

# John Deere Classic

Wednesday, July 5, 2023

TPC Deere Run

Silvis, Illinois, USA

## Cameron Young

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Cam Young to the interview room here at the 2023 John Deere Classic. It's your first start in this tournament, making your debut here. You were PGA TOUR rookie of the year last year. You've had a chance to play all nine today of the front, and I think you played the back nine yesterday. What are your first impressions of the TPC Deere Run?

CAMERON YOUNG: I really enjoyed it. I'm from the Northeast. I know this is not the Northeast, but the grasses are very similar. The terrain is very similar.

It's a comfortable place. I like that the tree lines kind of give you a very clear picture of the shots you're supposed to hit, and I think there's some fun shots out there.

It's not particularly demanding off the tee, I would say. I think it's very important to be in the fairways, but the fairways are wide enough that if you drive it well, you're going to hit a lot of them, and I think it's a really fun second shot golf course.

Even just on the front nine today, that second shot on 9 is fantastic. I think even 1 is really cool. The little wedge you have to hit on I think it's 4, kind of like an infinity looking green, is a really cool shot.

I think there's a bunch out there that are really fun, and I'm excited to get going tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: As you were growing up as a youngster, did you watch this event on television? Is there any specific memory or memories that you have of this event?

CAMERON YOUNG: I think anybody remembers Jordan. Obviously he was 19. I was probably 14. So I remember that.

Just thinking that -- I was hoping that could be me in a few years. Obviously I'm about 7 years behind him on my schedule to win a PGA TOUR event.



That's a memory I had here. I watched a lot of golf growing up. This is one that I remember Steve Stricker's three wins in a row. I feel like there's been some really cool things that have happened here, and it's one that I definitely remember.

THE MODERATOR: How would you assess your season this week? You were pretty strong through March and April, had some good finishes. How would you assess your overall season following your rookie of the year season?

CAMERON YOUNG: I think the finishes don't really capture how I've played. I played really well at the U.S. Open and kind of missed everything for a couple of days and then made three doubles in a row on Sunday.

So you look and say, oh, well, he shot, whatever, 2-over or 3-over for the tournament, but I was in 11th with seven holes to go, and I wasn't going to win, but I could have finished fourth. If it goes the other -- I hit one good shot and make a putt, all of a sudden I'm in 5th or 6th place. You are, like, man, you're having a great year because you have a 7th and a 5th in majors.

I feel like the finishes are not really indicative of how I've played. Honestly I played really nicely at the Travelers. I had a couple of really bad putting days, and then one day that I hit the driver absolutely everywhere trying a new driver. So I finished 60th, but realistically I played pretty well three of the four days.

If a couple of putts go in or I don't try something new like an idiot with the driver, maybe it goes very differently. So I feel like I'm playing pretty well. I'm working on a lot of good stuff. I'm just kind of waiting for that work to shine through a little bit.

THE MODERATOR: Description of how it's such a fine line out here.

CAMERON YOUNG: Yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. Talk about that. You haven't won yet. Is it frustrating --**



CAMERON YOUNG: Thank you for reminding me.

**Q. I'm sorry.**

CAMERON YOUNG: No, I know.

**Q. Is it frustrating? Does it grind on you a little bit that you're not where Jordan is?**

CAMERON YOUNG: Not necessarily. Certainly not in reference really to anybody.

I would say it's something that I want to achieve. It's not something that I go to bed thinking about that it bothers me. If you look back, all of my good finishes -- I finished second a bunch of times. I don't know how many. I've lost by one and finished in third a couple of times.

None of those tournaments were right here in my hands, and I threw them away. All of those I just played pretty well and somebody beat me. It wasn't like I had a two-shot lead and didn't win or something.

So none of them bother me, and I don't feel like I've had a tournament in my hands. I think that would probably bother me for some period of time.

But mostly what I take from those is just knowing that kind of what I just talked about. You're very close. Finishing second, you're playing good enough golf to win a PGA TOUR event. All it takes is just sometimes a chip just falls in the edge instead of kind of just missing or sometimes you make a putt on the 71st hole that is 35 feet. Sometimes you don't.

I feel like just one of those times I'm going to have something like that happen, and it's going to go the other way. It's kind of just a waiting game. Keep working on the same stuff and getting better, and eventually things will go the other way.

