

John Deere Classic

Sunday, July 7, 2024

TPC Deere Run

Silvis, Illinois, USA

Zach Johnson

Quick Quotes

Q. Zach, how well do you know Davis Thompson given his father's affiliation with the McGladrey?

ZACH JOHNSON: RSM.

Q. RSM, Sorry.

ZACH JOHNSON: Mildly well, considering the age gap. Todd, his father, is a really good friend. Todd has done a tremendous job with the Davis Love Foundation/RSM Classic. Tremendous job.

Great family. And I'm not just saying that to be nice. Tremendous family. Davis lives on the Island. I've played a lot with him over the years.

I say that. Ya'll know better than me. Maybe the last three or four, when he's been on TOUR, two or three. I don't know what year it is for him.

One of his best friends is my sports psychologist's son. Davis works with my sports psychologist, Dr. Mo, so whether it's a practice round on the road or whether it's a nice little money game at home, you know, periodically. It may just be nine holes with Dr. Mo.

We kind of saw it coming. I'm really elaborating here. We saw it coming about two, three months ago. I don't on what his changes were, but he did some changes in his golf bag and it started to click.

He's in that talent realm that what I'm seeing and what we're seeing, if you know him, it's not surprising.

Q. Are we looking at a potential superstar here? I realize that's a big word.

ZACH JOHNSON: No, I think the key word there is potential. I don't think that's inaccurate or offbeat. I think that's a pretty -- potential is a vague word, but I think you said it, Mike. I think -- what does Davis do well? Well, everything. It's not like he's the longest player. Not like he's the best wedger or best putter, but he does everything



really, really, really well.

Again, I'm not surprised. He hits it very, very solid in the middle of the face and very straight. He and his caddie, Joe, evidently have something going on that's pretty good.

Q. Feel like you've given him any kind of help?

ZACH JOHNSON: I'm not going to speak on his behalf. I don't think that would be -- I don't necessarily know. Indirectly maybe, just because we played some. It's not like we play every day, or practice every day together, but we've played some.

Whether or not you're even conscious of it I think if you play with somebody of his caliber, our caliber if you want to call it that, you're going to learn something. You may not know what it is, but you're going to pick it apart and retain something maybe.

Hopefully you can access it when needed. You know, I've always been impressed with his game. His amateur career speaks for itself. He had to have been close to No. 1 Am in the world for a period there. I have no idea. I think he finished first in the PGA TOUR U? Is that accurate? Second maybe?

Q. Second.

ZACH JOHNSON: There you go. Point is, I think there is some legitimacy to that. You know, once you get out here it is a transition to some degree. For talents like that the transition is subtle.

Q. When you started out here - my memory is hazy about everything.

ZACH JOHNSON: Ditto.

Q. He's 25; for a 25 winning out here was not that common, right?

ZACH JOHNSON: Yeah, it was a select few.

Q. What happened?

ZACH JOHNSON: Well, we can go down that hole. I think it's a collaboration, combination of a lot of different things.



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I think the attraction because of Tiger Woods for the younger generation is part of it. You talk to some of those kids, who do you grow up watching? Well, it's Tiger.

I watched him too, except I was competing against him which was a little bit unfortunate. And beautiful at the same time I should say.

I think it's that. I think it's also the -- technology has had something to do with it. Doesn't matter what generation you are in technology. There is something there, right?

So I'm going to go with the knowledge of the game, the pure, I mean, almost wisdom of the game when it comes to coaching, mechanics of the golf swing, efficiency of the mechanics of the golf swing, training for power is part of it.

And then the physical side, the actual proper specific workout designed for a golfer - for that golfer, for each individual.

When I got out here golf fitness had surfaced, but it was very rudimentary and I would even say infrequent. Now it's -- what we have our hands on and access to on a weekly basis relative to 20 some odd years ago is significant.

It's an industry now, golf fitness. I think that's a big part of it, too. All of that morphed into one I think.

And then like I said, the attraction of playing the game at a high level. When you see it as a kid -- I remember Jack in '86 at Augusta. That's my first recollection of watching golf. I was ten. He was 46 and he won -- only saw the back nine at Augusta National. I remember Jackie was on the bag and him winning. That was my first memory.

