

# John Deere Classic

Monday, June 5, 2023

TPC Deere Run

Silvis, Illinois, USA

## J.T. Poston

John Deere Classic Media Day

THE MODERATOR: J.T., welcome back.

J.T. POSTON: Thank you.

**Q. We talked when we sat down, I know you're not out on the course, but you're back here in the Quad Cities. When you get in here, do you get those vibes, those feelings? Obviously it was a special week last year in July.**

J.T. POSTON: Yeah, definitely. I think seeing that video brings back a lot of great memories. Obviously this is such a great community. I've said it for several years now, even before winning, that it just feels like home. I'm a North Carolina guy, and I feel like the community kind of matches where I grew up, and I've always had a lot of support. So I love coming back, and I'm definitely looking forward to being back this year.

**Q. We're known for our fantastic finishes. It wasn't a crazy finish by any stretch, but when we don't have a crazy finish, we have an historic one, and it was a wire-to-wire victory, first time in 30 years. Did you know as you went through, obviously you started great, but when did you know that it was a wire-to-wire? You had never done that before.**

J.T. POSTON: Yeah, I had never done it. I didn't know at the time. Honestly, I was just trying to focus on finishing it off. I know sleeping on a lead is not easy, but doing it every day was definitely new and a new challenge.

I don't really want to do it again, to be honest, but if it means that I get to keep the lead after Sunday, then I'm good with it. Yeah, it was tough. It was not as easy as I would have hoped.

**Q. So you don't want to do it again, so you don't want a 62 --**

J.T. POSTON: I'd be okay with maybe somebody else can go low early and then I'll catch up to them maybe would be ideal.



**Q. The video we just ran, you had a nice lead going into Sunday. Your mindset, because it was three birdies. I know on our walkie-talkies that we have, we were talking about this thing is over. Great start. Was that the mindset going in on Sunday?**

J.T. POSTON: Yeah, it was kind of new territory for me. I had had a few other chances where I was leading going into Sunday, but I was maybe tied with a couple other guys or maybe a one-shot lead, but never a three shots like it was starting the day.

My game plan, because I knew guys could go low out there, was to try and build the lead after the first nine holes. Then I would kind of reevaluate at the turn depending on where I stood.

Birdieing the first three is a pretty good start to doing that, but unfortunately gave a few back and had to kind of right the ship a little bit, and fortunately got to the meat of the back nine and still had a little bit of a cushion.

**Q. Talk about 17 because that's the birdie that you had on the back nine, gave you some breathing room going into 18. I know 17 was important to you.**

J.T. POSTON: Yeah, 17 was big just because I knew Emiliano was playing in front of me, and he could obviously birdie 18 and get it pretty close. So I knew if I birdied 17, I would at least have a two-shot cushion, whether he birdied or not on 18.

Two-shot lead is a lot easier than one, so it was nice to get that birdie, and I hadn't made one since the third hole I don't think. I had some looks and just couldn't quite get the ball in the hole.

**Q. Seeing the video and seeing the ball go in, winning the John Deere Classic, had you watched that since then, and what kinds of emotions and feelings -- you're in the moment at the time, so obviously it's taking a step back and seeing that.**

J.T. POSTON: I hadn't watched it in a while, but I have watched it several times since last year. That's something that my agent actually has kind of told me to do a few times if I have a bad stretch. He said, go watch the John Deere.



You're not that far off. You're playing well. That can bring back some good memories and some feels.

So I've definitely gone back and I've watched the whole tournament basically.

Definitely watching it now definitely brings back some great memories, and I still remember that feeling coming down the stretch, and finally kind of realizing that I had won it after hitting the green on 18. Always wanted that feeling of walking up 18, though, that you had won, and just kind of being able to take it in, and that was pretty cool.

**Q. You mentioned in the video, you hadn't played that great here. What took you so long? What was the difference between last year and maybe the years before that?**

J.T. POSTON: You know, I don't know. I think maybe putting too much pressure on myself because I know it's a good golf course for me. The greens are similar to what I grew up on. I feel like the style of play is -- you get a lot of opportunities. I feel like putting is kind of my strength.

