

# The Northern Trust

Wednesday, August 18, 2021

Jersey City, New Jersey, USA

Liberty National Golf Club

## Chesson Hadley

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the Northern Trust. It's great to have you here. Obviously, a remarkable finish and showing for you at the Wyndham Championship, where the hole-in-one got you into the field here. Can you talk about the emotion of that finish and your excitement to be at the playoffs this week?

CHESSON HADLEY: Sure. I've kind of been on the outside looking in all year. I had that great finish -- or bittersweet finish at Congaree, which kind of at least put me in a position to make the playoffs, and I actually played much better since then but hadn't really had a decent finish. I was making cuts but just kind of finishing towards the back of the pack.

Just found something there the last day and was able to -- I mean, the whole day was kind of magical from the start, from the hole-in-one to the finish. I'm very blessed to be here right now, that's for sure.

THE MODERATOR: You've been here before. You've played the Northern Trust. This is going to be your fifth start. You played at Liberty National. Have you been able to play the course yet this week, and what are your thoughts on this course related to the way your game plays?

CHESSON HADLEY: I do love this place. I played here back in 2019, and just kind of the whole experience that surrounds the Northern Trust, I think when it's here at Liberty, is unsurpassed. I stay in Manhattan and just take the ferry ride over in the morning. You pass the Statue of Liberty. I don't know, I just come to the course in a good mood ready to go.

I think probably statistically the course doesn't maybe set up for me that great because I think hitting the fairway is a premium here, but I don't know, I don't really feel like that matters. I don't know. I feel like I'm good enough to hit a fairway. I made the cut here in 2019 but didn't finish -- didn't really do much more than that, but certainly looking to carry the momentum from Sunday over to this week and get rock and rolling.



**Q. Did you cry after Congaree?**

CHESSON HADLEY: Did I cry?

**Q. Yes.**

CHESSON HADLEY: Wow, no. No crying. I was disappointed, believe it or not.

**Q. Sure. But I was just wondering because you were talking about crying at Wyndham and obviously the range of emotions in a few months for you.**

CHESSON HADLEY: What did you think of my crying?

**Q. I thought it was a great interview. Everyone loved it.**

CHESSON HADLEY: Oh, but what about the crying specifically? Was I a good crier? Could I be better? How can I get better at it since you're asking about it?

(Laughter)

I'm messing with you. I'm totally hijacking you.

**Q. I guess the range of emotions in a few months for one or the other.**

CHESSON HADLEY: It has been such a kind of up-and-down year, just with having the really great opportunity to win at Congaree and letting that slip away to just like being -- like playing better there towards the end of the year but not really getting anything out of it and just kind of thinking -- like this seriously can't be like -- I seriously can't be missing the top 125 after Congaree, and then Sunday happens, and it all made sense honestly. It just all came together.

**Q. Was celebrating Sunday at all comparable to celebrating a victory?**

CHESSON HADLEY: Yeah, I felt like I beat Kevin, honestly. I felt like I won the golf tournament.

**Q. Prize or Kisner?**



CHESSON HADLEY: Kisner. I always beat Kevin Prise -- in golf.

**Q. Good morning. Thanks for your time. First, had you allowed yourself to think of what you were going to do had you not made it here? I mean, obviously, you probably had to make some plans. You had to have some contingencies. And how daunting was that road to have to make if you didn't make it here?**

CHESSON HADLEY: Good question. All that was weighing on my mind. It was either jumping on a plane to go to Boise or jump on a plane to come here and try and maybe make my way to Atlanta.

I went home on Saturday night because I finished early, and I just -- Amanda and I, we talked, and she's been through -- she was going through all of this with me, and she was certainly emotional because she feels like she's been all by herself while I've been trying to do all this. I did not want to go to Boise for lots of reasons. That's a long way away from home. My family wasn't going to be able to come. My kids are starting school.

So Sunday was huge professionally, but it was also really big personally just because I could be with my family more. It was just such a relief.

