

The Ryder Cup

Wednesday, September 22, 2021

Kohler, Wisconsin, USA

Whistling Straits

Dustin Johnson

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome back to the 43rd Ryder Cup here at Whistling Straits. We're with Dustin Johnson. Welcome to your fifth career Ryder Cup. A little bit different role for you in this team room than you may have had in the past.

In all honesty did you ever see yourself as the oldest, the most experienced and sort of the wise veteran in the room?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: No. You know, thinking about it this year, obviously being the oldest by a few years, it's a little strange for me just that I've never been the oldest. I always felt like I was one of the younger guys on the team. Still feel that way, but obviously I'm, I guess, the veteran on the team really.

Yeah, it's a role that I enjoy, but obviously with the guys on the team, all of them are very good player, so don't really have to do much.

Q. As the veteran on the team you've seen a bunch of different team dynamics. This team seems to have kind of a die youthful fire. What's your read on how this team and the vibe around it compares to teams that you've played on in the past?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, it's definitely a little different obviously with us all being fairly young. We're young, but also we still have a lot of experience I feel like. So the dynamic has been great. We all get along really well for the most part, and during a team event, everyone -- we all get along and we've had a great time so far.

It's going to be a great week. I'm looking forward to it. I feel like we've got a really strong team, and it's going to be fun. We're going to have to play well, though, if we want to win, but I think -- I feel like the captains and everybody has got us set up in the right way to be successful.

Q. Have they been needing you at all for being the old guy on the team?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: No, not really.

Q. You have probably as much experience as anybody here on the American team. Pivotal holes this week in your mind, other than obviously if a match gets to 18, that's pivotal, but are there other holes you look at and say they could be really pivotal for this week?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I mean, I think they're all pivotal. There's not really necessarily one hole that's going to be pivotal, but the golf course is good. Depending on the weather, it's a tough golf course. Obviously they've cut the rough down a little bit, which will help.

You've still got to play some good golf to make birdies.

To me, and especially in a format like this, every hole is pivotal, really.

Q. Like to see 13 set up drivable?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Oh, it doesn't matter. Are they thinking about doing that?

Q. Possibly.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Well, if they do, then -- yeah, it's definitely one hole where you'd have to think about it because there's a lot of trouble around the green. Whether going for it is any advantage or not, obviously in a four-ball match possibly one guy could go for it, one guy lay up maybe. Who knows.

Q. I wonder if you could please remember, what are your memories of the run-up to your first Ryder Cup? What you were like? What it was like? Anything that stands out?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, mine was Wales. It was an interesting week. Obviously the weather didn't cooperate very well. It was very wet and rainy and cold, but it still was a fun week.

It was interesting for me, too, because I remember it was Thursday afternoon, I was on the range with Butch and just

hitting some balls, just kind of winding down, and cracked my driver, and of course all the trucks had just left.

Yeah, that was fun. I remember trying to -- ended up waking up Keith, who was back in San Diego. I think it was like, whatever, 3:00 in the morning there and he called the guys on the truck and somehow got me a couple heads a couple hours later. So that was an interesting curve ball that I got for my first Ryder Cup.

I still remember it was so much fun. It was a great week. Obviously the anticipation of the first match obviously didn't go quite as well as we would have liked to, but it still was a lot of fun, great memories and very enjoyable.

Q. Without getting into gin or roulette, what would be -- if someone were to ask you, given the accomplishments of the U.S. Team over the years, why does Europe keep winning, what would you say? What do you think they do that allows them to get the results they get?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: They just play better. It's really simple. Whoever plays better is going to win. I mean, it's not rocket science.

Q. I imagine you know a lot of the U.S. Team pretty well, but I was wondering if you've learned anything new about any of your teammates this week or if there are any guys that you haven't spent much time with until now.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: No, most of the guys, yeah, I've spent enough time with or been on teams with. I guess we've got Scottie -- Scottie, it's his first team event. But he's with the same management company, so I've played some golf with him and known him since he's got out here.

But yeah, for the most part, yeah, I know all the guys fairly well. We play a lot together and see each other on the road all the time.

Q. The last few Ryder Cups you've played in we've seen the courses tweaked to suit the home team to considerable effect. I just wonder, this venue not being a typical PGA TOUR venue, whether that takes away some of that advantage do you think?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: No, I mean, it's -- this golf course, obviously it's a great golf course. It's difficult. I played two PGAs here, so I know the course pretty well. Yeah, it's not a golf course that necessarily suits one team or the other.

But yeah, it's a good test of golf, and I think it'll be an exciting week. You're going to see some good golf around

here.

Q. Just wondering, 2010, 2012 particularly were very close losses, kind of came down to the end. I'm just wondering, do those compare in any way to any individual loss? Are those harder or easier to take than maybe a major you contended in and didn't get or a tournament that you thought you should have won?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, for some reason I feel like the team -- like the Ryder Cup is different. Obviously you're not just representing yourself, you're representing your country, your teammates, your captains, friends and family. It means -- the feelings are a little bit different, but I feel like it's -- not that it hurts or stings more, but yeah, it's a different kind of feeling when you lose. I don't like it, that's for sure. It's definitely way more enjoyable when you win.

Q. Talking about knowing each other in the team, Patrick was talking about this week being a different experience that you get to know each other better, you get to talk about things that you probably don't talk. He talked about sitting with you getting to know you better.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, obviously this week we spend a lot of time just with the team. Especially this year with COVID and all the other stuff, we do a lot of stuff where it's just the team. So yeah, we do get to spend extra time with guys, talking to them, so you get to know them a lot better than just playing a round of golf or seeing them at lunch or something.

Yeah, so it's a nice week, and it's a lot of fun, and I really enjoy it.

Q. Why do you play so well here? What is it about the course here that suits you, and how are you able to take the positives out of your previous performances from here, from the PGAs?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I don't know. I like the golf course. Like I said, I feel like it's tough. It's obviously all dependent on the conditions. If we get some wind and the course firms up a little bit, this golf course plays really difficult.

If the conditions stay fairly soft then we'll get to attack it a little bit more, but you've still got to hit quality golf shots and control your golf ball really well. It seems like there's always a breeze blowing. You've got to hit all kinds of different shots, use kind of every club in your bag.

Every shot you're hitting, this golf course makes you think and makes you really focus on what you're doing. I enjoy that. I've always liked tough golf courses.

Q. Coming back here, do you have positive memories?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I do. Yeah, I've played well here the two times when a major was here. Yeah, I like this golf course. I enjoy playing it, and I'm looking forward to this week.

Q. Being the most veteran guy on the team and having played only four Ryder Cups, is that a good thing for the U.S., the fact that you have six rookies and I think nine guys have only played no more than one. Is that good?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I mean, I think so. I can't really say one way or the other. We've had -- the teams I've been on the past, I feel like we've had tons of experience and it hasn't worked out so well, so maybe this is kind of an obviously different generation of golfers coming up, and we've got some really talented players, young guys that maybe don't have all the memories of losing all these Ryder Cups.

Maybe this is the recipe.

Q. What do you see your role as this week?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: My role is to win as many matches as I can or that -- just worry about my match that I'm playing in, help the team in any way that I can or that they need. So that's what I'm going to do.

THE MODERATOR: All right, thank you for the visit and have a good stay.

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