**Q. It's been a pretty meteoric rise for you on tour. Is there a progression to get to that point to have everything align and fall into place for you on a certain week?**

CAMERON YOUNG: Yeah, I think all of us are just out here trying to incrementally get better. I don't think anyone is -- there's very few people making drastic changes, I think.

Yeah, I feel like my golf game has definitely changed and gotten better since my Korn Ferry days and before then. I'm a better professional golfer. I'm better at having it be my job.

Yeah, like anybody, you don't see -- everybody kind of says, I won twice, dominated the Korn Ferry TOUR. That's not really true. I finished really well four times in a row to get my status, and then I missed a million cuts. I missed, like, 9 of 12 or something and then won twice. Everybody forgets the middle part.

Last year I was playing really well. I missed two or three cuts in a row at one point last year. This year you look on as it's really mediocre maybe by the numbers, but I didn't miss a cut from the Rocket Mortgage until the PGA this year.

In the back of my mind I wanted to go a full year, and I think there's really something to be said for that even though I haven't had as many high finishes. I also have been really consistent and have mentally grinded my way through to give myself a lot of chances to play well, even if I haven't quite converted them into those finishes.

I think that's a good sign for me going forward. It's something I'm proud of and something I kind of have worked toward this year.

**Q. As a New York City street kid, what's it like to be -- that's a joke.**

CAMERON YOUNG: I know.

**Q. -- a top-ranked player in the field. What brings you here, and how does that affect your expectations as you take to the course?**

CAMERON YOUNG: Honestly, the top-ranked player in the field thing doesn't really register in my mind just because I feel like every week it doesn't really matter as much. It's whoever plays well is going to have a chance to win.

In a lot of the majors and stuff, it happens to be guys that are ranked very highly in the world because that's why they're the best players in the world, but I don't by any means expect to play average golf and be at the top of the leaderboard.

I know that every week there's 150 other guys that are really, really good at golf trying to beat you. That part of it doesn't really do anything mentally to me.

I feel like for me it was really just a good time in my schedule. I don't love playing the week before a major. I like to be home with my family able to practice. So for me to be able to play this week and have a week at home and then go over rested to the British I think fits my schedule

really nicely.

That's really the major thing. I've tried to build my schedule as much as I can around the majors and around those elevated events. This worked out really nicely to add one kind of between this last stretch of four ending at the Travelers and the British Open.

**Q. I know you've mentioned this earlier when the results don't exactly match how you're playing. Is that more frustrating or motivating for you knowing that you are right there and it's just a couple of small things to go your way?**

CAMERON YOUNG: It's both. I would love to say it's not frustrating and I'm just excited every week to go and see what happens, but yeah, there is definitely frustration that comes along with it.

That stretch at the U.S. Open I worked really, really hard to get back to having a chance to have what you would call a good finish, I guess. I think I shot maybe 2-over on Thursday and got myself all the way back to 3-under for the tournament, which doesn't sound like a lot, but at a U.S. Open, you guys know how hard that is to do.

Very frustrating for it to go -- it went away in 25 minutes. It was three days of grinding so hard and playing some really good golf, and literally between the 11th tee and the 13th tee it all went away, which is kind of the nature of that tournament a little bit.

But the other side of that is I was excited the next week to go to Travelers because I felt like I was more in control of my ball than I was the week before. I was hitting more solid shots. I was more in control of my mind.

I didn't finish well at the Travelers either, but I feel like mentally I had a really good week, and I continued to see a lot of the same things I saw at U.S. Open.

Really all I'm doing here is the same thing. I feel like I'm seeing the same positive signs, and as long as I can keep myself in control of my mind and keep practicing and integrating the same things, at some point I know that's good enough to compete and have a chance to win out here. It's worked before. It's just a matter of putting it together a little bit.

**Q. What do you attribute to all the younger players that are more prepared to compete when they get out on the tour? I know we beat this into the ground already. You don't have that win, but you've been extremely successful sense you started. What do you attribute that to that guys are more ready when they**

**get out on tour? Is it something in junior golf or amateur golf? How do you see that as a younger guy out here?**

CAMERON YOUNG: I think through late junior golf and college and amateur golf, I think you're just very aware of what people are doing. With social media and all that stuff, there's so much coverage of how guys practice and how they want to get better.

