

The Northern Trust

Wednesday, August 18, 2021

Jersey City, New Jersey, USA

Liberty National Golf Club

Dustin Johnson

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome Dustin Johnson to the interview room here at the Northern Trust. Dustin, obviously, the defending champion winning at TPC Boston, but also the defending FedExCup champion.

Dustin, entering the playoffs 17th in the standings. Last year before your run, you entered 15th, so definitely in a similar position there. I guess just starting out how is the game feeling this year compared to this time last year when you made your run for the FedExCup?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Obviously, last year was a little bit different because a lot of golf tournaments leading right up into the playoffs. I feel like the game is starting to round into form. I'm starting in the last couple of events definitely played a little bit better, played a little bit -- it's a lot closer to what it was last year.

Yeah, I'm looking forward to the playoffs. I feel like I'm in a good spot. Obviously, need a good couple of weeks here, first and foremost here at the Northern Trust, and then next week at the BMW just to improve my position going into Atlanta.

Q. Dustin, you just finished your Pro-Am from this morning and then obviously went right to the range. Just curious about how you think Liberty National is playing so far and what stood out to you so far.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: The golf course is in really good shape, perfect condition. Greens are really good. Fairways, everything. It's in perfect shape. It's one of those golf courses -- you know, there's definitely some trouble off the tees, but if you're driving it well, you can get it in the fairway, you can definitely make some birdies. It kind of all depends on the wind.

It's going to play fairly long because it's soft. Last time we were here, it was so firm it played actually really short, but it's pretty soft out there. So it played fairly long. Got to take advantage of the par-5s and got a couple short par-4s that you know you've got to get some good looks on.



I feel like the course all in all is in perfect condition and shaping up to be a good week.

Q. Just curious, are you completely healthy?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I am. I'm feeling good.

Q. As you look back to last year, could you have predicted the run you went on, which was nearly sweeping all three of them except for one monster putt. Could you have predicted that going into Northern Trust last year?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: No, but I don't look that far ahead, so I would have never predicted it. I was playing well, so it wasn't a surprise because I felt like I was playing good coming into it. Obviously, two different courses for Northern Trust was Olympia Fields. One was soft, the other was really firm and fast, but I was playing really good golf.

I liked all the courses, and then obviously Atlanta is very difficult. Yeah, I mean, definitely couldn't have predicted that, but obviously I felt really good about the game.

Q. Didn't shock you, in other words?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: No, it didn't. Nothing really shocks me anymore.

Q. And I know you haven't had a good answer to this before and I'm actually not expecting one now, but last year when you had the double rounds of 80s and another one in Minnesota and you withdraw, and then all of a sudden you come back and it's like you're a brand new person from the PGA and onward. Is it that easy for you to just flip the switch?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yes, it is. As far as why, I can't tell you why. For me, obviously, I know I'm a good player. I've been a really good player for a long time. So playing a few bad rounds doesn't really bother me too much. Obviously, I know I need to go work on some things, which is what I did.

Any time, no matter how bad I'm playing, it only takes one shot here or one shot there where I get a nice feel and it turns everything around.



Q. Dustin, you got qualified for your fifth Ryder Cup team. I'm curious, when you think of guys who have excelled in that kind of event, whether they be Europeans, Poulter or Sergio, or American guys, what are the qualities of players who seem to excel in the Ryder Cup? What does it take to play well that week?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Golf, as we all know, is a very frustrating and difficult game, but the Ryder Cup, it's match play. It's a lot different because you know you're not out there just playing for yourself. You're playing for, obviously, your teammates, your captains, your country. So it's a little bit different of feelings out there.

But as far as why people play good and some don't, it's a golf tournament pretty much. So we're out there playing golf. It's whichever guys have their game that week are the ones that are going to play well and win their matches. You've got to get a little lucky too because sometimes if you're playing every match or four matches, most likely you're going to be a little bit off in one of them, and that's the one where you need, obviously, a little help from the other side.

