

# The American Express

Thursday, January 18, 2024

La Quinta, California, USA

PGA WEST Pete Dye Stadium Course

## Zach Johnson

### Quick Quotes

**Q. 62 to start your California swing. What were your thoughts on the round?**

ZACH JOHNSON: I was excited for the day. Put a lot of good work in as of late. Actually been a lot of normal golf work, given what happened last year with what I was responsible for, which was awesome. Now it's time to get back to work. I've enjoyed the work. I've enjoyed the sweat. Love what I'm doing off the golf course, on the golf course. Kind of mix and match my bag a little bit better. PXG has really honed in on what they feel is best for me, and I'm encouraged with that, which is awesome. All systems go. It's just one day, so I got to keep the ship straight and narrow and hopefully keep it going.

**Q. Your 14th start here. What have you learned about this layout over that time?**

ZACH JOHNSON: La Quinta Country Club is legitimately one of the purest places we play on the PGA TOUR year-in, year-out. The grass is -- it almost looks fake. If you have it going and you have some sort of rhythm and you're seeing the lines on the putting green, because they're pure, you can put a number up. So, love this place, love the membership here, the club's terrific. I told the assistant pro today, if I broke 76 that I should get a free membership, but I don't think that's going to work, so, that's unfortunate, however, we'll keep working on 'em.

**Q. What do you need to do on the Nicklaus Course tomorrow to maintain or grow the lead?**

ZACH JOHNSON: New day. Going to keep doing what I'm doing. My process has been great with my caddie, trying to hit the middle of the fairways as much as possible and that's worked out well, so it's just that. Stay in the moment. Stay right where my feet are.

**Q. Lastly, you mentioned you were working on the Ryder Cup last year, a lot of your Ryder Cup team members were, are in the field this week. How much of a mental boost does that provide for you to have those newly stronger connections with the younger guys as**



**you tee 'em up here and start your season?**

ZACH JOHNSON: I relish that. I think that's a luxury. I think that's somewhat of my tenure. They kind of keep me young to some degree. Motivated. Just watching them is, to say it's impressive would be an understatement. So, I say all that as far as their golf game goes, but the most impressive thing to me is who they are. The list goes on and on. There's a bunch of 'em playing. Xander and Wyndham, Scottie Scheffler, Burnsy, Patrick, Rickie, JT, a lot of the team's here. I'm sure I'm missing somebody. Pretty awesome they want to come here, too. It's great for AmEx, because I think it's one of our better tournaments to support this area. It's fun being around those guys as much as I can. It's probably going to come to an end sooner than I know, so I'll relish it.

**Q. You played pretty darned good, 29 on the front. How would you assess the day?**

ZACH JOHNSON: Got off to a good start. Gained some momentum. Hit a lot of shots in the middle of the club face. When I had loft in my hand I was able to be aggressive, which is always key. Obviously, I putted good. That goes without saying. You got to find your line and hit it down your line here. This is a place where if you have any rhythm, any momentum, any semblance of decent form you can kind of get it going. It's one of my favorite stops. It's just one day. A lot of golf left. One day.

**Q. A lot of golf left, looking for your first win since 2015.**

ZACH JOHNSON: That sounds about right. Yeah.

**Q. How do you keep it going the rest of the week?**

ZACH JOHNSON: Stay right where my feet are. I'm talking to you right now and I'm going to figure out what I'm going to do next and then just plot my way around. There's really no other way to go about this. I like the rhythm I'm in. I'm doing good stuff in the gym, doing good stuff on the golf course, off the golf course, whether you're talking about -- just, holistically, I feel like -- my team a's, we're all on the same page, and we know where golf sits. It's nice to work again. I haven't been able to put this much work in a little over a year's time, so I'm excited.



**Q. La Quinta Country Club, players rave about it, everybody loves it, you can just look at the place and it's pure as it gets, but for you personally, why do you enjoy it so much?**

ZACH JOHNSON: My motivation today was, I told one of the assistant pros that if I broke 76 I get a free membership, but I don't know if I got the okay on that one. I adore it. I think it's a gem. From a condition standpoint it's legitimately one of the best facilities I've ever set foot on, and I know my peers, I'm confident they would say the same. It's not big, it's not intimidating, necessarily, from a distance standpoint, but you got to shape your ball. There's trees in the way on a lot of shots and you got to carry this, and be below that and above that, whatever it may be, so you got to hit every shot, which I appreciate. But again, it's one of those places -- when you're playing, essentially, in a dome today, that obviously lends itself to lower scores, too, but everything about it is great. The membership's awesome, they want us here, which is spectacular, and AmEx rolls out the red carpet, so I'm excited to be back. I love coming back.

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