

The Saudi International powered by SoftBank Investment Advisers

Sunday, 7 February, 2021

King Abdullah Economic City, Saudi Arabia
Royal Greens Golf and Country Club

Dustin Johnson

Press Conference

STEVE TODD: We are pleased to be join by our champion for the second time in three years, Dustin Johnson. Give us your reflections on that victory today. It seemed to bunch up a little bit but you ultimately kept in control throughout.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I knew it was going to be a tough day. There was a lot of really good players right around the lead. The conditions; it was really windy and hard to get it close to the hole. I knew I was playing well. I really swung it well all week and very consistent with the way I was striking it. I knew if I could just drive it well today, I'd give myself a lot of opportunities and I did. I hit a lot of greens. Had a lot of really good looks. Didn't hole any of them until 13.

But yeah it was a really good day. I played really solid. It was tough to shoot a low number.

Q. Just wanted to ask you, what pleased you the most, you were not putting that great and you missed a few short ones, but what pleased you most about today's win?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, obviously just the way I was swinging the club. I felt like I really controlled the golf ball well in some windy conditions. I drove it well. I did everything really well except for hole putts. I didn't hole a lot of putts. It was really nice and I'm very pleased and proud of winning when I didn't feel like I had -- I wasn't completely on all cylinders as far as where everything was working well.

But yeah, I'm really just pleased with the way I controlled the golf ball.

Q. And the second part of the question, when you have a run like this, since August you have been playing some extraordinary golf. What is there to work on when you go back to your home base?



السعودية الدولية
SAUDI
INTERNATIONAL
POWERED BY  SoftBank
Investment Advisers

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I'm definitely going to work on the putting but I feel like there's always room for improvement throughout game no matter how you're hitting it. I still can get better with a lot of things I feel like.

Q. Is there any part of the game specifically that you want to make it better?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, all parts. No, there's not -- I mean, obviously the putting -- I feel like I'm putting it well. I just wasn't holing anything. I was misreading them. The greens are tricky and with the wind, too, you have to play some wind, so it was definitely hard to get a really good line.

So I'll go home and work on that a little bit but I'll worrying on all parts of my game, just always try to get better.

Q. A part of this event is growth of Saudi Arabia as a golf destination. Do you feel that happening and do you see that moving forward?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I think Golf Saudi, the Golf Saudi Foundation, they are really trying to grow the game of golf in this country, and I think they are taking all the right steps to do that. Getting golf clubs in young kids' hands, having the best players in the world come to play an event in their country, and they are building some golf courses. They are doing all the right things. I think they are doing a great job and hopefully they continue.

Q. Who do you have tonight? Bucs? Chiefs?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I think it will be a pretty good game, but I don't know. Tom is one of my friends but I'm going to have to go with the Chiefs I think (smiling).

Q. So obviously when you won the Saudi International in the first edition, you had a record, and this year, did you have that record in mind? Obviously you wanted to do well but did you have that in the back of your head?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: No, not -- I try to shoot as low as I

ASAP sports . . . when all is said, we're done.®

can every day that I play. So if I can beat that, that's great. But no, that wasn't my target. Every day I play, I try to shoot the lowest number I can.

Q. You won the first edition and you came second in the second, and you obviously won today. So what does this tournament mean to you?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: It means a lot. It's a great. Obviously from the first year to this year, it's gotten astronomically better, and I think they are going to continue to try to grow this tournament and make it one of the best in the world.

Yeah, it means a lot. It was a great field this year, so to get a victory, I'm very proud of that. It's a big win. I'm looking forward to coming back next year.

Q. Just wondering, a lot of players will talk about how they sort of set their stall out to peak at the majors. Seems like right now you're peaking every time you tee it up. Do you have a different outlook to that?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I like to play well every week, so yeah, I approach every tournament the same. I don't try to get my game just ready for the majors. I want to be ready each and every week I play.

Q. Just wondering, talking to SKY when you won the tournament about looking forward and enjoying playing around the world. Are you tempted or are you interested to join The European Tour?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: They try. I'd have to play too many events I think. I don't like to play that many. I have a schedule -- I mean, I like to play around 20 and not have to add three or four or five more. So I don't know if that would work. But I've definitely thought about it.

Q. Guys like Patrick Reed have been playing a lot and Tony Finau and Collin Morikawa last year. If you did play regularly on The European Tour, you'd probably be up there for The Race to Dubai title, too?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, obviously I'd be doing well. But like I said, it's all based on the schedule. If it works out and I can, then obviously I will. But that's quite a few more events that I've got to play.

Q. I meant to ask you this at the start of the week, so apologies. Have you thought about trying this AutoFlex shaft, the one they are all talking about, that Adam Scott was using last week at Torrey?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I don't even know what it is. So no, I

haven't thought about trying it.

Q. What are your recollections on what happened yesterday at the Phoenix Open with Jordan shooting 61 and the acclaim he received. And also can you talk to us about your perseverance in golf, because not every day is going to be easy in golf.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, obviously this game, it's very difficult. It's very frustrating. You can shoot 61 one day and 75 the next and there's no really rhyme or reason why. So you definitely need to have perseverance and you need to be mentally tough.

Yeah, obviously Jordan played a great round yesterday, but he's still got one more day to go. So we'll see. Obviously we'll see what happens today and see how the guys play.

Q. We're only amazingly two months away from the Masters. How much have you been thinking about that already, and what's your schedule leading up to Augusta, please?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I'm going to play -- I'm definitely playing L.A., the WGC, PLAYERS, Match Play and Augusta for sure.

Yes, I'm looking forward to going back to Augusta as the defending Masters Champion. Obviously it will be something different. But I'm really looking forward to that.

Q. Have you picked out the Champions Dinner menu yet?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I have not. I've got some ideas but I haven't picked it out yet.

Q. Is it going to be quite traditional or have you got some out-there idea?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: It's not going to be anything wild.

Q. Just curious, in all the events you've played on The European Tour over the years, have you managed to put a finger on why Europe has done so well in The Ryder Cup from your experiences on The European Tour? Have you seen anything that gives you an inkling as to why they do so well in that competition? And as a follow-up to that, can you talk about what you saw in Victor Perez who might be on that team facing you in Whistling Straits later this year?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I have no idea about The Ryder Cup and why they have won so many times, especially in the

past. If I did have a clue, then obviously I'd try to fix it. It just comes down to the team and who is playing better those three days. As we all know, golf is a funny sport. You know, whatever team plays better that week, they are going to win.

You know, Victor, I think he's a really good player and hopefully he's on the team and I'd like to play against him.

Q. Following on from Iain's question, you're reaching a level of golf at the moment that is very close to what Tiger was achieving a number of years ago. Every week when you step on to a golf course, do you feel that pressure? It doesn't show, but do you feel added pressure to be at that level every week now?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I mean, I don't feel any added pressure. I mean, I come into a tournament looking to contend and I prepare as best I can. Obviously I've been playing some really good golf the last six months. Hopefully I'm going to continue to play this kind of golf. But I'm seeing a lot of the same things each and every week, and that's what I do, and I've got a great team around me that helps me kind of stay in that form. So I can perform at the highest level each and every week.

Q. A lot of your American colleagues have made the journey to Scotland for The Scottish Open ahead of The Open Championship. At any time is that going to be in your schedule?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: It very well possibly could.

Q. This year?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: (Laughs) I don't know. I haven't made it that far in my schedule yet. But it could be.

STEVE TODD: Thank you for joining us.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports