

# John Deere Classic

Tuesday, June 28, 2022

TPC Deere Run

Silvis, Illinois, USA

## Nick Hardy

### Press Conference



MODERATOR: All right. Good afternoon, everyone. We would like to welcome Nick Hardy here to the media center at the John Deere Classic. Nick, you'll be making your third tournament appearance and first since 2018. What's it like to be back here, especially as a hometown event type feel?

NICK HARDY: Yeah. Ended up as a PGA TOUR member. It's definitely a lot nicer. So I'm just excited to be back here. This is my favorite event of the year for me. Clair giving me two spots here as a senior at Illinois and then as my first year out, I mean, it means the world to me, and I gained a lot of good experience from playing those two events those two years, and making the cut both weeks just added more experience. So very special to be here.

MODERATOR: You touched upon it, but can you speak about the importance and significance of Clair extending those sponsor exemptions, especially on the receiving side?

NICK HARDY: Yeah. He does an amazing job with them year in year out. I think he usually gives them to a lot of very well-deserving college, young up-and-coming players, and I was just fortunate to be one of them for two years straight, which is really amazing. And so definitely forever indebted for that.

MODERATOR: Can we expect to see a lot of family and friends out here at the course this week?

NICK HARDY: Yeah. For sure. I hope so. Especially my immediate family will be here, my three sisters and mom and dad, I'm pretty sure will be here. So looking forward to that for sure.

MODERATOR: And on quite the stretch, your fourth consecutive event, I think, this week, but coming off a career-best Top 10 last week. So how's your game feeling entering the week?

NICK HARDY: Yeah. I'm very confident. I felt that way

ever since my first event back in the Korn Ferry TOUR about a month ago, played great golf at home near Northbrook, and ever since then I've just felt really easy, no thoughts. I think that break off for me really helped me kind of slow my mind down and get my confidence back.

MODERATOR: And wrist feels fully great since then?

NICK HARDY: Yeah. No problems with the wrist. I feel pretty much 100 percent healthy and no issues, no flare-ups. So very fortunate for that, too.

MODERATOR: What confidence will you take from last week at Travelers entering this week?

NICK HARDY: I think mainly just building on what I've built on for like a month now. I think I'm really excited about the rest of the summer. I think, as long as I keep doing what I'm doing with all my -- I think I've grown a lot as a pro golfer this year, just like every year I've been a pro, but I think if I can keep on building what I'm building on, I'll keep going up.

MODERATOR: Any questions from the media?

**Q. Talk about the specifics. What have you learned? What has changed in your game, comfortability level out on tour now? What is the difference between Nick Hardy now and a year ago?**

NICK HARDY: Yes. That's a great question. I think just way more patient. You know, I think when you -- when I got my PGA TOUR card, I was definitely confident as a player and comfortable out here, just from having a lot of experience prior to being a member out here. But there's a difference. It's hard when you're a rookie, because I only got four starts in the fall, so you're already kind of feeling the pressure to get off to a good start, and on top of that I wasn't in the best frame of mind in my game for the last fall, end of last summer. So I think I just added a little stress and importance to my start. And, I mean, I didn't get off to a terrible start, but I only had four events in the fall, and I believe I played okay in two of them, but it wasn't enough to like make me feel comfortable at the reshuffles, and then the West Coast comes around and I just didn't play my best golf on the West Coast either. So I was kind of off to, you know, just behind. And I think I was just pressing a little bit, without even realizing it, and I think it



just kind of added a little bit to me, to my -- just the way I carried myself. Normally I'm a little calmer, a little more relaxed than I was, I think. I didn't realize it, but I think what made me realize it was that time off, and having to be forced away from the game for a month really just I wasn't thinking about the game, I wasn't thinking -- I wasn't -- there was no bad thoughts. There was no good thoughts, but there was no bad thoughts either. So it just made me kind of just relaxed, and I think I just was able to find my confidence again once I touched a club again.

**Q. Are you feeling some pressure? You say you felt like you were behind. Is there pressure now moving forward to have success out here, keep that card, keep moving, keep the career moving forward?**

NICK HARDY: Yeah, of course. There's always pressure. I mean, no matter where I'm at in my career, there's just as much pressure on myself, you know. The pressure that I feel is only self-inflicted. It's not -- I've never had external pressure affect me. It's always self-inflicted. And so I would say the pressure that I put on myself is the same as it was when I was in 2018, when I had no status, and in 2019 when I had no status for failing at Q-School. The pressure is the same. But, yeah, the challenge is harder, because I'm in a different spot where like getting a Korn Ferry TOUR card is not -- well, it's a little easier than keeping your card on the PGA TOUR. So I'm definitely in a spot that's more of a challenge, but that's something that I'm proud of and I take pride in, and it's the reason why I work really hard is to climb the ladder of professional golf and see how good I can be. And so, yes, of course, I feel pressure to perform well this summer and keep playing well, but I'm at a point in my game and in my career where I feel like I'm very matured and I feel like I am just ready for that challenge.