With that many chances and good greens that I'm familiar with, I feel like I really should play well, and I don't know if I just put too much pressure on myself going into the week feeling like I should play well, but thankfully last year was able to finally play some good golf and walk away with a trophy.

**Q. You mentioned your putting. Can you talk to us about your putting? Everybody is so different with their approach, and yours is different. I think watching you, it's a feel thing. Kind of talk about your putting and what makes you so good at that.**

J.T. POSTON: Yeah, I think what makes it a strength and what makes me good is because I've just always stuck to my guns and don't really let any other outside influence affect my putting. I've always just felt like I want to feel as comfortable as I possibly can over the putter, and it's very much a feel thing, and try not to get too technical with it.

So basically that's been my approach since I was a kid, and I've always putted well when I was a kid, and I just sort of stuck with it instead of going a different route where I might try and perfect it. I'm just going to do what I know feels best, and I think that at times can be hard to be consistent, but also I think it really helps when you're under the gun and have some pressure putts, that I can feel comfortable and not overthink it or put too much pressure on myself.

**Q. Last year when you won, your fiance was there.**

**Now she's your wife. First off, congratulations. When people tell you what's the biggest thing to happen over the years last year, I hope it's that and not the John Deere Classic.**

J.T. POSTON: It is that.

**Q. Do you ever catch yourself saying the wrong one?**

J.T. POSTON: Yes. (Laughter.) Glad she's not here to witness it.

But no, it is obviously -- it was a big life moment for both of us. John Deere is a close second last year.

Yeah, she's great. She actually flew up and surprised me. I didn't know she was coming last year, and surprised me on 18 green, which was really cool. Yeah, she'll be back this year.

**Q. Because in 2019 when you won before, she wasn't there --**

J.T. POSTON: We had just met. Yeah, my first win at the Wyndham we had just met and actually had started dating like maybe a few weeks before then. She was not there for that one.

I'm glad I was able to win another one, and she could be there. Yeah, it was perfect.

**Q. Obviously when you get done winning the John Deere Classic, you get a check and everybody loves that and I know that's important, but you also get a Gator. I've got four boys, so that Gator is --**

J.T. POSTON: Fun.

**Q. Take me through that Gator because I know you're using it and you used it well when it comes to this whole marriage and wedding and all that kind of stuff.**

J.T. POSTON: We had put it to use right away. We live in Sea Island, Georgia, beach town, not exactly the place where you see a lot of Gators riding around, but it sticks out because it's more of a golf cart community, and that's basically our golf cart. It's a lot faster than a lot of the other golf carts. (Laughter).

**Q. You can get it moving --**

J.T. POSTON: I got it up to 50. (Laughter.)

No, we've used it a lot. We have a lot of fun with it. When we got married in December, we used it our like getaway

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

vehicle. It was kind of a unique way that a lot of people will hop in a golf cart or their car, and we're like, we're going to use the Gator and it's going to be perfect, and we hopped in and peeled off.

**Q. So if you win this year, you don't need two Gators. Can we talk afterwards?**

J.T. POSTON: I haven't thought about that. Let me get the win out of the way first.

**Q. There's another golfer named JT --**

J.T. POSTON: Yeah.

**Q. And that happens, right? You don't look that much alike, to you?**

J.T. POSTON: No, but you'd be amazed the number of times that somebody will take a video of Justin Thomas and tag me in it on social media and I'll finish a round and I'll have a few videos or something sent my way of Justin hitting a driver or something, and I'm tagged in it. It definitely happens.

I've joked around with him a bunch about it. We have some fun with it. We had some fun with it at Tampa this year with the caddie bibs and I was the other JT, and we were paired together so we played for the bragging rights a few years ago about JT.

**Q. Who won?**

J.T. POSTON: I think I got him after the first two. We might have tied actually in the tournament, which -- no, I got him. I did. I got him on Sunday actually, so I've got the bragging rights right now.

[Applause.]

**Q. It's something to joke around with and you embraced it really well like that, but last year after John Deere Classic you did a national interview with ESPN. Talk about what happened. They had no clue who they were talking to.**

J.T. POSTON: Yeah, so I did an ESPN interview just over the phone. I wasn't there in person, obviously, which probably would have gotten ahead of it if I was there in person.