So, anyway, there is more access to the game I think for these kids.

Q. Those money games at Sea Island must be pretty good, huh?

ZACH JOHNSON: They can be. Obviously there is -- during the course of January through probably even September, October, it's hit and miss. Depends who has off weeks and who doesn't.

But, yeah, there can be. You know the names that live there. You can go figure that out. But there are is a lot of kids that you don't know yet, and they're good. If that makes sense. Whether they were college All-Americans or mini tour players, kids trying to work their way up and grinding. I can think of a handful right off the top of my head.

We've to have, I don't know, 13 to 16 kids, guys that live there that are -- counting me and Davis, J-Bird. Few have left.

Q. Brian is still there?

ZACH JOHNSON: Harman is there, Harris is there. Hudson is still there, Patton, Michael Thompson. He's hurt; he's trying to get back. JT Poston, Davis Thompson, Greyson Sigg. The list goes on and on and on and on and on and on.

Q. (Indiscernible.)

ZACH JOHNSON: I don't know. That's a good question. I don't think so. Todd Thompson played golf at Georgia as well. I believe their kids were raised in Auburn, Alabama. I think that's what Davis technically would call home.

But I don't know.

Q. When did you hand Davis his first dollar?

ZACH JOHNSON: Oh, I couldn't tell you. That's a good question. I couldn't tell you. I would love to come up with something witty and even inaccurate that makes it funny, but I'm not that clever.

Q. You have your best round since '17. You're in the top 25 right now. At 48 you shot 15-under. How do you feel you played overall over the course of the week?

ZACH JOHNSON: I had ten holes that got the best of me, a ten-hole stretch, and that was yesterday starting on the 9th hole. So what I've learned that your mind, your default in your mind goes to the negative. It's probably not wise, because there was we'll call it 60, 62 holes that were actually pretty efficient.

If I play somewhat like I played today on the back nine, you know, it's going to be a little bit better for sure. So that part is unfortunate. I'm pretty -- what's the word I'm looking for -- particular? No. I don't like expectations. At the same time, I have pretty high standards.

Can't use course knowledge as an excuse. Or course conditions. Course is as good as I've ever seen it. A little bit of rain. Obviously played it up on Thursday. That part of unfortunate.

This place plains you have drains great. John Deere has done an amazing job. They've made the tournament better and better every year. That's why with guys are coming.

I don't want to say I'm pleased with the result, but I got what I got and I think you that's -- I missed some; made some. I'm still learning. That's the beauty. Still trying to get better.

Q. Is this golf course too easy?

ZACH JOHNSON: No. I see what you're saying. I think it's a fair question. It's funny you say that because we were talking about that. I don't know. I looked at the leaderboard somewhere on the back nine to see what the leaders were doing, right?

Saw that he was way under really, really quick.

Q. Tied Michael Kim's record at the turn.

ZACH JOHNSON: Yeah. That's impressive. Here is the proper answer: I think if it's in another month, another time, season, no, it's not.

If you play this mid-spring it's not going to be this low. Shoot, my first two years out here, maybe my sponsor exemptions, if you will. It was in September.

You would have to go back and look. I think Vijay shot 11- or 12-under in four days and won by two or three. Granted, the game has changed since 2000, 2001, whatever it was.

I don't know. I see where you're going. The problem with trying to fix it is that it's just, all right, let's just throw another tee box back there 30, 40 yards. In some respects that is probably proper; in some respects I don't think it is.

I don't have the answer if it is too easy. I can tell you in a year and a half from now it's not. Yeah, it's a bona fide question. I don't know how to respond to it other than -- sometimes it's fun to see guys make birdies; that's not a bad product as well.

I know a lot of fans like to see -- well, carnage would be the extreme, but like to see struggle. Totally get that. We have a lot of weeks with struggle. There is a lot of tournaments that aren't even majors that feel like a major.

So every now and again it's nice to have to, all right, man, I got to step on the gas and get off it a good start, whatever it may be. Be aggressive. When the greens are this receptive and it's -- the heat is up the ball goes further. Fairways are still pretty wide because of the moisture. It's point and shot. The ball lands, stops where it is.

It becomes low. That's the combination. That's the

formula. It's not just this week. But this is one of those weeks.

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