**Q. Does this week then allow you to just sort of play like I've got nothing to lose? Because obviously, now you have to post another really good result to move on. So how do you look at this week in that regard?**

CHESSON HADLEY: You're spot on. I'm playing with house money. I'm on credit at the casino, and I can just kind of let it go. I think I need to set a new goal to -- I probably need to figure out exactly what I need to finish to get inside the top 70, so I need to set a new goal, figure out kind of where I need to finish, and just kind of look at the leaderboards and kind of get motivated and figure out a way to get to that number and obviously try and win the golf tournament.

But you can't win the golf tournament until Sunday. Let's just put ourselves in position and see what happens.

**Q. I know you didn't ask me, but for me it was really good crying. Like very, very well done.**

CHESSON HADLEY: I appreciate it. I gave Sean every opportunity to tell me I was a good crier. Crickets.

**Q. I wanted to ask you, if somebody were to come to you who was just getting onto the PGA TOUR or who was maybe a year away from it and saw you as**

**somebody who's had some ups and downs, has had great moments, disappointing moments, and you've had a decently long career under your belt at this point, if they asked you, how do you deal with that, how do you deal with the ebbs and flows when you're not Tiger Woods or somebody, what mentality should you take for that over the long distance? What would you have to say to somebody like that?**

CHESSON HADLEY: It's never easy, but it gets easier the more you do it, which is not necessarily the goal to go through that really more than once or twice in a career. It does get easier. I think it comes with wisdom, and you only obtain wisdom by living life and going through experiences, and experience helps you know how to deal with them better the next time.

But you have to be tough. You have to be so tough out here. You have to be mentally -- I mean, I'm certainly biased, but I think physically this is the hardest sport in the world, and there's no questions asked, this is the most difficult mental sport in the world. You have to be so tough.

If I can encourage kids these days, work on your mental game because you do not have to be the best in the world. You have to be good, certainly physically out here, but if you can just mentally be better than everybody else, you'll find your way out to the PGA TOUR, and you'll have a very long, good career out here.

**Q. Has it been a good life professionally speaking for you, do you think, the golf aspect of it?**

CHESSON HADLEY: That's another good question. You know, Grayson Murray, a friend of mine, lives in Raleigh. Obviously, he's doing some stuff right now with his tweet recently, but it shed a little bit of light on kind of the life we live. It is not always glamorous. It's hard. We are on the road a lot. I don't sleep in my own bed. I don't see my family necessarily as much as I want. That's an aspect of this game that people don't understand.

I'm not on a private jet. I don't get on a jet and fly to the next location. I don't have that luxury. I certainly have the potential to unlock that, but I'm obviously battling to finish 125 this year, and I can't afford to do that. This is hard, and this is a grind. I do love it. You guys saw in my interview that I love what I do, and there are certainly a lot of aspects of it that I love, but there are aspects of it that are not great honestly. It's not that much fun, and it's a challenge.

**Q. Kind of related -- and A-plus on the crying as well. I was really impressed. There was no heavy breathing. That seems to be the key for good crying. But when**

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**was the last time you had cried on the golf course?**

CHESSON HADLEY: Cried on the golf course? I mean, it was probably junior golf, when I like actually cried on the golf course.

**Q. For a good thing or a bad thing?**

CHESSON HADLEY: Typically, it's always -- that's not true. When I earned my card back in '17, I remember getting emotional in New York after I won, but I tapped in, and then I kind of went off to the side and like -- I mean, the round was over, but I knew I'd locked my card up and I was going back there. So I was emotional then.

**Q. And kind of a similar question to what you've answered, I'm curious -- I'm sure you've been in this sort of perform or go home situation before during your PGA TOUR career. How do you find you perform under that kind of unique pressure?**

CHESSON HADLEY: I feel like, when my back's against the wall, I've done pretty well. It just makes you go to kind of a little bit of an extra gear focus-wise, and I talked to one of my great friends and former coach about this kind of after Sunday just to kind of put a thumb on maybe one of the reasons why I did play better on Sunday.

So you've got to tap into a little bit of a reserve or something that you have in there that you might not necessarily tap into all the time.

**Q. Hello, Chesson. Congratulations on --**

CHESSON HADLEY: You are the man.

