

# John Deere Classic

Wednesday, July 5, 2023

TPC Deere Run

Silvis, Illinois, USA

## Adam Schenk

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: I would like to welcome Adam Schenk to the interview room here at John Deere Classic. Thanks for joining us for a few minutes. I know given your background in the agricultural world, this is a big week for you. A lot going on, in addition to the fact that you have had good success here in past John Deere Classics. A couple of top-10 finishes. Just a few thoughts on how it feels to be back here this week.

ADAM SCHENK: It feels great. Had some success here. Midwest course is bent grass, so I really enjoy that aspect of it. They take a ton of pride in their tournament and do a great job running it.

So it's easy to come back here and really look forward to it year after year.

THE MODERATOR: Just a few comments about how you feel coming into the week. You've had four top 10s, including your seventh place finish last week at Rocket Mortgage. Just a few thoughts on how you are hopefully able to carry that over and keep the good play going.

ADAM SCHENK: Feels good. I feel like recently it's been feast or famine, so I feel like I either play well or miss the cut. I would love to get more on the end of the spectrum where you are playing well consistently. If you're not playing great, you're still making the cut and finishing whatever that might be, 30th, 40th.

But I try and pride myself on being consistent and making a lot of cuts because I don't think you'll talk to many people out here -- no one likes missing cuts, but that would be a little bit of an upcoming goal for me is just to clean up some of the weeks that I'm not as sharp as some of the good weeks I've had.

So it's just figuring out how to do that that's the hard part, and that's what everybody is always searching for.

THE MODERATOR: Weather permitting, I know tonight is going to be a fun night for you with the Big Dig. I guess everybody is coming in. If that goes without a weather



hitch, is that something you guys are all excited about?

ADAM SCHENK: Yes, I've done it twice. It's been a couple of years since I have done it. Last year I got sick and had to withdraw, which was unfortunate, but the Big Dig, it's special. Get around some of the John Deere equipment and get to play with some of the bulldozers and move some dirt.

I think we're going to take our dog, Bunker, as well and son, A.J. So Bunker will be running around, jumping in the pond, I'm sure. He'll be in heaven.

THE MODERATOR: Good. With that, we'll take a few questions.

#### **Q. Does Bunker still get as much love at home with the baby there because that tends to change?**

ADAM SCHENK: He does. Maybe a little more so from me just because my wife is a little busier. If I go out and play when we're home, I take Bunker to the golf course every time. He doesn't miss.

Leaving this morning, he sees me take my golf bag, and he goes with me most of the time, but when we're at tournaments, he doesn't go obviously. So he sees me taking the golf bag and he knows he is not going, so he puts on the pouty face and makes you feel pretty bad.

#### **Q. Are you frustrated with the runner-up finishes and the near misses at this point, or are you learning from every opportunity?**

ADAM SCHENK: Yeah, learning. It's incredibly hard to win out here, and I think everybody knows that. No one would argue with that.

It takes some luck, and I've had a decent amount of luck to even finish second, so great weeks. If you keep knocking on the door enough times, eventually you'll walk through. I guess that would be more my mentality.

The one at Charles Schwab stings losing in a playoff, but the more I look back on it, Emiliano doubled the last hole on, so I didn't even deserve to be in the playoff. So just having a chance and had two putts to win, so I had my chances. Didn't work out.



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Taking what I learned from that week and then from Valspar, putting it towards weeks where I'm playing well like last week. Didn't get it done; but a few more putts go in, a few less mistakes here or there, I would have been right there.

Just generally building off of the recent success for when the cards do align, I think that gives me my best chance to win.

**Q. We tend to focus on the young players that show up here with the college résumés that kind of pop, but there's another way to build a career out here, and you're an example of that. Did the early top 10s here at the Deere kind of when you weren't making as many cuts as you might like or weren't finishing as high in the FedEx Cup standings as you would have set out to do, how much did those top 10s mean to you? Did they tell you you belonged?**

ADAM SCHENK: A lot. Maybe more so the second one. The first time I top-10'd here, I think I finished seventh. I had one of my friends on the bag, Ben Marvin, a college teammate of mine.