**Q. They might not have let you in.**

J.T. POSTON: Yeah, probably not. So over the phone, they're kind of going through the intro and they start saying

from Louisville, Kentucky, pride of the Crimson Tide, winner of the PGA Championship, and they said Justin Thomas, and this is live, and I just was like, guys, you've got the wrong guy here. I don't know what else to tell you. They kind of scrambled, and I let it slide and was able to -- it was fine. But they scrambled, and we still did the interview kind of, but I gave them some grief afterwards.

**Q. You have to.**

J.T. POSTON: I let them know for sure, but I think they knew they messed up, so I wasn't going to rub it in.

**Q. Talk to us about your caddie because sometimes Aaron Flener is sometimes -- I don't know if he gets more spotlight than you at times.**

J.T. POSTON: He's getting there, yeah.

**Q. First off, your relationship with him, that's super important. You guys are really close. That's important when you're spending so much time together on the course.**

J.T. POSTON: Yeah, he was a good friend of mine before we even started working together. He used to caddie for Steven Yeager. We met on the Korn Ferry TOUR, and Steven and I played a lot of college golf against each other, so when I got out there, we played a lot of practice rounds, I got to know Aaron that way, and I got my card my first year, they got their card their second year, and got out on TOUR and decided to split, and when they did, I picked him up, and we've been working together for probably five and a half years now.

It's been great. He jokes that it's his longest lasting relationship. (Laughter.) I've got that going for me.

But he's great. We've always been good friends. He's really laid back, really funny. He's good at if I'm playing well, telling a few jokes, keeping my mind off of where I am on the leaderboard. Did a really good job of it that last year with this tournament.

When I'm playing bad, he's good at telling jokes and --

**Q. What does he say to you when you're playing bad?**

J.T. POSTON: I wish I could recall like some specifics. It's hard -- because it's always just random one-liner things or something that he picks up. That's what makes him so good is it's not rehearsed, he just kind of thinks of it. But he's also good at knowing if I'm frustrated, he knows when to let me blow it off and when to step in and say something.

I can never remember, I get asked that all the time, and I can never remember any specifics or anything like that, but he's just a funny guy and fun to be around.

**Q. Did you sign off on or are you cool with the fact that your caddie is a male underwear model? And can you explain that to anybody who doesn't know --**

J.T. POSTON: Yeah, definitely if you don't know what you're talking about, that's not -- he just did an endorsement for SAXX underwear and he and about four other caddies, and they did a commercial that was really funny, and they had a blast with it. He doesn't have to ask my permission, he can do it. He's like, just to let you know, I'm doing this, in case you see some funny videos floating around on the internet of me in my underwear, just want to give you a heads up.

That's exactly the person he is. He's always a lot of fun. He's going to have a good time no matter what. Yeah, he's now an underwear model. Definitely look it up, SAXX underwear, or look up his social media. He's got it all over his social media, so it's pretty funny.

**Q. What is it about that course? I know you finally broke through with it this year. Do you have a favorite hole out there? Do you have one that you want to -- that drives you crazy?**

J.T. POSTON: The one that drives me crazy is 4. I love hitting it into that tree. And I can never make myself hit it far enough right to miss the tree or aim -- I always aim over there, but then I just barely tug it a little bit left, and I feel like it never goes through that tree, it always hits and goes wherever.

Favorite hole? There's a lot of good ones. I really think it's a great golf course, great setup. The agronomy team does a great job with how the course conditions and stuff throughout the week. I know it's not an easy time of year to keep some of those bent greens the way they are.

But I would say last year, 9 was probably a pivotal hole for me. I wouldn't -- favor it is a stretch because it's a tough one, but I played it 2-under for the week, which I would say as far as winning a golf tournament, that was probably pivotal compared to the rest of the week. That's probably my answer right now.

