; Families for Effective Autism Treatment; and many, many more.

“While we welcome grant applications and partners from any part of the country, there is a heavy focus on the Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas area,” says Spieth. “This is where Annie and I grew up, so to be able to see, visit, and know the teams and their impact is really important to us.”

Like the Ryder and Presidents Cups in which Spieth has excelled, the Foundation relies on

LOOKING UP

JSFF supports RISE Adaptive Sports, which assists people with physical challenges to recover, inspire, succeed, and empower themselves.

teamwork. "Because of the nature of my job, I travel often, but Annie graciously lends quite a bit of time and efforts to our Foundation. We are also so fortunate to have an excellent team, including a board of directors and family members, who contribute to the vision and support of the JSFF."

One of the highlights of the Foundation's year is the annual Spieth & Friends fundraising event. "On our first night this year, Annie and I welcomed guests into our home to thank sponsors and showcase the work of our Foundation grant partners throughout 2021." The following evening's event, at Topgolf in The Colony, featured an awesome night of golf, food, and fun, with the highlight being a concert from the country singer Lee Brice. "We shifted to two evenings because it's important to us to spend time with those who support us year-long, but also welcome a wider group of friends to participate and learn about the Foundation's work. We're impact driven and every dollar we raise at Spieth & Friends is committed directly to our community partners."

As well as his regular sponsors, including NetJets, Under Armour, AT&T, Titleist, and Rolex, these events are supported by Spieth's golfing buddies and the wider PGA community.

With 15 international professional wins and counting, the game has been good to the Texan, but, as any golfer knows, the key to continued success lies between the ears. In Spieth's case, there can be little doubt that



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his family and Foundation play a crucial part in that story. As his mother, Chris, told ESPN, "Jordan wouldn't be where he is today if he hadn't grown up with Ellie." The player himself credits his sister with "keeping [me] grounded and focused as well as keeping the game of golf in perspective."

In November, the Spieth family celebrated a new arrival as Annie gave birth to their first child, a beautiful bouncing boy. Family, golf, caring for those in the community facing adversity: It's all about perspective. Whatever the challenges ahead, Jordan Spieth has the right clubs in his personal armory to win by three. jordanspiethgolf.com/foundation

PAR FOR THE COURSE
On the driving range at the Spieth & Friends fundraising event, *above*; the golfer at the Tesori Family Foundation All-Star Kids Clinic for Special Needs Golfers, *left*.