Q. You've played in every possible scenario that is possible in this game. How do the nerves of the 1st tee of a Ryder Cup compare to anything else in golf?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: It's definitely different. My first Ryder Cup, I still remember the tee shot at Wales. It's a completely different feeling. It's something you've never felt before, at least something that I never felt before sitting on that 1st tee, especially the fans over there singing, and the it cold and wet, windy, wasn't ideal conditions to hit a nice tee shot for your first Ryder Cup.

It's a lot of fun, though. You've just got to embrace it and enjoy it and enjoy the week.

Q. What was your level of disappointment in not shooting 60 last year at the Northern Trust? Breaking 60, I mean.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: None really. Obviously, I wanted to shoot 59, but I'll still take 60 any day of the week.

Q. Is that the best four rounds that you've ever strung together?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I mean four rounds in a row, I was pretty flawless golf for the most part. But, yeah, but four days in a row, yeah, it's kind of hard to beat that for me.

Q. Question for you on Collin Morikawa. Can you remember the first time you played with him or heard about him that you thought this guy's really legit?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I played with him -- I saw him play a little bit, I guess it was two years ago. Obviously, didn't play with him, I don't think, until last year maybe, but he's with TaylorMade so I got to see him a little bit, but obviously I knew he was a good player.

At the beginning, you can never really tell how good of a player someone is, but I knew he was a really good, young, talented player.

Q. Jordan Spieth isn't locked in yet for the Ryder Cup team, but what difference does it make that probably a year ago, if they'd have had the Ryder Cup when it was originally scheduled, he would not have been on the team, and now he looks to be pretty much a lock?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: What's the question?

Q. How big a difference is it to have him on the American side in this Ryder Cup?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Obviously, he's playing really well this year, had a great season, turned it around a good bit. So, yeah, he's obviously somebody we want on the team, especially when he's playing as well as he is right now. Yeah, it's definitely good to have Jordan on the team.

Q. Going to make the mistake of tapping your memory here. I'm curious, I was wondering when's the last time you felt a sense of urgency for anything? By the way, you were, I think, 117 in FedExCup in 2008, your first year. Do you have any recollection of that?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I do.

Q. Oh, good.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I actually remember on the 36th hole, I had like about a four-footer to make the cut on the number, which would have gotten me into the next week. My card would have been -- because that was back then it went to 125 for the second playoff event.

And I horseshoed it, and I missed the cut, obviously didn't make it into the top 125. Back then, we also had the fall season to go where you could make 125 on the money list. So I had three weeks off and went home and worked on the game really hard and obviously came out and won the first event at Turning Stone.

Q. Back to kind of my original question, I guess, if



there was one, do you recall the last time you had a sense of urgency about anything, about playing, about needing a good result or something like that?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I mean, yeah, I always need a good result. For me, every week I come here playing I want to put myself in position to win. Obviously, it's the playoffs. It's definitely a sense of urgency to play well and contend for the championship.

Q. If you'd have been told in January that we're in August you and still haven't won on the PGA TOUR, what would have been your reaction to that?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I would have said I was probably struggling (Laughter).

Q. Surprised? Disappointed? Anything?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: No, it just is what it is. It's golf. It happens. Like I said, the game is definitely starting to take a turn for the better, starting to see a lot more consistency in the shots and in my game. So, yeah, I'm looking forward to the next few weeks.

Q. My question is a pretty simple one. You've been in a lot of Ryder Cups. How important is it for the team to get along and be friendly with each other while you're there in terms of going out and playing well?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, all the guys out here, we're all -- especially it doesn't matter what our differences are. When you get to the Ryder Cup and you're on the team, it's not just about you. So we're all adults, and we gather as a team and as a whole for that week, so I don't feel like there's any issues with that.

Like I said, we're not just playing for ourselves, we're playing for our country. You've got other teammates, your captains, your family, all the fans that are there. It's definitely important that everyone comes together and plays as a team.

Q. Do you think the American team has been good at that while you've been a player?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I think so. I think we've done a good job. This year I think it's shaping up that we're going to have a pretty stout team. So I'm looking forward to it.

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