**Q. What kicked in last week, and is that something that you can or hope to carry over this week?**

NICK HARDY: Yeah. Nothing kicked in last week, just because I feel like I just was building on what I've built on since I came back, which was amazing at that home event in the Korn Ferry TOUR where I almost won in a playoff. It was just I didn't have any expectations or any thoughts or any, you know, going into the event. I just wanted to win, and I didn't come away with a win, but I came away with kind of a process that was very successful that I've just tried to keep the same in terms of what I'm doing the week of, like what I'm -- when I'm resting, how I'm saving my energy during rounds, how I'm breathing, how I'm eating, how I'm preparing. Like all those things, if I can keep the same as possible, then I know I can kind of keep doing what I'm doing.

**Q. I just had one quick question. I imagine Zach's among them, but who are some of the guys that you kind of looked up to and kind of model your attitude and game after out here on TOUR?**

NICK HARDY: Definitely Zach Johnson. He is -- we have the same agent, so that's definitely a relationship that I've had with Zach for a while, too. Steve Stricker went to Illinois, really good, best friends with Coach. So that's always been something that -- a player that I've really admired out here. And, of course, Tiger Woods. He's really the one golfer that's inspired me the most. So those, definitely those guys.

**Q. What have you picked up from those three guys specifically?**

NICK HARDY: Yeah. Mainly Tiger Woods, because that's how I fell in love with golf is I never missed an interview of his or I never missed literally a step he took on TV for 12 years when I was growing up. So I studied everything he did and how he prepared and how he trained and how he, you know, got better and better. And I think that's what I admired the most. And I think he taught me that, you know, what you're competing for is a lot more than just money. It's for history. It's for kind of winning, you know. So -- and how to do it. It's that guy, you know.

**Q. Nick, before the Travelers Championship you had a great U.S. Open. What do you take away from a strong finish there?**

NICK HARDY: Yeah. U.S. Open I feel like I was actually in a pretty good spot to win on Sunday. I was only a few shots back after about six or seven holes, and I had a bad 8th hole. But that kind of took me out of it. But I was in, I was definitely up there on the weekend, which was obviously always a goal of mine, but it's the first time I've ever had that chance to win, let alone a major on the PGA TOUR. So being in that spot, lead on Saturday and Sunday tee times and just getting a feel for that was extremely motivating, and it really is going to help me going on in my career for experience.

**Q. Are you and Patrick Flavin both came up from Merit Club Youth Program. What's it like seeing him out here, and have you guys played a practice round together?**

NICK HARDY: Yeah. We're going to play nine holes in about 20 minutes. So, yeah, Patrick and I are best buddies. We both came through the Merit Club Youth Program, which still is just one of the most amazing things that any club does in the country is give an amazing deal for young golfers that don't really -- really don't -- I never

had, but most golfers don't have a place to play and practice every day. I was just a public golf course kind of growing up. I grew up on the Anetsberger par-3 course and Sportsman's Country Club, so it gave me a private place to practice that was amazing facilities, and they let me bring out my buddies for \$20 to go play, which was incredible growing up. And Patrick was one of the buddies that I always played with at the Merit Club growing up. We played countless times from when we were 15, 16, 17, all the way through college and high school and whatever. It's definitely special to me, the Merit Club.

**Q. You guys got a little competition going on between yourselves?**

NICK HARDY: Always. We push each other. Always have. I think it's gotten me better. I think it's gotten him better. That's certain. Just we're both extremely high competitive people. And to have a friend that supports me and I support him like we do, I think it's really important as well.

**Q. Kind of getting down to crunch time in the TOUR schedule right now. You're close to that 125 number on the FedExCup ranks. What are your goals for the rest of the year? How much are you planning on playing? Does that plan change depending upon success and where you are in FedExCup?**

NICK HARDY: Yeah. I have discussions with my fiancé, Liz, about my schedule. It's tough to plan right now, because I know I gotta play, but you also gotta rest and make sure you're properly ready to play. So that's important. And I know from experience on the Korn Ferry TOUR, like you don't necessarily want to play nine or ten in a row, but sometimes you have to. And I think I'm at a point in my career where I'm ready to, if I need to, in terms of how I handle myself now and how I am nutrition, how I rest, how I prepare throughout the week, I think it's better than it's ever been. So if I need to play that many, I will.

**Q. Making the FedExCup in the playoffs, is that a major goal for you?**

NICK HARDY: Oh, yeah. For sure. Shoot, I've done a lot of damage the last few weeks in terms of climbing that ladder to get there, but I've definitely still got a ways to go. So that's a goal of mine to make the FedExCup playoffs, yeah.

**Q. Could put another chunk in this week, too, can't you?**

NICK HARDY: Yeah. Big time. They give out 500 points to the winner, so yeah.

**Q. That's a nice chunk.**

MODERATOR: Unless there are any others, I'm going to close with going back with Patrick Flavin, you guys remained honorary ambassadors for First Tee Chicago. Is there any birdie challenge going on with that?

NICK HARDY: I'm glad you mentioned that. There is. You can find the link at First Tee Chicago website. But we are doing a birdie challenge to raise money for the First Tee Chicago, and hopefully we make a lot of birdies.

MODERATOR: And final one, when is the wedding?

NICK HARDY: Um, we haven't planned a wedding yet, but we're going to do something small in Australia. So no one's invited, just us. (Laughs).

MODERATOR: As always, thank you for taking the time to join us, and good luck this week.

NICK HARDY: Thank you.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports