

John Deere Classic

Wednesday, July 3, 2024

TPC Deere Run

Silvis, Illinois, USA

Jason Day

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Jason, if I did my math right, exactly 350 starts ago, spanning 18 years, you made your first start on the PGA TOUR right here at the John Deere Classic in 2006.

JASON DAY: Yep.

THE MODERATOR: Made four starts since then, the most recent in 2011. Thrilled to have you back. Just a few comments being back here for the first time in 13 years in a spot you got to started 17, 18 ago.

JASON DAY: Yeah, this was my first start as a professional golfer. I still remember it. Actually, I think we might have stayed down at the Super 8 hotel somewhere.

THE MODERATOR: Oh, good memory. (Applause.)

JASON DAY: Yeah. Well, and if I do remember --

THE MODERATOR: I just want to go on record and say I have arrived. Super 8 with Jason Day in the same sentence.

JASON DAY: Yeah. I think back then your AC unit fell out the wall, so he could crawl from to his room to the outside, which was even funnier.

THE MODERATOR: I had the dog come into my room on my bed. I literally woke up with a dog on my bed.

JASON DAY: And then my caddie at the time, Colin, you walk into his room and it had a heart-shaped bathtub right next to the bed. It was like high rent stuff back then.

It was great. No, I enjoyed it thoroughly, and I've enjoyed it -- I tried to come back a couple years ago and my back didn't allow me to. It's nice to be back. I know Clair Peterson way back in the day, you know, 18 years ago, was nice enough to give me my first start here, and I've always enjoyed the people and the golf tournament.

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for a long time, so it's nice to go over those stories from 18 years ago.

THE MODERATOR: That's impressive. I did not see that one coming. (Laughter.) That was good.

Q. Super 8 this week?

THE MODERATOR: Some things don't change.

JASON DAY: Yeah, no. I'm in my bus, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: You got room?

JASON DAY: I do, but you're going to be sleeping next to my kids.

THE MODERATOR: Well we'll move beyond this. So just thoughts on being back. I'm sure a lot has changed. Thoughts on the course.

JASON DAY: Yeah, nothing too dramatic. Obviously got a little bit longer since being here. It's also a lot of trees have been cleared out from what I understand.

You see kind of I think Rock River, which you see more of that view, which I think is quite pretty. Yeah, nothing has changed too dramatically in regards to the golf course from what I understand.

Still kind of one of those ones where you have to shoot a low score when you come here. That's kind of how it always has been. And I think it's a nice change. We've come off the back end of Memorial, U.S. Open; we had Travelers where you can go low, but going through those tough weeks, it's nice to come back to a course where you can score.

Q. In the midst of a good season, four Top 10s and the most recent Top 5 at Wells Fargo. Thoughts on how you're feeling about your game, mindset, and so forth coming into the week.

JASON DAY: Yeah, I think I need a little bit of a spark to try and get something going here. Obviously coming into the heavy part of the season. We've only got seven tournaments left for the year. Guys that are looking -- on the outside looking in on the FedEx, it's kind of crunch time

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for them.

Me personally, I'm looking to try and find the good play that I had at the start of the year and try and replicate that through my end part of my year. I've got a busy schedule after this. Kind of goes week on here at John Deere and week off and then The Open Championship, week off, Olympics, week off, then the playoffs. So it's stop and start, but it's pretty condensed. Feels like it's been a pretty full on year so far.

Q. After 350 starts, is there such a thing as momentum in golf?

JASON DAY: Yeah.

Q. Or is it just week to week. Great week at the Travelers; now what happens?

JASON DAY: Yeah, I think definitely there is momentum in golf for sure, but also there is -- sometimes you hear stories of guys that have played eight weeks in a row and played terrible and all of sudden won. Stuart Appleby won on his 13th start in a row back when he won his last one.

There are stories of that, but I definitely think for me, kind of having a bit of a mid-season low, I am starting to see a lot of good signs coming out of my game right now.

Feel like I'm a little bit -- I've got a little bit more control with my irons. I changed the shafts in my irons, and I feel like that's kind of giving my a little bit more playability and regards to hitting draws and fades, working trajectories and working spin.

So when you can do that, I feel like I've got a lot more shots in the bag and more opportunity to hit certain shots to certain pin locations.

So short game is good. Driving is good. Feel pretty good about that.

But other than that, I'm just trying to get some momentum rolling into this second half.

Q. Got to go back to the Super 8. Was that like an ah-ha moment where you're, oh, man, this isn't maybe as glamorous as I thought it was going to be?

JASON DAY: I got it for free, so I'm not complaining. When you get something for free you can't complain. Actually, to be honest it was great memories. I've stayed in some pretty rough hotels over the years, and yeah, that was one of them. I do remember Dougy, we were both very young back then.

That was an eye opener, first one of my career.

Q. You've done it probably a few times, but coming back to a golf course you haven't played in a few years, is it like starting over a little bit or does the muscle memory kick in?

JASON DAY: You kind of remember. I guess it's so different now. Back then we didn't have any stats guys. Like we were kind of on the start of like a lot of this technology that we have now in regards to TrackMans and all that stuff.

Back then, I've gone through different phases where it was more old school way of playing to more offense. Guys out here drive it a very long way. They have stats guys, so many people on the team. It's different these days.

But looking back, I still remember all the holes, no problem. It's kind of I would say that my game plan hasn't really changed too dramatically. If I'm taking 11, for instance, you don't really want to get it too far down there because it kind of narrows in, necks in. I remember hitting 2-iron there.

But you kind of pick and choose. This is talking about my stats guy, you kind of pick and choose what holes you want to birdie. There are a lot of opportunities out here, but if you can kind of average 5-under a day here, you're probably going to be really close to the lead on Sunday. Depending on the weather obviously.

Q. The back, is it something you have to nurse? Do you adjust your schedule accordingly?

JASON DAY: No, not anymore. I used to but not anymore. I feel like I worked my way out of it, touch wood, so I feel good. Like I said, couple years ago, Clair Peterson was retiring as tournament director and I wanted to do a nice thing and come back and support him.

Obviously unfortunately my back went out on Wednesday and I couldn't play. It's nice to be able to be here talking about my back in a healthy way and in a positive note instead of a negative note.

Q. The Olympics, that's a different major to plug into the schedule. What are your feelings about playing in the Olympics?

JASON DAY: You know, when it first came about, I think in 2016, I was No. 1 in the world at the time or 1 or 2. I really didn't have any plans on playing the Olympics because it was never on the radar.

You're torn between two worlds. Hey, the media is asking what it's like to be an Olympian. I'm like, I've never really wanted to play in the Olympics because it was never part of the Olympics, not until early 1900s, so it's just never something I ever thought about.

I love watching the Olympics. But now, kind of looking back -- I spoke about it last week. Looking back on it, I probably should have gone to Rio and played. I think it's something bigger than yourself. You're actually representing your country and your sport. As an Australian, the Olympics is a big thing because we're a big sporting nation.

To get another turn at it I feel very grateful for it. The travel is going to be kind of back and forth. I'm going to go Open Championship, back for a week, and fly back over. So the time zones and shifts will be a little bit tough. I am not going to the opening ceremony, but treat it like a normal tournament and try and get over there and win a medal. It would be nice. That is always a goal.

But looking forward to presenting Australia, first and foremost. I have never -- I have represented Australia at every level, junior and amateur and obviously now I get to represent Australia at its highest level as an Olympian.

Q. You were talking earlier about the tough stretch of golf that you guys have had, the tougher courses that you played.

JASON DAY: Yep.

Q. Do you have any preference playing a course where even par is gonna win as opposed to somewhere like here where 20-under is going to win?

JASON DAY: No, I think we need -- I think they do a pretty good job of -- I tell you what. If we get beat up every single week and even par was winning, I would be a miserable person. I was going to saying something else. But I would be very miserable. I don't know if I would stay in the game as long as I have.

I think there is a good mix. You need some even pars, some high single digit scores, and kind of need your low teens, mid-teens and now you need your upper 20s. I feel like it can get a little bit stagnant if it's too level par all the time and it's just hard. Then it gets boring for the fans.

It's nice to come to a golf course like this where there are scores and you have to push. It's like kind of go. Even though it's four days and more of a marathon than a sprint, but when you come to a golf course like this you can't let

up.

A golf course like this brings in the whole field, whereas a golf course when you shoot around even par, the cream always rises to the top, so typically the guys that are all-round very good game, those guys will play very well.

I like either/or, but right now, it's nice to be able to play this. Like I said, I feel like The Open Championship is always tough even though that Henrik and Phil Mickelson had that duel back at Troon and they shot pretty deep, like a lot under, right around 20, if not 20.

But who knows with the weather over there. Could be a tough one. Heard they had a lot of rain and it's been soft and windy. Then obviously the Olympics, the golf course over there is tough.

I know that it's kind of nice to be to get this in. And it fit well in the schedule too, because I was never going to go across to Scotland and play two in a row. Not with my family. I would like to be selfish and go and play, but I don't think my family would appreciate that.

Q. What do you think the weather is going to do to the scores this week?

JASON DAY: Yeah, the conditions out there right now are really soft, so I think the greens are -- they're very receptive, not as soft as I thought they would be. If we can scoot by tomorrow with no rain, Thursday through Saturday, I think a little bit of rain on Sunday, I think it'll start to firm up but the scores will be low. I wouldn't be surprised low 20s just because of that.

Q. Since 2006 and the first start, how would you say the world of equipment has changed to now?

JASON DAY: Trying to think of all the clubs I had.

THE MODERATOR: You're getting ready to see them. Just the pictures.

JASON DAY: Yeah, driver head is definitely a lot bigger. I think the driver is the most forgiving club in the bag, and that's why you see more guys hitting driver than ever before.

Back then, even though it was metal, and it still forgiving back then, but if you miss-hit one you could get a quacker going left, a little duck hook off -- it was kind of one of those things if you didn't hit it it was still good but wasn't as good as what we have today, and that's why the game has changed.

Driver head is a little bit bigger I would say. Irons, kind of the same. Can't really -- there is advancements in irons, but I would say that I'm playing more of a game improvement iron these days, which is tough to hear. (Laughter.)

I need all the speed I can get and get it up in the air. I used to have a lot of the speed. It's not like that anymore.

But with that being said, I think not much. The wedges -- everything is so much more dialed these days. The parameters on like having a wedge the same every single time. Granted, back then I would play -- if I had a 60-degree wedge that I loved, because you're playing out of the rough, bunker, and the fairway, I would change maybe once a year.

Some guys would change like -- now these days guys change wedges probably once every tournament or once ever two tournaments. I know Tiger changes every tournament.

But because everything is like so advanced in how they make a golf club, you can reproduce the same club over and over again. You know, I still don't change the wedge. I'm still the same. Yeah, shafts are probably a little bit more advanced.

But, yeah, overall I would say the driver head is a little bit bigger and I think the athlete itself is bigger and stronger than what the technology is really giving us.

You look at some of these young guys now, they're like over 6', 6'2", 6'3", 6'4". They're tall. Look like models. Tall, wide shoulders, and hit it an absolute mile, which is very depressing when you have to compete against them.

Yeah, but at the end of the day the good thing about golf is you got to get the ball in the hole with the least amount of strokes. If you can still do that, that's all that matters.

Q. Has your mindset changed a lot since 2006 in how you set up your equipment?

JASON DAY: Yes, it has, but it's mainly shaft related. Yeah, I've had to go to a little softer shaft. Had to go to a little softer shaft so it kicks a little bit easier for me so I can actually turn the ball over. I think I was playing the wrong shaft -- I shouldn't say I was playing the wrong shaft. I was playing the shaft I thought would take enough spin off for me, which it did, but I just couldn't really work the ball, because it's a big heavy shaft. 136 gram shaft. It's like swinging a crowbar.

And I loved that. That what I was playing when I was No. 1

in the world, but also had ten more miles an hour speed. So I think it's time to stay in the softer shaft.

Q. Doug, what kind of dog and did you keep it? If so, what did you name it?

JASON DAY: Did it have fleas?

THE MODERATOR: This is a story for another time. We got to let this guy go.

JASON DAY: I love it. What dog was it?

THE MODERATOR: I don't know if you remember the construction workers. There was a group of construction workers outside of my -- they were all ground floor rooms. The window unit came out, but when I woke up I had wedged -- the hole the AC was in was too wide which is what made it go out, so I put a towel to fill the gap.

When you woke up, one of the construction worker's dogs it turned out had come through and was asleep at the foot of my bed. That's not something you really prepare for. I though how wild did I get last night?

But I still have a picture of that AC unit when they pulled it out.

JASON DAY: You do?

THE MODERATOR: Yeah.

JASON DAY: Oh, man. Yeah. I walked in there and tried to close my curtains. My curtain fell off the -- it broke off, and I'm like well I guess I'm walk you go up at butt crack of dawn now. Good memories, man.

THE MODERATOR: So good. I'm so impressed that you remember that.

JASON DAY: Yeah, it's one of the only things I can remember. I don't have a really good memory.

THE MODERATOR: That's what you call friends for life, Super 8 2006.

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