

U.S. Open Championship 2020

Sunday, September 20, 2020

Mamaroneck, New York, USA

Winged Foot Golf Club

Zach Johnson

Flash Interview



Q. Zach Johnson, 4-over 64. How was it out there today?

ZACH JOHNSON: It was tough. It was, I would say, what you would expect out of a U.S. Open, what you would expect really out of Winged Foot with no rain and wind. I mean, hard, every shot. But that's what you expect. I thought it was really good.

Q. Zach, if I'd have told you on Wednesday the leader of the U.S. Open -- the winner of the U.S. Open is going to hit 4 of his last 21 fairways, what would you have said to me?

ZACH JOHNSON: I would have said no way. No chance.

Q. As someone who won your majors kind of the proper way -- or I guess at the time -- fairways, greens, putts -- what do you make of this performance?

ZACH JOHNSON: It's absolutely stellar. I played -- did I play nine holes with him? I must have played nine holes with him at some point this week, and he's trying to find his lines off the tee with his driver. Obviously, very aggressive lines and things of that nature.

But it was as if -- you know, if the pin's right, ideally, I'm in the fairway, but if I'm not, then I'm going to hit it in the left rough. If the pin's left, obviously, I want to be down the right fairway, and if I'm not, I'm going to be in the right rough. That's what it seemed like.

That could be -- obviously, I'm dumbing it down because Bryson's got a lot more thought into it than that. I'm impressed. I mean, I don't know -- here's the thing. If he's not hitting fairways -- same thing with Matt -- their short game has obviously been very good, and this place is not easy around the greens.

So is it the proper way, like you said? I don't know, but it's a way to play. Given what he's been given and given how he works and how he approaches his body and his equipment, it's a way to play, and it's not wrong at all. It's

just very different but also very, very effective. So hat's off. Given -- I'm assuming Matt or he will win.

I don't think we can base it on one guy is my point. I think the game's still very good.

Q. He's kind of cruising at this point.

ZACH JOHNSON: Oh, he is? Okay.

Q. When he came out and he looked so different, he had packed on the pounds and everything, there was a lot of sort of skepticism and chatter, I guess would be the best way to put it. What were your thoughts when he looked so different?

ZACH JOHNSON: My first thought was, well, he was really big to begin with. So I could see it. I could kind of see it with his neck and his shoulders and his back. It's not like I'm overly checking him out, but he looked heavier. Whether it was 5 pounds or 25 pounds, hard for me to tell. He was always broad -- big shoulders, big guy. He always hit it far. I mean, he always hit it really far, I thought. But look who you're asking.

Yeah, it was an approach. I don't -- I've said this to like friends of mine that have asked, right? I'll say it again. It's not something that I probably would have done at his age, consulting with my team, but that doesn't mean it's a wrong approach, and it doesn't mean it's something that couldn't be advantageous. I'm extremely impressed because he -- I've had talks with him. Obviously, he's cerebral. That's pretty generalizing there. He's very, very strategic and always trying to get better.

I mean, I could elaborate on that, but it's impressive.

Q. Could you compare the challenge the course presented this week versus two years ago at Shinnecock.

ZACH JOHNSON: Man, Shinnecock is probably my favorite golf course in the world. If I'm going to pick one to play a competition on, that's probably one I'm going to pick. I absolutely adore it. So I don't know if my opinion is really justified there.



Shinnecock, being that it's arguably my favorite or one of my favorites, I played two championships there that were U.S. Opens, in 2004, whatever it was, '3, '4, '5, whatever it was, it was unfortunate. We saw some things there that were unfortunate, and we saw a day two years ago that was kind of unfortunate. Just in the sense that the leaders were kind of behind the 8 ball, and the guys that played in the first two groups were in the last group.

So that happens in golf. I'm not suggesting it doesn't, but Shinnecock's a place you kind of let it be. What they did here, you just let it be. Winged Foot doesn't need to be manipulated or contrived. Just let it be, and it's fantastic.

There wasn't much wind on Thursday, scores are low. We had some dying winds yesterday, there were some low scores. And today was very trying. Hat's off to those who set it up. Hat's off to the membership of this club. They did a great job.

Those two courses are two of my favorites. So it's hard. I'm comparing apples to apples there.

Q. What would be your advice to Matthew Wolff, who's not going to get it done today, but this is his first U.S. Open, and he's still only 21.

ZACH JOHNSON: My advice? Leave this parking lot with the positives because, my guess, there's a slough of them. Whatever he's doing right now is not ineffective. It's one of those days where he's probably -- I mean, what is he today? A couple over par?

Q. I think 3 or 4.

Q. 5 over.

ZACH JOHNSON: Oh, okay. I didn't realize that. He's going to slice and dice today, and he needs to really focus in on some of the things that he did the previous three days, I think more so than today.

Today was hard. He's going to learn a lot. My guess is, when he's in this position again, because he's really good, and he will be -- what is he, 21, 22?

Q. 21.

ZACH JOHNSON: If he stays healthy, he'll be better off next time around. I like Matt. I've gotten to know him really well, and he's really good.

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