

# John Deere Classic

Thursday, July 8, 2021

TPC Deere Run

Silvis, Illinois, USA

## Chesson Hadley

### Quick Quotes

#### Q. How do you assess your 63 today?

CHESSON HADLEY: Yeah, it was great. Just from the -- I was comfortable early and was able to get out of the gates with a birdie. Hit some really nice shots kind of right off the bat and then I saw a couple putts come off the way I wanted it to, and it was just kind of all clicking today, which was great.

I thought the golf course was probably in as good a shape as I've ever seen it. I don't know if I've played around here where the ball is like really kind of bounding in the fairways. I was walking down No. 10 and you could feel the firmness in your feet.

The course is in excellent shape. I know it looks like there might be a chance of rain, so hopefully that can stay away from us, but it was just an awesome day, great way to get the tournament started for sure.

#### Q. Looking back on your first two starts here, I'm not sure if you made it to the weekend in the first two starts, but looking back at those years, what now in your game is really shaping up to play well here?

CHESSON HADLEY: Well, you know, it's funny you come to places and it doesn't really fit your eye or there's some tee shots that make you uncomfortable, or there's always shots on golf courses that make you uncomfortable, and I would definitely say that when I first started coming here I just -- sometimes you've just got to play it and kind of get kicked in the teeth and figure it out, and that's kind of what's happened.

I think I had an okay finish here in maybe 2018 or something like that. I think I had a good couple first rounds but I didn't play great on the weekend.

I've been out here -- I don't know if I'm considered a veteran or not now, but this is my eighth year and I'm 34. Just things are different. I'm hitting it better. I'm putting it good and putting it well. It just lined up today, and hopefully it'll keep doing that this week.



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CLASSIC



#### Q. Did you look at the leaderboard before you started your round to see what was posted this morning?

CHESSON HADLEY: I looked at it once, just kind of to see what was going on. When I was warming up on the range there's a leaderboard on the range, so I saw a 6-under was posted and then I don't know if Chez shot 7-under or not. I think I saw that. But that was it.

I didn't really pay attention to it during the round. But I knew I was certainly moving up there.

#### Q. Did seeing those low numbers early change your approach this afternoon?

CHESSON HADLEY: No. I mean, I've played this place long enough, and you look at the scorecards inside, Steve Stricker shot zero here one here and I think he shot 1-under on the final round.

The scores are always low here, always. I knew you'd have to just kind of go get it, take advantage of the holes, a lot of the holes out here that you can.

#### Q. It seems like usually early in the week especially the morning scoring is better than the afternoon, yet here this afternoon we've got three guys from this late wave at the top of the leaderboard. You talked a little bit about the conditions of the course, but what's happening out there this afternoon that's allowing for those low scores?

CHESSON HADLEY: Well, I had lunch with J-Byrd, who I think he was first off. I'm sure it was softer this morning, a little bit of moisture in the air, it was colder, I think it was low 60s, the ball isn't going as far. It just played easier this afternoon. I don't know what the stroke average will look like, compare, but I guarantee you it will probably play a little bit easier this afternoon, and like I was saying earlier I can't remember seeing a time where the ball was bounding in the fairway out here. I personally like that because you can take less club off the tee and hit it in the same position. Anytime you're hitting a 3-wood where you're hitting your driver then that seems to work out.

I don't know, maybe the wind direction helps, as well, with the north wind. Got some holes downwind that maybe

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typically play into the wind. So that could have had a little bit to do with it, as well.

**Q. What were the keys? What did you do well out there?**

CHESSON HADLEY: I kind of did it all good today. That was an easy question. Sorry, hopefully that doesn't sound arrogant. But I did. I put the ball in the fairway -- I got a couple good breaks. I hit a couple foul balls, but the putter felt good and my iron game was sharp, so I was giving myself opportunities, and it was just a great day.

**Q. What was the best part of the day, the round of golf or the conversation with the family on your way up here?**

CHESSON HADLEY: Oh, yeah, obviously they teed that one up for me, thank you. Obviously the conversation with the family. We're back in Raleigh, so they're an hour ahead of us, so it's bedtime for Hughes, Hollins and Hampton right now. I'm sure my wife is quickly putting them in bed so that she can kind of have some alone time, well-deserved alone time.

Yeah, it was a great day, and it was cool to FaceTime them on the way in.

**Q. Do they know what dad shot today?**

CHESSON HADLEY: I think they do. I think Hughes knows that I shot 8-under. He said, like, I know that you're leading. It's all about winning for him. It's like -- he's seven, so it's all about winning for him, and that's kind of his thoughts.

It's cool, yeah. I like playing good for the family.

**Q. Were they with you at Palmetto or was there a warm reception when you came back from that tournament?**

CHESSON HADLEY: My wife asked -- they were not with me during that week. My wife asked if I wanted her to come down, and I told her no. I knew that might hurt her feelings, but I was just -- I hadn't played well in a while, and I'd kind of been under -- I felt like I kind of had the lead all week and it was just pressure I hadn't felt in unfortunately quite a long time. So I just kind of wanted to get through it myself without any distractions.

She came down with my dad I guess during the round, and unfortunately I finished the way I did, but there's kind of a plan -- there's always a reason why things happen, and so maybe this -- certainly if I'm in contention this week, I'll

handle it better just by having experienced that a couple weeks ago.

You know, I'm in a good spot certainly for that.

**Q. It wasn't a W but it did do a lot for you in the FedExCup standings. How important was that week for you as we get to this point in the season?**

CHESSON HADLEY: Oh, for sure. I was probably around 150-ish, and I think I got 150 points that week, which was great. Unfortunately that was my first top 10 in almost two years. It was, it was my first two 10 in two years, since the 2019 U.S. Open. It was just great to kind of see some things go my way for a change.

I made a little bit of some mechanical adjustments that helped with that. You don't just play good by luck, you have to hit the ball where you want to hit it and putt it how you want to putt it. So it was great to do that for three of the four days. Obviously the last day was a struggle, but it was huge for the rest of my year. It gave me some much-needed momentum that I didn't have.

**Q. Do you feel like you're in a much better place mentally and physically to follow up a low round like this now?**

CHESSON HADLEY: Yeah, absolutely. Typically it's hard to follow up a low round with another low round or another really good round, and your expectations just naturally rise and stuff like that. But I've shot 8-under before, so I'm just going to go out there tomorrow morning, and we're going to just try and hit the fairway on No. 1. That's all I can worry about, and we'll go from there.

I certainly feel good about things. I know what I'm doing, and hopefully it can keep producing results.

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