

U.S. Open Championship 2020

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Mamaroneck, New York, USA

Winged Foot Golf Club

Dustin Johnson

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Dustin, welcome back, short break. We would love to welcome world No. 1 Dustin Johnson into the interview area. Dustin is making his 13th appearance in the championship. He was just named Player of the Year by the PGA TOUR.

Q. Dustin, can you just describe what has come together for you during this restart to win three tournaments like you have and play as well as you have during this whole time? What do you see working for you, and how does it apply out here?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I mean, obviously I've just put in a lot of good work. I felt like it's nice to see the work that you're putting in to be able to take it on the golf course and to a golf tournament. Yeah, I spent a lot of time with Claude and my brother working on the putting, and so yeah, everything just seems to be clicking right now.

But yeah, I mean, I've definitely had to put in a lot of work to get to where I'm at. I mean, obviously the game is good, and it feels good, so I'm very pleased with it.

Q. You mentioned the putting; a lot of people have talked about the routine being much different from the past. How important has that change been to your success?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I mean, with putting, if you look at every week, the guy who's winning or -- if you're going to have a good week, you've got to putt well. So it's just something that I've been working on. I started using a line, and it's definitely helped me out a lot, especially like inside 10 feet, starting to make a lot more of those.

But yeah, I've had to practice with it because it's something new and had to get used to using a line and to line up.

Q. The U.S. Open used to be known for being won by short, accurate players. In the last few years it's been you, Gary, Brooks, kind of longer athletic guys. What's your theory as to why, and do you think that will continue?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I can't tell you why, but I mean, obviously the golf courses make a difference. You know, the U.S. Open you've got to drive it straight, especially at this golf course. You have to hit the fairways. And then once you hit the fairways, it doesn't get much easier from there, either.

You really have to hit the fairways. The rough is -- it's not super deep, but you just can't play out of it. You can't control the golf ball, and you can't get to the greens from it.

You know, it's definitely a premium on hitting fairways, but the golf course is in fantastic condition. I'm looking forward to this week. It's going to be a good challenge. But I like it.

Q. In terms of difficulty, where does this golf course rank among some you've played, and how aggressive can you be with it?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I mean, I haven't played in a tournament yet, but so far it seems very, very hard, one of the harder ones I've ever played. But you know, it's fair. There's nothing real tricky about it. You've just got to hit good shots.

Q. Will you hit driver as often as you would like, or will you back off?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I mean, there's holes I can hit driver and play aggressive on, but there's a lot of holes where I'm hitting iron off the tee just because of the way it shapes. I don't like to draw the driver, so I've got a lot of holes where I've got to lay back a little bit just because you've got to hit it in the fairway, and driver kind of runs out of room. Especially the fairways are firm and fast right now, so the ball is running out pretty good, and there's a lot of holes that are difficult shots to get it in the fairway.

Q. How would you compare the difficulty of this and Oakmont?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: It's very similar, I think, you know, golf course-wise. The only difference is off the tees at Oakmont there's no trees in your way.

Q. I read that you had never been here until recently; is that true?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Well, I had thought so, but I guess somebody was telling me I played a NetJets outing here 10 or 11 years ago, but I want to say I don't think we played the West Course. I think we played the other one because I didn't remember one hole, so we must have played the other course.

Q. Were there any surprises or anything eye-opening to you when you did get to play it?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: No, just from talking to some of the guys that have been here, I knew it was going to be difficult. I actually watched one of the videos I think the USGA put out. So I got a little bit of an idea on the golf course. It's kind of a drone flyover video, so I had a little bit of an idea of what it looked like and what it was going to require.

Coming here, obviously -- I watched some of the 2006 U.S. Open. It's a tough golf course. You've got to go out and play -- golf your ball around here if you want to shoot a good score.

Q. The greens are bigger than they were in '06. The greens are pretty unusual, don't you think?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I mean, I don't know about unusual. They're difficult. I think it fits the golf course very well. A lot of the greens are real similar with all the slopes. There's only a certain area on the greens that are usable, but yeah, I think it's good. It's going to be a good test. Like I said, driving it in the fairway, and then you've got to hit good iron shots because you've got to hit them the right distance.

Q. What is the worst lie you've had this week, and can you just explain what it was like?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I mean, you can get some pretty good ones in the rough, but I've been able to advance them down the fairway, not necessarily get it on the green or to the green. I haven't had any that I couldn't get out.

Q. You shot 30-under in Boston, but you've also proved you can win on these layouts where par is a good score. Is there an adjustment you make in your mindset for a course like this? And then secondly, Rahm said that the long hitters are still going to have the advantage here because they'll be so much farther -- if they're in the rough, they'll be so much farther down they still might be able to get it on?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I mean, obviously you've got a completely different mindset when you're playing a course like TPC Boston where it was soft and the greens were really good so you could attack every flag. It didn't matter what club you were hitting.

Here it's just a completely different mindset. Obviously I've been fortunate enough to play two really difficult golf courses the last couple weeks, which was Olympia Fields and East Lake. They're both golf courses where you have to drive it in the fairway. And then even when you're in the fairway, it's not that easy to get it close to the hole.

You know, coming in here, obviously the game, we've been playing courses like that, so kind of used to it. For me it's just pick whatever club I can get it in the fairway with and go with that and then go find it and hit it again.

Q. With the kind of season you've had, do you put more expectation on yourself going into this U.S. Open?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: No, I mean, I'm playing well. I've got a lot of confidence in the game, but no, I'm not putting any extra expectation -- I mean, I expect to play well every week, but coming here, it's just a golf course where -- the game is in good form right now, hopefully it stays in good form for the rest of the week, but it's one of those golf courses where it's very difficult and you need to be spot-on if you want to play well.

Q. What stands out most from watching that 2006 U.S. Open on TV?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I mean, you can just -- from what I remember, obviously it was a long time ago, but, I mean, if you drive it in the rough, you're going to struggle to make pars, and that's just how it is. But there's enough room to hit the fairways.

Q. Is Tour life now busy to the point where like in the past guys would play here or Quaker, where now guys are kind of seeing it on video? Is it just when you're done you want to put the clubs down and get away? Has it changed because there are so many more demands on your generation?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I didn't quite understand the question.

Q. In the past we had a PGA TOUR event here in Westchester, some of the guys would come over here and play Quaker Ridge, play Sleepy Hollow, some of the more historic courses. Life was different then. Is

life busier now with everything that you guys are asked to do?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Well, it depends. Obviously this is a major so you're really focused a lot on this golf course, but if we had an event down the road, a regular Tour event, I would probably try to sneak out here and get a round in.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Dustin. Good luck this week.

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