We played great. I made a ton of putts. I played okay. I just made everything I looked at, especially on the weekend.

The next maybe two years later Brent Henley was on the bag, and I was struggling. I think I was right around 125. Maybe even a little higher on the FedEx Cup list.

That was my first tournament where I actually had a chance to win. I was maybe up one or two with five or six holes left to go with Lucas Glover, the eventual champion.

That was the first really taste of I have a golf tournament to win, it's kind of mine to lose. I made one bogey coming in, and he birdied several holes coming in, so I didn't -- I kind of lost it, but he more so won it as well.

Then that really propelled me to thinking, all right, I got really close. I think using that experience I can build off of that and get better and be more prepared for the next time, and I think I finished fourth that week, and that was a confidence-builder.

I feel like I have taken off a little since then because confidence was very low at that point. That has been a little bit of a resurgence in my career.

It's funny you asked because I actually talked to my wife about that yesterday about if I would have played poorly

that week or if I tweaked my back, I would have missed out on that fourth place finish and the FedEx Cup points, the confidence, all that stuff. So it was a sneak career-changing moment.

**Q. What do you attribute where you are now, just the way that your game has developed this season?**

ADAM SCHENK: That's a good question. I think about it a lot. Some luck. Some experience. Just getting better at knowing my game and how I need to play golf and how I need to handle situations where I'm not good at a certain shot, how do I get by and make par and being patient.

I know it's easier said than done, but it's a lot of the same things that guys sit up here that win a lot more than I do or win at all because I have not won, but patience, sticking to your game plan, not getting ahead of yourself. Just simple things like that.

Then there's a difference between talking about it and then actually doing it on the golf course, and that's where I feel like I've really improved this year is implementing it instead of necessarily talking about it or, oh, there's a couple of exceptions where I stuck to my process, but here I kind of got loose and made two silly bogeys.

That's what I've really tried to do this year is just eliminate -- can't eliminate all mistakes. I try to. I set a pretty high standard. Brett Swedberg and I, we try our best just to eliminate mistakes.

**Q. (Off microphone)**

ADAM SCHENK: Yes, he is.

**Q. Are you familiar with the history of this tournament and the first-time winners that this has produced?**

ADAM SCHENK: I know it's produced a lot of first-time winners. I don't know how many or how many years in a row, but...

**Q. 23 up to this point.**

ADAM SCHENK: 23.

**Q. Do you even think about that, having not won yet think, okay, this is a place where a lot of guys have done it, maybe I can be the next one? Does that even cross your mind or not?**

ADAM SCHENK: Not really. It would be awesome just to have a chance on Sunday. That's all anybody is really looking for.



It's just being in contention is so fun, and maybe that's what I have learned more than anything. When you get in contention just how fun it is, so you are not necessarily trying to do anything just besides get back in that situation so you can have that much fun again because you finish and you were, like, man, that was really fun. I had a chance to win.

I have not won yet. Obviously I've mentioned that five times already now. I think that's the fun part, and I think that what guys like Jon Rahm or someone that wins consistently, you get a taste of winning, and he just gets banning there so often, and it's just fun.

**Q. Was that just a step in the progression for you to have that mentality where being in contention is fun as opposed to being in contention and getting deer in the headlights look and, like, oh, my God, I'm in contention, what do I do now?**

ADAM SCHENK: It can be, and I don't think you can predict how you're going to act. A lot of these new guys that come out here straight from college are much more so ready to win than I was.

Like I said, I've been basically a career grinder, so I have been on a slow, steady slope up. There's some ups, and there's some downs for four or five months at times.

