

Masters Tournament

Wednesday, March 24, 2021

Augusta, Georgia, USA

Dustin Johnson

Font Test

Press Conference



UPDATE: April 4 2021 test

MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone. This is Regina O'Brien. We appreciate you joining us today on a call with 2020 Masters champion Dustin Johnson, and thank you, Dustin, for your time, as well.

We look forward to welcoming you back to Augusta very soon. I was hoping you would reflect on what it meant to you personally to spend the past five months as the reigning Masters champion.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I mean, honestly it's been incredible. It's something that I've dreamed of as a kid. It's been an amazing experience.

MODERATOR: With a few weeks to go, how are you feeling about your preparations for the Masters?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I've got a little ways to go. Obviously the game is not quite in the form that I would like it to be in right now, but I've got plenty of time to get it back in order leading up to Augusta.

MODERATOR: Thanks, Dustin, and again, we're looking forward to hosting you soon.

Q. I'm going to leave the menu to someone else. All you eat is chicken, anyway. When you go back and look at video of your win, what stands out to you, and if you watch it all the way through to the interview and see the way that you get choked up, what's that like watching it?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I actually haven't watched that part yet.

Q. Why not?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I've watched -- well, no, I just haven't got all the way through it. I've watched a lot of the golf. But I will watch it.

Q. What stands out to you?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I felt like I was in complete control of the golf ball pretty much the whole week. Distance control; I drove it pretty well. That's the biggest thing is I really drove it well that week.

Q. And secondly, and lastly, can you give us a few examples of some of the shots you played in November to the greens, but there's no way you would think about hitting that shot if conditions are like they are expected to be in April?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Well, November, the greens were soft, so you could be a lot more aggressive with longer clubs because they would stop and then hold the green. So coming into -- I mean, they actually weren't even a shot that I hit but one of the guys I was playing with hit a 3-wood to like the back left pin on 15, you know, and it landed right next to the hole and stopped to like a couple feet.

So that's just a shot that in April, unless we just get tons of rain, is not possible.

Q. Your lead got trimmed to one. Were you nervous? And what makes you nervous off the golf course?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I was definitely nervous starting the day because obviously it meant so much to me. So I was feeling it from kind of the time when I woke up. I couldn't hardly even -- couldn't eat any breakfast, really. Took a couple bites. But it was hard to -- hard to get down for some reason, which I've never had that problem before.

And then on the course, too, I remember walking down trying to eat a little bit of an almond butter and jelly sandwich and took one bite and had to wash it down with water, and that was the only way I could get it down.

Yeah, I was definitely a little nervous, not in a bad way, more just because it meant so much to me, and I obviously really wanted to win the Masters.



Q. When you look across Masters Sunday in total, is there a favorite picture from the day or a favorite single moment?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: That whole daily was special. I feel like, everything about it. Yeah, some of the photos I've seen of me and AJ and some of me and Paulina, those are really neat pictures that we'll have forever.

Q. Just wanted to ask you, people talk a lot about the physical gifts that you have, the natural ability and so forth. How much of natural ability is just in your head, your intelligence, your IQ, your ability to see a shot before all those physical gifts kick in and you can hit it?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I mean, I think obviously golf is very mental. So I think a lot of it is in your head, so with golf and when I'm playing well, yeah, you're thinking very clearly and you're making good decisions.

But golf is a funny game. So I don't know -- I don't know how to explain the mental part of it. I know my mental game's pretty strong, but I guess it's all natural ability. And then learned a lot of it, too, just through college, playing experiences, whatever it might be, books. Kind of just taking everything I've learned along the way, and I tried to make it into my own.

Q. Did you ever think more clearly than you did those four days in November or that last round?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I was super focused all week and knew exactly what I was going to do and was able to execute.

Q. Have you figured out the menu, and if so, could you tell us what it is?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I should be able to tell you tomorrow.

Q. Well, we don't have a conference call tomorrow.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I've got a call when we're done to do the menu, so --.

Q. Have you given any thought about what your first journey will be when you arrive at Augusta with the Green Jacket the first day you get there?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: No. I did go -- when did I go, last week, I went up for a couple days. That was pretty cool, first time back, going into the Champions Locker Room and stuff. That was a really neat experience. First time I spent the night on the grounds, so that was another

like cool first-time experience, and had dinner in my Green Jacket. That was a lot of fun.

