

U.S. Open Championship 2022

Friday, June 17, 2022

Brookline, Massachusetts, USA

The Country Club

Joel Dahmen

Flash Interview



THE MODERATOR: Joel Dahmen, 2-under 68. Tied for the lead heading into the weekend at the U.S. Open. What's running through your mind?

JOEL DAHMEN: I don't know. It's kind of been a whirlwind really. I was trying to think back on the round today, and it's all kind of a blur really, which I think is probably a good thing. Yeah, I'm excited. My game is obviously pretty good right now. I handled nerves pretty well out there today.

I don't know, it will be a big weekend. Yeah, who -- we don't tee off until 3:45 tomorrow. I typically have to be home at 5:00 for dinner, so this will be different for sure.

Q. You talked about yesterday how cool it was to be leading yesterday. What kind of reaction did you get from friends? How many text messages, how many calls?

JOEL DAHMEN: A lot. I probably have a lot right now.

Q. Be specific, please.

JOEL DAHMEN: I only have 45 right now because I've tampered so many expectations through the years of we can celebrate on Sunday type stuff. Yeah, it's been fun. I had plenty of people shout out to me or whatever.

36 holes left in a U.S. Open is a lot longer than 36 holes at any other golf course. We're just going to keep plugging ahead.

Q. You mentioned nerves. Do you have nerves on Friday even though it's the U.S. Open, even with everything you've gone through, winning on TOUR, going through Q-school, everything?

JOEL DAHMEN: Yeah, I think honestly in the past Fridays have been some of my toughest days. I've played well in the first rounds, but I haven't kept it together or got it in the house on Fridays.

I love being in the moment on the weekend. Late tee times, being around the crowds is what I love. I've really struggled on Friday afternoons getting in the house.

Kept it together. Made a couple really good par saves on the back. Yeah, there was plenty of nerves out there. There's people everywhere, hard golf course, playing for the U.S. Open.

Q. Knowing that you're heading home on Friday with a share of the lead, where does that rank among the coolest days of your golf career?

JOEL DAHMEN: Behind playing with Tiger, for sure. Behind winning. Behind getting my TOUR card twice.

I mean, it's up there. This is really cool, but it's really all for naught if you go lay and egg on the weekend.

Yeah, this is cool. This is fun, but it would be really fun if I was doing this again Saturday and Sunday.

Q. Did you feel any mounting pressure today as you saw your name climbing the leaderboard? And if so, how did you or how did you and Geno kind of slow things down to stay with it?

JOEL DAHMEN: Geno likes to walk fast. I'll probably have to tell him to chill tomorrow or just let him go and I'll be by myself.

Yeah, it was kind of ramping up. Especially there was a spot -- I bogeyed 10 and had a long par putt on 12, and all of a sudden that gets away. Some tough holes coming in, and to make a long putt on 15 and 16. All those things could have been -- you're three or four shots worse coming in all of a sudden.

It wasn't mounting because it's a climactic moment or a Sunday pressure or anything. It was just like, dude, you're playing really well, don't screw this up right now. Get out of your own way kind of thing. Just hit some golf shots, and I did that really well.



Q. Does the conversation with Geno change at all when things are ramping up?

JOEL DAHMEN: No, you guys know Geno. He always comes up with something to say or some story that he's pulling out of his hat. I'd figure by now I would have heard all of them, but that is still not the case somehow.

Yeah, he does a good job of not talking about golf until it's golf time, so whatever it is -- I played with Lanto Griffin, who's a good friend of mine. That helps, too, when you can just chat about other things. He's got an upcoming wedding. He is trying to build a house; I'm trying to build a house. So all that stuff we can chat about non-golf-wise out there.

Q. Thinking about kind of your career and everything you've been through to get here, what does it mean to you that your golf scores mean so much to so many people around you and following you?

JOEL DAHMEN: That's a deep one. Yeah, it's kind of weird. I've always just tried to be myself, I guess. My rookie year out here I was not myself. I was trying to be a pro golfer, and that's not who I am per se. I'm a little more laid back and like to have a little more fun, and I have my best friend beside me in Geno, and he is a ton of fun, and he's fun to be around.

It's kind of weird how just us being ourselves and putting it out there for everyone, it's kind of endearing. It's pretty cool to have people root for you. It's great.

Q. Is that harder to do at a week like this, or is it natural?

JOEL DAHMEN: Yeah, I actually caught myself a little bit on the front today of kind of keep my head down and try not to -- trying to almost be a pro golfer and do -- those big guys just keep their head down and keep going, but I wave to people and I say, hi. I've just got to keep doing that.

Q. Are you comfortable with kind of that extra attention now?

JOEL DAHMEN: No. It is unbelievable to me how many people know my name or yell for me out there. It's weird. I'm getting recognized a little bit more off the golf course, which is -- my wife will look at me, like, what is happening? It's not normal. I don't know if I'll ever get used to it, but it comes with good golf.

Q. Then also, what's the craziest thing you've ever had to autograph?

JOEL DAHMEN: Hmm. I haven't autographed a boob yet.

I don't know. Oh, like a Zyn can, like a Copenhagen can. Someone had me sign one of those recently.

Q. Was it empty?

JOEL DAHMEN: I didn't ask. I shouldn't have done that. That was bad.

Q. I was reading around a little bit. Is it true you almost skipped your qualifier coming into this?

JOEL DAHMEN: There was a lot of discussion leading up to it, yeah, the prior week. I told my wife I wasn't going to do it. Then I was tired at Memorial and said I wasn't going to do it. I was never really going to do it until I played -- sort of played better at Memorial and the game was there.

My coach, Rob Rashell, came out and things started to trend in the right direction. And then Geno, I felt bad because he didn't switch his flight when he could have got home Sunday night, so at that point I had to stick it out.

Q. How happy are you that you did do it?

JOEL DAHMEN: I'm incredibly happy now for sure. Yeah, I mean, sometimes you take for granted what you have out here a little bit. I think this is my eighth or ninth major championship, and you think not long ago I would have done a lot of things to play in one, and to think that I have an opportunity just to skip one, kind of looking back, even this whole week, you don't appreciate really.

I've played 130 some odd events. I've been six years out here. It's easy to get in a lull and be like, you just go home for two weeks and hang out and everything is all hunky-dory, but when you get here, everything changes as soon as you get on property. It's a USGA event. It's huge. People everywhere. So, yeah, that changes your mind pretty quickly.

Q. Have you ever gotten mad at Geno or vice versa on the golf course?

JOEL DAHMEN: Oh, yeah. We fight like brothers. We've had a couple dust-ups, and it's always me barking at him and being a jerk. Not so much even blaming him, just kind of being pouty and yeah, being a butthead out there, and Geno will -- I have a very long leash, but every now and then he pulls on it, and I shape up rather quickly.

Q. It's been five years since the Waffle House hat. Do you remember wearing that and how did that happen?

JOEL DAHMEN: Not really, no. I know of the story, and some of the details I don't really remember. But yeah, I showed up with a Waffle House hat, and yeah, that was in Nashville, just cruising through. I was in last place on the Korn Ferry event, I was thinking ahead about playing the TOUR event next week. But yeah, that was just another Geno-and-I thing.

Q. How was the Ben Rector concert?

JOEL DAHMEN: It was great. He's good. It's really fun as an athlete at the highest level to watch someone else do what they do at their highest level and how much time and effort they put into it and then to look out and see how many people are there watching him and singing every word of every song. He's just such a great guy. He's a great golfer, too.

Hopefully he's my Pebble Beach partner next year. That is the goal. I've got to send some bottles of wine up there probably to make that happen, but he's just a great guy.

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