

U.S. Open Championship 2022

Thursday, June 16, 2022

Brookline, Massachusetts, USA

The Country Club

Joel Dahmen

Flash Interview



THE MODERATOR: We're here with Joel Dahmen, 3-under 67. Can you talk us through your round today.

JOEL DAHMEN: I made a great bogey on the first. Or on my 10th hole. That's a par-5, so it was fine.

Then I made a good putt on the par-3 and kind of settled me down. Hit a bunch of fairways and greens after that. Just kind of kept the ball in front of me, kept it in play, and took advantage of some of the easier holes.

THE MODERATOR: Three birdies in your last five holes. What did you find towards the end of the round?

JOEL DAHMEN: The easier holes on the golf course. I found a drivable par-4 that I knocked on the fringe. The shot I hit into 6 was a great golf shot that worked out even better. Then 8 is -- the long players will be hitting short irons today in there downwind. Found some of the easier holes on the back -- or I guess on the front.

THE MODERATOR: What was your mindset going into today, and how does that change now that you're tied for the U.S. Open lead?

JOEL DAHMEN: I knew I could compete here because it's not overly long. I hit a bunch of fairways. I typically hit a lot of greens.

Yeah, I mean, it was -- I don't have -- I try to keep expectations low, as you guys probably know a little bit, but yeah, it just shows that this is a good golf course for me. If I can keep hitting the ball this way, I can probably hang around for a long time.

Q. Have you always been that way? When you were a junior, were you, like, oh, I'm not very good, or was it just like a --

JOEL DAHMEN: I don't know if it's self-deprecating a little bit, but my dad taught me to be very humble, I guess. I remember some vivid car rides coming home after a junior winner, whatever, and it was like, you don't talk about yourself. You let people ask you questions type thing.

It's not necessarily a humble thing anymore. It's just like, I don't know, staying neutral. Can't get too high, too low. Do I believe in myself? Yeah. If you look at my game and what I am, for me to make it on Tour for six years and play this well, that's probably overachieving some would say. I wasn't All-American. I wasn't the best.

It's just understanding who I am and where I'm at. Rocco Mediate took Tiger to 91 holes; I think I can do okay.

Q. What is it about this course? You kind of mentioned it. It's not gentler, but a different test than the U.S. Opens of the past couple of years?

JOEL DAHMEN: Yeah, like the Winged Foot stood out to me. I didn't have a fighting chance there. I had to hit it so perfect all the time, where this one even if you are in the rough, it's graduated a little bit. I can get it around the greens. I'm not hitting 4-iron or hybrid into every hole; there's wedges out there. You can get to the par-5, No. 8, that stuff.

You still have to hit it great, and you still have to be in the right spots, but this is like everyone can play this golf course, from Brian Stuard to myself to the long players.

You have to hit -- even myself, I hit multiple 3-woods off the tee, hit a hybrid on 9. It's not just a hit-as-far-as-you-can-type contest.

Q. How would you describe your competitiveness as an athlete?

JOEL DAHMEN: Pretty high. I'm super competitive. I love competing. I am the greatest backyard game player in the world. Max Homa will tell you differently. But darts, cornhole. I would put myself against anyone, especially on the PGA TOUR. But I just love being competitive. I love playing for whatever it is, cards. I've always been that way. Always been super competitive.

Q. I guess with that said, when part of the personality is that self-deprecating thing and you like say I'm not going to do this, I can't do that, is it -- is there then

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something in the back of your mind where you're like, now I'm going to prove everything that I just said wrong?

JOEL DAHMEN: When you are with these other guys, they have it a little bit, but it's also get in between the ropes, I'm very competitive, and I believe in myself, and I hate losing. But it's also, like -- for me the most fun when you're playing with the best players. I've gotten to play with Spieth in the final round close to the lead twice this year, and in that moment, like, I love that stuff. I love being in that situation. I love being nervous. I love my hands shaking. That's why we play the game.

I've done pretty well under pressure. The closer I get to it, I don't tend to just completely collapse. I mean, obviously, everyone has at times, but I do better when I'm in the moment than I'm when I'm screwing around in 40th trying to make a paycheck type thing. A little more focused on every little thing for sure.

Q. I know it wasn't an issue today, but when things do start going tough for you, do you start believing the self-deprecating stuff and start having to do the opposite and talking yourself up a little bit?

JOEL DAHMEN: You have to do a little bit of both, and Geno, my caddie, has probably been on me at times about that. There is times where it's easy to kind of just, oh, it's fine to cruise down the hill and just this slippery slope and I just find myself at the bottom and pick yourself back up again.

When you get in these moments in these bigger events, that's what I love. Yeah, when I'm playing well and I'm in these moments, I get more fired up for it. I'm ready to go more. I have a harder time to tee it up on a Saturday or Sunday when I'm in 40th. That just doesn't get my blood going.

Q. Are we sort of getting ahead of ourselves with the talk after one round?

JOEL DAHMEN: Yeah. Look, it's pretty easy to go shoot 76 or 77 out there and all of a sudden you're in 40th again. Also, I don't know. How often are you going to be tied for the lead of the U.S. Open? This is incredible, right?

I had two putts from 30 feet. I don't think anyone in the afternoon is probably going to shoot three. That would be a hell of a score, but it would be a really cool footnote. Even if I ended up 40th, who cares?

Q. So finishing in the lead is something that would be actively cool?

JOEL DAHMEN: Absolutely. Why not? Is it way cooler to finish in the lead on Sunday? Yeah. Is it still cool as a kid who grew up in Clarkston, Washington, to be like, man, he is leading the U.S. Open, that's kind of a cool deal. For sure.

Q. What does the rest of your day look like? You have tomorrow afternoon that's your next tee time. What do you do between now and then?

JOEL DAHMEN: Fortunate, I'm going to call him a newly best friend, Ben Rector, he is a musician. I got to meet him in Pebble this year, and he is in town tonight. We're going to go to his concert. It will be difficult to go to that one and not have 100 beers like we typically do at the concerts.

My wife's siblings -- I guess they're my brother- and sister-in-law since we're married, but they just graduated high school, so they're in town. We'll go to dinner and go watch Ben tonight and have an easy night.

With it being 2:00 tomorrow, I try to stay up later so I can sleep in longer because the long mornings kind of -- there's nothing to do so, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Joel.

JOEL DAHMEN: Thank you, guys.

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