Q. Do you know who you're sharing your locker with?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, Fuzzy [Zoeller].

Q. When you look back, your first five trips to the Masters were not up to your standards. The last five have been pretty brilliant. Did you have any doubts in your mind the first five trips? Were you surprised or confused by it? What's the big turnaround?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I think just getting to know the course better. Getting used to kind of the atmosphere there. Obviously this year the atmosphere was way different than it normally is, but normal Masters is you play in front of a lot of people, so it has a different kind of vibe to it. It's an incredible one.

But yeah, I feel like my first -- I really liked the golf course, and I felt like I was playing it pretty well. Just wasn't scoring that well on it and just making too many mistakes. But it wasn't -- the golf course, I felt like I knew the golf course pretty well, but maybe I guess I didn't know it as well as I thought I did.

But yeah, I feel like obviously the last -- the more and more I play the golf course, the more I learn about it and the more comfortable I am on it.

Q. Is there any hole in particular where you changed your strategy over the years, or have you pretty much had the same strategy from day one?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I mean, pretty much kind of the same strategy. I felt like it changes a little bit here and there, just depending on the wind. But I feel like, yeah, my strategy is pretty, you know, kind of stayed pretty similar. Just been able to execute it a little bit better.

Q. I've heard guys like Rory [McIlroy] and Justin Thomas say they really try and emulate your mental game, kind of what you do on the mental side. Is there anybody that you play with or that you're around that you try to emulate mentally?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I don't know. No, not really that I've thought about. I feel like what I'm doing has been working pretty well, so I'm going to stick with it until it's not. I don't know, didn't really answer your question very well.

Q. To get back into the form to where you hope to repeat

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at the Masters, how important is it in playing in the tournaments like the Dell coming up, to get back into that form? And obviously you played great at Dell in '17.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I feel like it's really close. Last week at THE PLAYERS, I felt like I played pretty good. I just made a lot of mistakes. A lot of mental mistakes, just a little bit of everything. So I just didn't -- didn't score very well. I played good enough every day to have a chance to win on Sunday. Just kind of pissing away shots, which is real uncharacteristic, but we'll get it worked out.

But the game feels like it's in pretty good form, and it's really close to being really good again.

Q. You haven't ever taken your anger out on any other flag sticks, have you?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: No, I have not. It was unfortunate.

Q. I wanted to quickly ask you about your visit to Augusta. Can you say when it was exactly? Was it during Bay Hill week? And what was the course like? What was it like getting back on the course and playing the holes? Did any memories come back from the a few months ago, or was it just so casual that it wouldn't seem the same?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: The course is in really good condition. I was up there on Tuesday and Wednesday last week, or the week before THE PLAYERS.

But yeah, I mean, definitely I'm pretty sure when I was playing on most of the holes, you know, I was definitely thinking about the shot that I hit on that Sunday when I played. Especially the first round, because it was the first round, the first time I've been back since the Masters.

Q. On a different tact, as someone who hits it far and obviously can take advantage of that length, do you appreciate what Bryson [DeChambeau] is doing specifically as it relates to Augusta National? Do you see the benefits he can gain? Obviously his game is on, it wasn't really on in November, but I'm just curious how you view him going after that in that manner?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Well, you've got to put in the work, and he's obviously putting in the work. He wants to hit it further. It's what works for him.

Yeah, length is definitely an advantage, and if you can hit it further and control it, then you definitely can have an advantage. Especially on some of these golf courses we play.

Q. I know that you know and have known how good you are at golf, but is there anything about having a green jacket that makes you see yourself differently as a golfer or just have this extra assurance?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I mean, it definitely is something that gives me more confidence, which is good. You need confidence when you're playing golf. It definitely reassures me and to myself that I am a very good player, and that, you know, I can win these big golf tournaments.

Q. Is there something about the Masters in particular; now you've got it and no one can ever take that away from you, but is there any relief to it, I guess?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: A little bit. I've been close a couple times. The previous year, I finished second to Tiger [Woods].

Yeah, it is definitely something that definitely relieves a lot of pressure when I step back on to the ground at Augusta for the Masters again.

