

TOUR Championship

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Atlanta, Georgia, USA

East Lake Golf Club

Dustin Johnson

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome reigning FedExCup champion Dustin Johnson to the interview room here at East Lake Golf Club. Dustin, great memories as you come back to Atlanta this week. Maybe get some opening comments on the state of your game and what you've seen on the golf course so far.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, it's definitely good to be back here. Obviously if you make it to the TOUR Championship you've had a pretty good season. Yeah, coming back here obviously after winning last year, getting my first FedExCup title, it's definitely got some good memories.

I feel like the game is starting to round into form right at the right time. This is obviously a really good week to play well. So obviously my position coming into is not as good as it was last year, but I feel like I'm still in a position where I've got a chance to win as long as -- I'm going to have to have a spectacular week, but I still feel like I have a chance.

Q. Played a few holes earlier today. A lot of rain over the last couple days. What's the golf course looking like?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: The golf course, yeah, it's always in perfect condition. The fairway's a little bit softer than normal so the ball is not really rolling, but the greens are -- still have some bounce in them and they're fast. Rough is deep. Course is exactly the same as always, and it's going to play difficult.

Q. Did you cut yourself shaving?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I did. No, I just shaved it off.

Q. Any reason why? Just come up with something?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Zero reason.

Q. How does that happen? You've had a beard all year and then people are supposed to grow beards during the playoffs.



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DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, well, not me. Yesterday I was shaving and I decided it shave it off.

Q. How soon will it be back, Friday?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, probably. By Sunday I'll have a beard.

Q. Just quickly ask you what you think have to do to win from five shots back?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Seven.

Q. Seven; what kind of challenge is that?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: It's a great challenge, but obviously over one day would be a lot to ask, but over four days it's not as big of an ask. I'm still going to have to play extremely well, but over four rounds it's a lot easier to make up seven strokes than over one day.

On a golf course like East Lake Golf Club, if you can get off to a good start, shoot a good first round or just get your -- inch your way a little bit closer each day, still going to have to play four great rounds if I want a chance to win.

Q. I should probably know this, but obviously I don't. Do you recall what it was like last year when you started with the two-shot lead? Do you remember what it was like after Thursday? Did you find yourself looking at the board any differently on like a Friday morning than when you started?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Maybe a little bit because you start with the lead, so it almost feels like it's a five-round tournament rather than a four. You just played really good the first day, but still got four more left.

So it's definitely different, but I just tried to go out and shoot as low as I could every day.

Q. That was pretty match my question about the staggered strokes and the starting strokes format. They say it's hard to sleep or can be hard to sleep on a lead. Did you to feel like you were sleeping on the lead Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday of that week?

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DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, kind of. Like I said, just felt like it was a five-round tournament really because Thursday you start with a score. But, yeah, it was just -- I knew I had to, if I wanted to win, I still was going to have to play four good rounds.

There is really no way around that. You got to play well if you want to win. Obviously I played just good enough. But, yeah, it's a tough golf course. Starting even where I'm at I feel like I have a chance, but I'm going to have to play four solid rounds.

Q. Rory McIlroy was saying he feels like the course is a good one to separate the field, where if it you start hitting until the rough guys can shoot a higher number, you can makeup a deficit like yours or his pretty quickly. Do you agree with that?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I do. I do. This golf course, if you don't play it the right way and play it well you're going to struggle. You've got to hit fairways, hit it on the green.

It's just is difficult course, and you've got to kind of use every club in your bag. Some of the par-3s are really long. The par-5s, you know, you hit all kinds of different shots really, driver, 3-wood, irons off the tee. You hit pretty much your whole golf bag every day.

It's a demanding golf course, but if you can drive it in the fairway you can shoot some good scores.

Q. Just wanted to see if you can weigh in on any comments coming up this week on fan behavior and get any sense that it's become a little more aggressive, and did you hear or like what Jay had to say about --

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I didn't hear, so...

What did he say?

Q. It would take an hour. It's Jay. God, I hope that doesn't go in the transcript. (Laughter.) Just the idea they're going to toss people if they start hearing fans saying things. Brooksie came up with the whole Bryson thing. If they start hearing aggressive vulgar comments...

DUSTIN JOHNSON: You hear it every week, but it's always like there is the one or two guys that do it. So I think it gives the rest of the fans kind of a bad rap. Most of the time 99% of the fans are great.

But you always get the one, whatever you want to call him, person, that, I don't know, what they're thinking or why they do it.

Yeah, it's just unnecessary obviously.

Q. Have you heard much yourself? Anything directed at you or anything that got under your skin?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Occasionally. Not too often though. I'm lucky enough that the fans, they like me, so...

But, yeah, I mean, you hear stuff. Whether it's at other players or even directed towards you. You know, a lot of times you want to smack them, but you can't.

Q. Well, you could you just go to prison. (Laughter.) Other thing I wanted to ask about was the format itself. Do you like it, okay with it, like to see to changed?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I think it works. I do. Kind of gives everyone that makes it to this week a chance to win, so I do like it.

That makes it exciting, easy to follow. It's easy for us players to follow, too, because kind of the other way there were so many different scenarios, especially if you were like first coming into the week. A lot of the times you were relying on other players if you weren't at the top.

THE MODERATOR: All right, that concludes things. Best of luck this week.

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