

TOUR Championship

Monday, September 7, 2020

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

East Lake Golf Club

Dustin Johnson

Press Conference

MICHAEL BALIKER: Dustin, this was your 11th trip to East Lake this week. You've been chasing this trophy for a long time. How satisfying is it to finally get it done?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, it's definitely very satisfying to be the FedExCup champion. Obviously coming in here I was in first with a two-shot lead, and I needed all those strokes that I could get. It's a tough golf course, but I feel like I played pretty solid all week.

Obviously yesterday was a great round, and then obviously today was -- I played -- got off to a great start and I played really well coming down the stretch.

Yeah, it was a tough day, tough golf course, and I'm definitely excited it's over and that I can celebrate a little bit now instead of -- it was a grind out there. But I'm very proud to be the FedExCup champion.

Q. What were the clubs you hit for the approaches on 14 through 16 and which did you view as kind of the most important shot?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: 14 I hit a 5-iron. 15 I hit a 5-iron. 16 was a sand wedge. 17 was a sand wedge. 18 was (indiscernible).

But probably the -- I mean, 15 was a really good shot. I mean, obviously it's a difficult hole. I think it was playing 234 or something like that. I'm not real sure. I just knew it was 205 front.

Yeah, I mean, that was probably a good one -- I hit a really good shot on 14, too.

But probably the best shot I hit out of all of them was a sand wedge out of the bunker on 16.

Q. What was the level of concern with your game leaving here last year and how does it feel to go from finishing last here last year to now winning this year?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I don't even remember what



TOUR CHAMPIONSHIP

happened last year. That was a long time ago. I was playing a little better coming in this season.

Q. Were you nervous today?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I was nervous. I always get nervous because it means something. Yeah, I mean, I get nervous on the first hole, kind of settled down a little bit, and then obviously the back nine definitely could feel it, just because there were a lot of really good players around me and they were playing well.

So I knew I was going to have to shoot a good score on the back nine if I wanted to win.

Q. Paul Azinger said a long time ago that only two things would really rattle a player, playing for cash or playing for prestige. Which one meant more to you today?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Probably the prestige for sure just because being a FedExCup champion is something that I really wanted to do. I wanted to hold that trophy at the end of the day. It was something that I wanted to accomplish during my career, and obviously I got one of them. Now I'm going to try to get me another.

Q. There's a lot of big names on the trophy. Were you kind of annoyed that yours wasn't on it?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: A little bit, but like I said yesterday, I think a couple times there I didn't really have control of what was going on just because of my play, but obviously today I was in control of winning the trophy or not.

If I played well, I was going to win; if I didn't, I wasn't going to. I like that situation a lot better.

Q. Can you talk about how important that putt was on 13 and your emotions when you banged it off the back of the cup?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I mean, obviously I hit my -- obviously the drive went just in the left rough there and I hit a good shot right where I wanted to, just short right of the green.

But it was just one of those -- my ball was sitting in the first

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cut. I thought I was going to catch it clean and didn't and it came up short. Yeah, that putt was definitely kind of the turning point for me there on the back nine. You know, obviously it gave me the confidence and kind of kept the round going in the right direction.

Stepped up, hit a really nice drive on 14; hit some really quality shots really the rest of the way in. That was a big putt.

Q. When you look at what you've done this post season, you're exactly one shot away from being absolutely perfect, obviously, in the playoff which you didn't really have much control over in that situation. Can you characterize this run compared to some of the other runs you've had in your career these last few weeks?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, feel like the game is in really good form, playing some solid golf, and obviously contending every week. I'm playing probably some of the best golf I've ever played.

Like I said, there's plenty of room for improvement.

Q. Obviously it's a big amount of money and I'm sure it means a lot to you, but I'm just curious if you can think back to a time in your career when there was an amount of money that might have been a lot less that really changed your life, that really might've mattered in terms of whether it was your career or just whatever, paying back sponsors or anything that you might have -- where that money would have really had a huge impact on you even if it might have been a lot less.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, absolutely. When I went through all three stages of Q-school and got my TOUR card I think they gave me like a \$25,000 check. Yeah, I thought I was rich because I didn't have but a couple hundred bucks in my bank account probably.