**Q. You mentioned a little bit about this area, this tournament, and it kind of fits you. Hometown vibe, what we talked about earlier, to have this, we don't get our champion to come back or some tournaments don't get their champion to come back. When you get a phone call that we want to fly you in to do this, were**

**you like, I want to do this, and is this one of the reasons why this community is pretty special?**

J.T. POSTON: Yeah, I definitely was looking forward to being back, and to be able to come back and be a part of this and get excited for the tournament coming up, like you said, it's a very similar community to what I grew up in. I grew up in a small town in North Carolina, and I love going back there and spending time there, and the same goes here. I have such great memories here and have been so grateful for just the opportunity to be here and play. We're lucky to do what we get to do, and for John Deere to put a tournament on here and the history behind it and to have my name linked to that and be a part of that is special.

I always want to give back and look forward to giving back and being here for years to come.

**Q. Three top 10s I think this year, T34 at the Masters. Obviously we're a month away from the John Deere Classic. Where are you now, where do you want to be when you get here in July?**

J.T. POSTON: Game is good. It's solid. I would say this time of year last year or kind of going into the summer, my game was -- I wouldn't say struggling but I wasn't playing as well. I didn't have the results that I would have liked, and was able to kind of turn it on in the summer, and it clicked and finished the year strong.

I am encouraged about where I am now. I feel like I'm playing a little bit better than I was this time last year, so hopefully I can get on a similar run to what I did last year.

But it's one of those -- golf is a funny game. I feel like I'm playing well. The results just haven't quite been there, say, the last month or so. But I've played long enough and been out here long enough to know that that comes in waves regardless of how you're playing. I feel like I'm getting really close to playing really good golf and contending again. Hopefully maybe John Deere will be the week again.

**Q. You won in 2019, and you won last year. I don't want you to compare or say which one is your favorite. What was the difference, I guess, and what did you learn from 2019 to 2022 when you won?**

J.T. POSTON: I think just the difference between getting your first win and your second win. I think the first one, it's hard to win, period. The first one for me almost kind of came out of nowhere. I just had a really good week in Greensboro, and I was starting the day behind, and the guys that were leading didn't quite play as well and I played really well on Sunday. It came out of nowhere and

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

happened really fast. Then all of a sudden trying to do it again is tough.

That second win is almost I would say the hardest or felt harder than the first one. If I'm picking favorites, this -- I really would say, even if none of you guys were here, I would say this is probably my favorite just because I knew -- I felt like I really had to work for this one and really had to work hard at my game, kind of going through some lows and not playing well and some bad stretches and sort of digging it out of the dirt and playing well and finally getting it done here.

That one to me is more special knowing the amount of work and effort that was put into getting here.

**Q. Let's learn a little bit about you besides golf itself. I've got some dumb questions. Round of golf with anybody, doesn't have to be a golfer, and can't be Decker.**

J.T. POSTON: Okay, now I've got to think. Probably my grandfather. He was one that got me into the game of golf when I was a kid. He passed away two years ago, and so to be able to play with him would be pretty special. He was the one that taught me how to play, built me my first club, and I've got a lot of memories of playing with him as a kid.

**Q. If you weren't a golfer but you were still playing sports, what sport would you want to play professionally if you could?**

J.T. POSTON: Probably baseball.

**Q. Were you good?**

J.T. POSTON: I was okay. Baseball swing got in the way of the golf swing, though. That was what kind of ended my baseball career, so I'd say. But I've always been a big baseball fan, Braves fan, grew up watching the Braves. I played a bunch as a kid. I played a bunch of sports. I still do. I still love to get out and play some. It's hard to choose one, but if I were to choose one I'd say baseball.

**Q. I know you're a North Carolina basketball fan, so you like your college hoops?**

J.T. POSTON: Mm-hmm.

**Q. You know about Caitlin Clark?**

J.T. POSTON: I do, yeah.

**Q. You know she's coming to John Deere Classic?**

J.T. POSTON: I heard, I saw that. That's going to be awesome. I'm looking forward to meeting her.

**Q. Andrew is trying to get a hoop out there. Can you shoot it?**

J.T. POSTON: Yeah, I can shoot it. Not as good as her, but I can shoot it.

**Q. Would you accept a challenge?**

J.T. POSTON: There's no guarantee it's going to go in, but I can try.

**Q. Who cares about makes, it's shots that count.**

J.T. POSTON: I'd putt, that's what I'd do. She shoots.