**Q. You are the man. That was fun to watch on Sunday. We had all sorts of stuff going on in Omaha, but I was following on the site as well and like wow. I wanted to ask, did you have a flight, hotel, car planned for Boise, or were you not thinking that until --**

CHESSON HADLEY: Absolutely. It was all ready. There was plan A, and then there was plan B. It was all ready. I mean, I can't even begin to describe to you how little I wanted to go to Boise. That is -- like Raleigh is not close to Boise. I am so thankful. That might be my most thankful reason why I'm in New York.

And I've won in Boise, so I like that place, but I'm so glad to be here.

**Q. Can you just kind of speak to just what the difference is with like worst case in the FedExCup playoffs, and now it's pretty much the same status as**

**you would have by winning the final 25. So just kind of that line of demarcation, kind of how big it is for your status what you were able to do.**

CHESSON HADLEY: Yeah, I also get a little bit more FedExCup money.

**Q. Yeah, that is true.**

CHESSON HADLEY: That helps. But you're right. It would basically be the same status if I had won the finals. You know what, I'll pat myself on the back. I've done that before.

I don't know, I think it just does something -- it's different. I think it puts me in a different mindset versus going back to finals and then doing all of that. I feel like I'm in a different mindset now than I would have been if I finished 126 or something like that. So I'm excited to be here, and hopefully, you know, we can ride this ship all the way to Atlanta.

**Q. Absolutely. Was that literally your first ace like -- like when's the last ace you had like anywhere practice round type?**

CHESSON HADLEY: In my existence, that is my first ace since ever.

**Q. Never junior golf? Never practice round?**

CHESSON HADLEY: I have never ever had the ball go in the hole the first time on a par-3 or par-4.

**Q. So when you hear of guys having like 15, 20 aces, would you always like shake your head in the past type of thing?**

CHESSON HADLEY: They're just lucky. Yeah, I would. Like my coach, everybody always gives me so much crap about it. It's not like I'm not good enough to make a one or wasn't good enough to make a one. It just wasn't my time yet, but I did it in a PGA TOUR event on the very last round when I most needed something, and I guess not many of them could probably say that. So that was pretty cool.

**Q. Absolutely. Last from me, I was looking back at the 2017 Boise board where you won, and you were tied with David Skinns entering the third round. He withdrew to go home. His second son was being born, and you went on to win the tournament. I was wondering if I could get your perspective on how cool that must be for David, first year getting his PGA TOUR card, winning in Omaha, to get it done kind of in those circumstances of having been so close in Boise four**

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**years ago and then deciding to go home.**

CHESSON HADLEY: Oh, sure. I don't know David very well. I certainly know of David, but I followed that and saw what he did. I mean, I can't imagine -- was it -- how many years? 17 years has he been a pro? Is that right? You want to talk about being tough, like I was talking about earlier. I mean, that is tough.

I'm sure he is just over the moon. I saw on Instagram or Twitter about what his boys kind of had everything set up for him when he got home. I mean, that's a memory, and I guess that's kind of why we're all out here. We're all about making memories, and that's certainly one he'll never forget.

**Q. Always a pleasure. Glad I won't be seeing you in Columbus.**

CHESSON HADLEY: Thanks, Kevin. I'll see you at THE PLAYERS.

**Q. A lot of talk about the emotions. Just curious physically with your game, was there anything that you had been working on that had clicked or anything new you'd been doing with any aspects of your game physically to play well down the stretch?**

CHESSON HADLEY: No, but one thing that I did learn that at Congaree, I just kind of got stuck in the mode of just keep doing what I was doing and not make like -- because it got sideways really bad there the last four or five holes at Congaree, and I never made an adjustment, which I look back now and, gosh, that was so stupid because, if I had just made maybe a slight ball position or a weight shift adjustment at setup, we wouldn't even be having this conversation.

But I learned something there. I learned -- and I remember sitting in 5 fairway, and things were starting to get a bit loose for me on Sunday, and I was like, David, I've got to make a little adjustment, and we just kind of talked, and I just kind of shifted my weight just a touch left, and I hit some really quality shots on the way in.

So I learned something there, and that was really all. I've been kind of sticking with things, made cuts, and putter was still doing it, just hadn't put it all together, and it just all kind of came together at Wyndham.

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