Q. Kind of the opposite of what Fergie had asked earlier, is there an example of a shot from that week in November that you think will be useful in April or something you learned in November that you think will be useful in a few weeks?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Well, it just all depends on the golf course. But I would imagine it's going to be pretty firm and fast, especially if they have good weather.

Like I said, the course, I played it two weeks ago and the course is in immaculate condition. It looks like it's shaping up to be a normal Masters, and so I'm really looking forward to that.

But as far as shots, I mean, yeah, I know I can hit the shots, but it's all just going to depend on how the golf course plays. It's definitely not going to be as soft as it was. So you know, you just have to be able to land the ball in different spots.

Q. Secondly, how has your routine or preparation over the years changed going into the tournament from, say, early in your career to the last few years?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: It hasn't really changed a whole lot. I try to prepare every week the same. Like I want to be ready when I go to a golf tournament and same goes for Augusta. I want my game to be in order before I get there, not while I'm there. I think that's probably the



biggest difference is just making sure I'm prepared before I arrive instead of trying to figure something out while I'm there.

Q. Do you feel short-changed at all that you only had five months here to serve as the defending Masters champion and what's been the coolest outing you've had in those five months with the jacket?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: No, I do not feel short-changed. It wouldn't bother me if I only had it for a day. It would be okay. I've got one, and five months, a year, one month, a day, it doesn't really make a difference to me.

Probably the coolest thing was when I went back up to Augusta last week and got to wear my jacket when I was on property.

Q. And can I ask you, kind of following up, Rory spoke last week about getting a little sideways when he was pursuing more club head speed going for more length trying to emulate Bryson. What has been your approach with that topic? Have you been tempted to step outside yourself and try for even more length and club head speed?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I messed around a little bit with it back in October maybe, and yeah, I mean, if I want to, I could hit it further. I had a driver that I could definitely hit it a lot further than the one I'm playing.

But to me, the little bit of the extra distance that came with it, obviously the harder you swing, obviously the bigger your misses are. For me, it just didn't help.

Until I feel like when at my best that I can't beat someone, then I'll try and change something. But as of right now, I feel like if I play my best golf, I feel like I can beat whoever I'm playing against.

Q. It's my understanding that they dredged up about 5,000 balls from the bottom of Lake Murray out of the mud that you and Austin probably hit out of your grandfather's front yard. I wonder, what are your recollections of that? Where did you get those balls? Did you hit any neighbor's houses along the way? Any memories from those times?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I definitely remember hitting golf balls into the lake when I was a kid. I don't remember how many. Yeah, I'm sure we hit a neighbor's house or two, not on -- probably on accident, probably more us being kids.

Q. Would you hit a bucket of balls from the range and

bring them out there?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Just find them. The ones you find on the golf course and the woods and the creeks. They are the ones you don't want to play with.

Q. Did you ever break a window?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: No, I don't think so, or not that I remember.

Q. When you won at Oakmont in 2016, after finally breaking through, did you reset or have any other goals in mind for more majors, and did the Masters in any form, your win there, kind of validate your Open win?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, for sure, I've contended in a bunch of majors, and I've had chances to win a lot of them. But yeah, obviously the hardest one is to get the first, but even getting the second one, it's just as hard. I mean, it doesn't get any easier.

Obviously now that I've got two majors, yeah, I mean, you know, the goal is to definitely get more. You know, but for me, it's just I want to put myself in that position to have a chance to win come that back nine on Sunday at Augusta, which will be our next major.

Q. When you're heading into this tournament with how fantastic your performance was last time, do you add any more pressure on to yourself to try and even better that performance again?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: No. It kind of depends on the golf course. If it's soft again, yeah, you'd be able to shoot some low scores. But if it's firm and fast like I have a feeling it's going to be, the golf course plays way different and way more difficult.

So I'll just try to shoot as low as I can every day. Add them up at the end.

Q. Are you expecting it to be a much different feeling this time, hopefully, with some more supporters there?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I think it will be back to feeling like a normal Masters. Obviously last year, there was nothing normal about last year, for the whole year, really.

Yeah, I think this year in April, the Masters will feel like it's back, and it will feel the same. I'm definitely looking forward to that.