I think that you're exactly right when you said that's a step in the progression of just learning how I feel when I get in contention, how I handle the nerves, what changes in my swing, what did I mess up, and how do I fix it for the next time?

That's what I think everyone out here is always trying to figure out, and it's easier said than done. You try some things, and they work. Then you try the same thing next week, and it's just doesn't work, for lack of better words. That can be the maddening part of this game.

Like last week, I didn't win last week, but I still had a great week. We had a ton of fun. I felt like I got back in contention, and that's the goal. That's the goal again this week.

**Q. You talked about just now the players that are more prepared when they come to tour to compete and play. What do you attribute that to, and how has that changed in your time on tour when you have seen different groups of the next generation of players come through?**

ADAM SCHENK: That's another good question. I feel like

they think they can compete out here, and they absolutely can. They hit it a mile.

They're just polished. I don't know if it's what you can exactly attribute it to. Knowing how to play golf better. Using some of the technology, TrackMan, Foresight, whatever those might be.

Maybe it's slowly starting -- those guys see people before them have success straight out of college, and then they know they can do that, and they work that much harder and just feel like -- since I've been out here, it's gotten a lot harder to keep your card out here. It's gotten harder to win. It's gotten harder to top 10.

Even if it's a field like -- I think last week was a pretty strong field for Rocket Mortgage compared to other fields they've had, which have never been bad, but this one was extra strong. It's still incredibly hard to win that field.

If you go to the U.S. Open where everyone is there, it's hard to win no matter what the field is. No matter how many of the top players are there, you have to play really well.

I think these young kids have started to see the people before them have success, and they just strive to get a little better, and they work really hard. They crush it when they come out here, a lot of guys.

**Q. How different is that mindset from when you came out here to what you experienced your first time out here on tour?**

ADAM SCHENK: Well, straight out of college I went to Buenos Aires, Argentina, for Latin America Q-school, and that was perfect for me. I played great, got through. I got a year down there, got two years in the Korn Ferry. That's what I needed. I wasn't as good coming out of college. That's what I needed.

Like we just said, some of these guys are, so that was the more route I had to take because I wasn't a world-class talent, and I'm still not. I have great weeks, but I also probably miss 40% of my cuts, and I understand that. Everyone does.

I'm trying to improve upon that, but it is a slow process, but it's nice to see some of the work that I've done propel me to once I get inside the top 20 and 10, I'm saying there and going from 30th to 20th to 11th to 5th ending the week rather than 5th to 7th, 11th to 20th.

I've gotten up there a lot in my career. I just haven't stayed. That's the parts that I've worked on in my game.

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That's what I have -- that's what's allowed me to kind of stay in the top 10 and have better results this year.

**Q. You say you're not like a world-class player or anything like that, but you're top 30 in the FedEx right now. You're in position to be around for a lot of the playoffs. Does that change your expectations for yourself for this season or what you hold up for yourself or how far you can advance this year? How does that kind of go?**

ADAM SCHENK: Absolutely it did. I want to make East Lake really bad. It's important to peak. Now it's the end of the season, so it's important to peak now.

It's important to peak in Memphis and Chicago because those are the ones that I think they're worth four times the points if I'm not mistaken. Top 10 at either of those two events is going to get you to East Lake.

It has changed my maybe confidence a little bit. I feel like I'm not outwardly an overly confident person, but mentally I know it's in there somewhere.

But the second if I feel like -- if I start acting cocky or better than everybody else, which I'm absolutely not, then golf will just smash you upside the head. So I try to stay level-headed and worry about myself and enjoy the success that I've had. I want to win, but the best way I can do that is just focus on myself and take care of business when you get a chance on the weekend.

**Q. I know you've mentioned the feast or famine of the last few events. I think over your last eight you've either missed the cut or finished in the top 10. When you fluctuate as much as that, how does that change your preparation going into an event whether it's off a missed cut or off a top 10 when you are both sides of the cut line there?**

ADAM SCHENK: I play a lot of my best golf off missed cuts. I need to go back and see how many top 10s I've had off of missed cuts because it's been a lot. Probably three-fourths of them.

I look at missed cuts maybe a little differently than most people. I just look at them as learning opportunities. Obviously I failed, but then it propels me and gets me a little upset going into next week.

So I learn what I did wrong, get a little fire under my ass, and then use that motivation to play well next week, and I feel like it gets me prepared.

You see it sometimes out here. You see a top player miss

the cut maybe before a big event or even at a big event, and that next event they're playing they usually come out with a little extra somehow.

In all honesty, that's absolutely the best way to be out here is play really good or play really bad because if you finish 40th or 50th every week, that's still pretty good golf. You don't get rewarded for it. So I've been both sides much the spectrum.

I've made eight cuts in a row and finished 40th or higher, and you would rather miss every cut and have a fifth. It's kind of backwards.

You are rewarded for consistency out here, but you're not. When you play good, you need to play good. That's how it works.

**Q. Your life has changed out here with the success. You're going to the British Open and Scottish; is that correct?**

ADAM SCHENK: Not going to the Scottish.

**Q. But you are in the British. That's brand new for you; right?**

ADAM SCHENK: Yes, first one.

**Q. It's changed at home. Obviously with your son coming in the world, how has fatherhood, do you think, influenced what you are doing on the golf course?**

ADAM SCHENK: I think it does. I think you see a lot of people have kids, and they play really good afterwards. You have a new perspective.

It's golf, yourself, even your wife. Your wife is very important, of course, but you have added a new addition where now your son, child, is the most important thing in the world to you right now.

If I play great golf, that's awesome. If I play bad golf, that's okay too. I mean, he is 2 months old, so he is not going to know the difference. He is also not going to know the difference really when he is 5 years old.

It's kind of the same as Bunker. 80, 70, 60, it doesn't matter what I shoot. He is happy to see you at the door, jumping on you, ready to lick you.

I find comfort in that. I find myself thinking about him just a lot when I'm on the golf course or just throughout the day. It just brings a smile to your face how special it is just to be a dad. We're just really enjoying it.

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**Q. You're sitting up there kind of joking a little bit about not winning. What kind of keeps your positivity going every week to think about getting that one win eventually?**

ADAM SCHENK: Everyone has such different talent levels out here. I feel like there's 20 to 30 guys out here, maybe more, they're just really good. They're probably just a step above everybody else.

Like I was talking with Peter Malnati last week, and he said -- maybe I shot 20-under last week. Maybe he shot 19 or 18. We talked in the locker room.

He said, I played great for me. I'm like, I played great for me too. That was a great week for me to finish 7th.

Could I have shot 24? Maybe, but I would have had four shots of basically luck of making a 20-footer, different things that needed to happen for me to have a chance. I still played great. If Jon Rahm plays great, he probably is not finishing 7th.

I think it's important just for people to realize -- it goes back to focusing on yourself. If I take care of my business and handle my situations and my talent level and the shots I can hit and the shots I don't know how to hit as consistently, how do I get by those, that is how I give myself the best chance to win rather than I played great and finished 7th. I need to change everything because it is hard to win out here.

I think people lose sight of how good of golf you have to play to even finish in the top 20. It goes back to the Kevin Kisner quote a long time ago: "They give away a lot of money for 20th place too." So it's not all bad.

Winning is great. It's not all it's about, but that's something I have to knock off my list. That's next for me. So I would not have regret if I don't win, but it's something that I really, really want to do.

**Q. That being said, though, your entire career, say you go without a win, would you be content having gone your entire career without a victory?**

ADAM SCHENK: Yes. It would be fine, but it's something that would always be in the back of my mind knowing how close I got and then never got there.

That's what would nag on me or be the little guy on my shoulder possibly telling me, but hopefully I don't have to cross that bridge. But if I do, that's okay too.