Then I went to the first tournament in Hawai'i, I think I finished 10th, and I don't know, it was a hundred grand or something.

So yeah, that was big, and obviously that was a lot of money to me.

Now obviously I'm very thankful for FedEx and the amount of money they donate for us to be whoever is the FedExCup champion, but it's not about the money for me. It's more about the trophy.

Q. Was there a time back say 10, 12 years ago where you had to get over the idea of thinking how much

money a missed putt would cost? Is that an important part to being successful, to not think about the money even though it's a lot?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Well, at this stage of my career I'm fortunate enough where I don't need to think about that. It's more -- it's all about winning and the trophies. The money is not -- I don't really care about that. I want to win tournaments, and I want to win trophies.

Q. Sounds like you talked to Wayne over the weekend; can you maybe share the insights of that conversation that you guys had?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: He was playing golf and I asked him how he was playing. He said he was hitting it pretty good but Janet was yelling at him because he wasn't playing good enough that was about the extent of the conversation.

Q. You addressed this a little bit, but was this maybe more important in some ways to you given the five strokes -- obviously wanting to win the FedExCup and so forth, did it take on any greater significance in that regard to you?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I didn't really understand. Sorry.

Q. Did you need this win in your eyes?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Well, yeah, I needed the win. Last week I had the lead going into the final round. Played a really good solid round, made a great putt to get into a playoff, but ended up losing in the playoff.

Having a five-shot lead today, it's something, yeah, I needed to finish it off, especially give myself a lot of confidence going into the U.S. Open here in -- what, it starts in 10 days or something, or less.

Obviously got a couple days to celebrate with Paulina and the kids, and then got to get back to grinding again.

Q. These last four weeks you and A.J. seem to have been especially dialed in in your routine on the greens, and I think there might have been a couple adjustments made in how you guys are going about things. I wonder if you could kind of explain that and just what role he really played in this run that you've been on here recently.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, A.J. is a big part of the game. Obviously he's my brother. We're a good team. He reads the greens well, and a lot of times, too, I know we're doing well when -- you know, because I started using the line at

the PGA on the putter when I was putting, and so he's been doing the AimPoint for a while.

So I know when I line it up and we've got it in the same vicinity that we're doing a good job. He's done a great job over the last four weeks, four tournaments, and I'm glad to have my brother on the bag with me.

Q. You talked about needing this win and things like that, but from him being an unproven guy out here who had never caddied on the TOUR until now, how much do you think he's kind of validated himself as being worthy of being out here and being one of the top caddies in the game?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I think from the first time he came out he was -- he played golf growing up. He played basketball through high school and college, but he was always a decent player.

Yeah, I mean, it didn't take him long to catch on. He's a very good caddie and he would do well for anybody, but he's going to be on my bag for a long time.

Q. Have you played Winged Foot?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I have not played it.

Q. What have you heard about it if you have heard about it, if you've asked questions about it?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: That it's a very good golf course, difficult but fair.

Q. How would you compare the way you're playing now with the spring of '17 when you were blowing through Riv and Match Play and Mexico and things like that?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: It's similar. It's getting there. I think I was playing really good then. Obviously I'm playing very well now. Like I said, I feel like I can play better, though.

You know, at times I'm firing on all cylinders, but there's times where I'm not. I'm playing good enough, though, to where I can keep it where I still can give myself a chance to win.

Compared to spring of '17, almost there.

Q. Kind of along those lines, it's kind of exhausting to get through this stretch and have to do all these virtual interviews and stuff like that --

DUSTIN JOHNSON: But thanks for all your questions.

(Laughter.)

Q. But the fact that the U.S. Open is coming up, the fact that we still have the Masters, are you kind of excited now the way that fits into this weird season?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I am. I am excited. Obviously I'm playing well. I've got a lot of confidence in the game, so I'm really looking forward to the next obviously couple months.

But then I'm also -- after that I'm looking forward to some time off. It's been a long stretch, but it's made it a lot easier playing well, that's for sure.

MICHAEL BALIKER: Thanks, Dustin. Congratulations.

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