I think it just makes people more aware of what it takes to be really good at this. Any time you have a talented 17-year-old at golf and give him ideas, I feel like that's just going to add up to somebody that's more thoughtful and more prepared to play at this level early.

So I think that it's leading to better competition in college, which is kind of, in turn, creating a cycle where guys are better and better and more and more prepared to play against people that are better and better.

It's been fun, obviously. I kind of benefited from some of that. We had a very good team when I was at Wake Forest. I got to watch Will hit balls every day, which is depressing and you can always learn something from it.

Yeah, I think it's really just a combination of those things. It's guys aware of what professionals are doing and what the best players in the world are doing and having exposure to that younger is just making people better really early.

**Q. What were you able to find last year as the rookie of the year on the PGA TOUR that you're still looking to find this year in year two?**

CAMERON YOUNG: Just in general for the season?

**Q. Yeah, just part of the game.**

CAMERON YOUNG: I'm always working on certain thing. I feel like the driver can just be a huge weapon for me. I drove it I think statistically a little better last year than I have this year, but I think recently I've really started to figure out why. Even just my nine holes today, I was really happy with the way I drove it.

I think bringing some more consistency to that and not just being like, oh, the driver feels good today, I hit it straight all day. I think something I'm looking for and working on is trying to put some perimeters on why and figure out ways that when it doesn't feel good, how to make the ball do something functional as opposed to just all feel all the time.

That's something that I think I really want to work on and

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

have been working on.

We're always practicing some putting stuff. I mean, that's kind of a given I think for anybody. I'm looking for consistency in how I putt.

I've had more good days recently than I had for about six months, but I've had some terrible days too. I'm working on trying to get those a little closer together. Hopefully not bringing the good down, but hopefully bringing the bad up a little bit.

Really those two things. I feel like the iron game I generally am pretty solid. I control my distance pretty well.

I might not be the best wedge player in the world, but I'm not terrible either. I'm always trying to get a little better at that stuff.

I feel like the two bookends of it, if you drive it with well, you're going to be successful on the PGA TOUR, and if you putt well, you're going to probably do really, really well on the weeks you drive it well.

**Q. You just came off the course. Mindset with this golf course, this layout? It's a ball striker's advantage. Obviously, the bent grass putting comes into play. People score low here. What's your mindset heading into tomorrow?**

CAMERON YOUNG: I think it's mostly a battle for me of I think just some patience. You want to be playing from the fairway. I mean, we've gone out there and kind of decided each hole which club gives us the best chance of being in the fairway because I think out here that's how you're going to get the most birdie putts.

Then from there it's just a battle of knowing if you hit it 20 feet all day, you just don't make a bunch of 20-footers. But if you are consistent and you're not making too many mistakes, it's going to add up to something pretty good eventually. You only have to make one or two of them. You don't have to make seven.

It's just a patience battle and really just trying to stick to the game plan that we've come up with over the last couple of days.

**Q. I don't know how much attention you pay to news and online, but a preview for this event they talked about a weak field in the "New York Post." I was reading it today. I was thinking, it really depends on the lens you look through. You have these up-and-comers. You addressed some of this already, but the idea of the -- I've never heard anyone win a**

**tournament here at the John Deere and say, wow, I wish so and so was in the field.**

CAMERON YOUNG: Yeah, I think that's a pretty good point. Someone like -- I'm paired with Ludvig; right? I don't know him at all. I don't know what his world ranking is. I have no clue. I would love to look it up actually.

Whatever it is right now, it's not high enough. He is realistically one of the best players in the world already. I think he has proven that over the last few weeks. Canada and last week in Detroit.

I can't remember other ones, but just watching him play, just the eye, you just can tell. He is very, very good at golf. Whatever he is ranked, it's probably not high enough.

So I think there's some element of that. Then there's also the element of anyone that wants to call a PGA TOUR field weak is probably not correct.

You can't call any really PGA TOUR sanctioned field weak. The Canadian Tour, the competition is amazing. Korn Ferry TOUR is really strong. It's a very difficult tour to play on. Out here is obviously very difficult to succeed.

I think it's just not a realistic way to look at it. Any one field on the PGA TOUR, there's 150 really good golfers. It's just a battle of who plays well that week.