**Q. As a basketball fan, watching what she has done and I'm sure even down in Georgia you knew all about Caitlin Clark. What were your thoughts on what she's done?**

J.T. POSTON: Yeah, it's incredibly impressive. I can't remember another time when so many people tuned in to that national championship game and watched her play even before then, just the whole run that she was on. It's impressive. I love how humble she is, and as much attention as she got as an individual, I loved that she was all about the team, and her goal was not to see how many points she could score or how many threes she could make and all her own individual accolades, she was wanting to win a national championship, and I thought that that was really cool.

**Q. Favorite food?**

J.T. POSTON: Sushi.

**Q. Really?**

J.T. POSTON: Yeah.

**Q. Have you had Whitey's?**

J.T. POSTON: No, I haven't.

**Q. Ice cream with Caitlin on Wednesday.**

J.T. POSTON: Whitey's, gotcha.

**Q. But you like ice cream? What's your favorite flavor?**

J.T. POSTON: Oreo or cookies and cream.



**Q. Ryder Cup win or Masters win?**

J.T. POSTON: I think Ryder Cup. That's probably not a popular answer, but I just would love to be on one of those teams one day. I would say Ryder Cup win in the U.S. teams like it would be pretty hard to beat.

**Q. Talking or texting.**

Do you prefer to do?

J.T. POSTON: Text.

**Q. Do you talk-to-text?**

J.T. POSTON: No, I can't do that. I don't even think I know how to do that.

**Q. Favorite TV show. Do you watch TV, besides the news?**

J.T. POSTON: My wife and I watch a lot of Netflix and stuff like that.

**Q. What's your favorite?**

J.T. POSTON: We just watched "Succession." That was probably our latest. That was a good one. It's hard to pick a favorite. There's a lot of good ones out there.

**Q. Favorite course. Don't say Deere Run just because we're here.**

J.T. POSTON: On TOUR or ever?

**Q. Anywhere. Could be a mini golf course if you want.**

J.T. POSTON: I don't know, do those have names? Probably St Andrews is probably my favorite I've got to say. My first Open last year at St Andrews after the win, so that definitely plays a part in it probably, playing in an Open. But St Andrews was just really cool, and to be able to go back to the history of golf and kind of take it all in and then play an Open there was -- I don't know how I'm going to top that.

**Q. Is this kind of your first defense of a championship with media and crowds and all that stuff, and how do you plan on tackling it?**

J.T. POSTON: Yeah, it definitely is. My first win was in '19, so the defense was during COVID, so all this was over a Zoom call last time. When we played the tournament, there were no fans out there, nothing.

This is kind of my first rodeo, but I'm looking forward to it. I'm excited. I think it's a fun aspect of being back when you're coming back as the defending champion. I'm going to try not to put too much pressure on myself and go out and perform like I would normally try to. I don't think there will be any sort of different game plan for the week other than just looking forward to being back.

**Q. We're going to do a little crowd participation before we get done with you. You're J.T., and I didn't know until recently what J.T. stands for, so our great tournament director Andrew Lehman has a Bobblehead and a pin flag. Nobody get your phones out. What does J.T. stand for? Any guesses?**

J.T. POSTON: It's not Justin Thomas, either. When people ask me, I just say I'll give you \$100 if you can guess it.

**Q. It's a Bobblehead, a pin flag and \$100.**

AUDIENCE MEMBER: James Tyree. I looked it up.

**Q. Take me through Tyree. It's a family name, right?**

J.T. POSTON: Tyree is a family name. I'm a junior, so I was named after my dad, and the Tyree just comes from my dad's side of the family. I think his great aunt's last name was Tyree, so that's kind of our lineage, and that's where it comes from.

**Q. More people, obviously not in this room, but more people are starting to realize this, but are some people starting to call you Tyree?**

J.T. POSTON: I'm starting to get it a little bit in some crowds at some tournaments. I've always said it's my name, so I'll answer to it if somebody calls me that. Obviously J.T. gets mixed up a lot with the other JT, so I'll answer to anybody. If you want to call me Tyree, I'll answer to it.

**Q. James Tyree Poston, your 2022 John Deere Classic champion. Thank you for letting me bug you for the entire morning. Do you want to go golfing?**

J.T. POSTON: Do we have time? Do you get strokes?

**Q. A round of golf for you is enjoyable and quick. A round of golf with me takes a while. We're not shooting 70s, we're shooting 90s.**

J.T. POSTON: That's all right. That's all right.

**Q. We see you Thursday through Sunday, but how approach a course every time you play? Do you scout it? What's your focus that way?**

J.T. POSTON: Yeah, so usually we're getting into town either Sunday night or Monday morning, and the prep starts kind of right away. You're trying to get a feel for the golf course and how it's playing. Is it firm? Is it fast? Is it softer? Getting used to the green speeds and stuff like that, see if there's some new tees that may have been added since we were here last.

Fortunately enough for me, this is my seventh year on TOUR, so a lot of these courses I've seen before, so there usually aren't too many surprises other than maybe the occasional new tee here or there. So my approach is sort of practicing and working on what I know I need to work on for the week and then play nine holes on Tuesday and then nine holes in the pro-am on Wednesday. That's just kind of how I approach most weeks.

You know going into the week what it sort of takes to win at certain golf courses. The John Deere, for example, usually there's a lot of birdies, so you really want to be good with the putter. You want to hit as many fairways as you can and be sharp with your scoring clubs. Last week at the Memorial, you don't get as many wedges in your hand so it puts more of a premium on chipping and putting and hitting fairways. You kind of attack each week based on the course and sort of how it plays.

**Q. As someone who works a lot with youth and golfers, how do we grow the game more? Any advice on keeping kids engaged for as long as possible?**

J.T. POSTON: That's a great question and a tough one. I would say the best thing -- my advice to kids would be to just get out there and have fun with it. I think you see a lot of kids that take it a little too seriously and get discouraged early and don't kind of stick with it. I would say that would maybe be the biggest thing is have fun with it.

When I was a kid I remember just going to the range and wanting to see how far I could hit it or just wanting to be out there and didn't really care where it went. My grandfather, I mentioned him earlier, he didn't let me get out on the golf course until I was much older and it was just because I don't think he wanted me to get discouraged by hitting golf balls into the woods or not playing well after I had watched it on TV.

So yeah, I would say just have fun with it, and whether it's games or competition amongst each other and just a way that you can make it competitive and fun I think would be perfect.

**Q. How do you stay in the right head space traveling all the time, flying, because I know I fly once a year and when I get on the plane I'm like dead tired. How do you go about each week traveling so much?**

J.T. POSTON: I wish I had an answer other than you just kind of get used to it. You get really good at living out of a suitcase. But one of the things that I do, if there's a change in say time zones and trying to adjust to the time zone is go try and stay active, do a workout or go walk or go just get out and about and try and avoid that bed as long as possible. That usually helps and gets you kind of on track within that first day or so.

As far as the travel in general, you just sort of get used to it. I was fortunate enough, I loved it. I even loved airplanes as a kid, so I kind of thought it was fun and cool when we first started traveling a bunch and just flying around and getting to see different parts of the world.

**Q. Talk to me about the elevated events on TOUR now and what you think of those, what that means for the TOUR. How good is it for the players and how tough does that make it to schedule your events?**

J.T. POSTON: Yeah, so the elevated events is something that's kind of new this year and going forward for the next however many seasons. I do think it is good for the TOUR. I think the ones that they've had so far this year have all produced great tournaments. They get great fields.

I think the big concern is spreading the wealth, so to say, amongst the other tournaments, and letting -- you don't want the same tournaments to be elevated every year because then that creates a sort of divide. I think if they can spread -- if you don't get an elevated event this year or next year but you know you're getting it three years down the road, then that's something to be very excited about and you know that you're going to have the top 50 players in the world and probably the best field -- one of the best fields of the year at your event.

I think as far as the trajectory of the TOUR and where it's headed, I think it's a good thing. I think for the players, they're excited about it.

I think there's still a lot that is being figured out as far as how they're going to be run, and like I said, which events are going to be elevated, is there going to be a rotation. I think a lot of players are for that sort of rotation system where you get every three years or four years, you're guaranteed at least one elevated event.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