THE MODERATOR: He is 528th, by the way.

CAMERON YOUNG: Is he actually? Yeah, that's not right.

**Q. Cam, looking ahead to the British Open, you were part of a pretty epic passion play right in the middle of it a year ago on Sunday with all the things that were involved in Rory and Cam Smith. Have you reflected on that? Have you reflected on your experience at St Andrews, and have you thought about going back and what that second place finish really meant to you?**

CAMERON YOUNG: Yeah. I don't know. Obviously I was really proud of the golf I played down the stretch there. It's a fun time.

Cameron was obviously playing really, really well. Rory was right behind us, and we knew everything he did because everyone was rooting for Rory. I don't think anyone even knew I was there.

But, yeah, it's another chance to win a major championship. All those are good. I mean, even if you're -- even like what happened to me at the U.S. Open, just being there just a little bit gets some juices flowing that

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

aren't always there.

I just remember those last three holes, 16, 17, are really difficult driving holes if you hit driver. I knew that I probably had to have two putts for birdie and a putt for two to have any chance to win.

Kind of standing on 16 I looked at caddie, Chad, I'm just, like -- he kind of wants me to hit 5-iron left on 16. I was, like, Chad, I'm not going to win the tournament hitting 5-iron, I'm going to hit driver. He is, like, okay, buddy. It's your line.

I hit three of the best drives I've hit in my life in a row on the 70th, 71st, and 72nd holes at a major at the U.S. Open championship at St Andrews. I don't know. There's something about that that even though I didn't win, to me proves that I can because it just doesn't take much.

You look at the putts Cameron Smith made the very last couple of holes, the 2-putt he made on 17 short of the death bunker left and then obviously a really good up-and-down on 18. Any of that could have not happened. It could have been a playoff, and then you never know.

Yeah, it was a cool week, and I really enjoyed it. I think I'm really proud of some of the golf I played that week.

**Q. (Off microphone)**

CAMERON YOUNG: Oh, man. The front was three today, and the back might be four or five, so seven to eight I would say. Maybe nine.

**Q. (Off microphone)**

CAMERON YOUNG: Depending how soft the fairways, direction of the wind. The drivable hole, I think it's 14. That one could be not driver just depending on wind and hole location. I would say somewhere seven to nine depending on the day.

**Q. Two things real quick. Pretty magical year last year. What did that do to your mindset for this year? How do you follow up a year like that that kind of comes out of nowhere?**

CAMERON YOUNG: I don't know. I think it definitely made me more comfortable out here. Even still Presidents Cup time, I was, like, man, am I allowed to be sitting here?

I think having a little time away and coming back to it, having done all of that, I think made me a lot more comfortable. Starting the season like ZOZO, CJ Cup, and then starting at Sentry in the winter in January, I think

having the little time to separate all the good stuff that happened to me over the course of last year, I got to sit on that for a month or two and come back. I think by the time I got back, I was much more comfortable than I had left.

I think just even the simple things, like knowing the second year on tour, a lot of the places are the same, the places I've been before. I'm not, like, man, I don't know where the locker room is this week.

I think just overall getting to play in all the big events and getting to experience all of that last year has just helped make me more comfortable. It's really just experience playing on the PGA TOUR. It's one of those things.

As you get more of it, things feel more like home, and you get more comfortable, and that's been the difference the two years for me.

**Q. I don't know if you know the history of this tournament. 23 first-time winners here. Did you know that number, and do you think, oh, okay, if those 23 can do it, maybe this could be my week? Or do you go in thinking every week this would be my week?**

CAMERON YOUNG: To be completely honest, not at all. Yeah, I didn't know that about the tournament. I feel like now that I think about it, it kind of rings a little bit of a bell that that's been a trend.

But honestly I really thought the first time I was going to win a PGA TOUR event might have been the PGA Championship last year, which would have been kind of a rare one.

There's been plenty of times that I've thought it in totally random places. I've thought it anywhere from the Open Championship to Sanderson Farms to Riviera. Honestly I hit it pretty good this morning, so who knows?

It's just a battle every week trying to go out and do my job the best I can. Eventually that's going to turn out with nobody beating me by one, so I'm just kind of trying to keep plugging along, keep pounding the stone, and eventually it will break.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports