

U.S. Open Championship 2025

Wednesday, June 11, 2025

Oakmont, Pennsylvania, USA

Oakmont Country Club

Chase Johnson

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome back to the interview area. We are joined by Chase Johnson, who is playing in his first U.S. Open this year and made it through both local and final qualifying. Chase, let's start with the last 10 days, what it's been like for you.

CHASE JOHNSON: Yep, the last 10 days, it's all a blur right now.

I played -- I actually did the Memorial Pro-Am that Tuesday. Had to go back home for engagement photos Wednesday morning, U.S. Open final qualifying, went into a three-hole playoff, didn't get back until, like, probably 9:00 or 10:00, laundry, flew out the next morning, woke up at 4:00 to go to Scottsdale for the next APGA Tour event, unfortunately finished runner-up in that one, and then flew right back to Michigan for my fiancée's birthday and then straight here.

Q. When you arrived here at Oakmont, you didn't quite know you were in the field yet, so talk about finding out and your mentality around that.

CHASE JOHNSON: Yeah, everyone was saying that I had a really good chance, but obviously moved inside the top 60. But that's kind of a chicken that you're not going to count until it's hatched out here. I was kind of in that alternate mind frame, getting out here, kind of get familiar with the course and then Reese called me on Sunday night and I was pretty ecstatic and let a little bit of emotion out.

Obviously there's a bigger job to do now to make it all worth it, but I was extremely excited, and my phone blew up. I think I have 700 messages I haven't gotten through yet.

Q. What constitutes a little bit of emotion being let out?

CHASE JOHNSON: I gave my caddie a handshake. No, again, we were mentally prepared to play, but it was like slowly kind of building, but then it was just like a relief, like you're finally in the field. It was like, oh, okay, now we can go to work.

Q. Can you talk about the playoff? I was there but I was hiding in the clubhouse trying to reach deadline and ready to hit send whenever whoever won it, which was you, but you were playing against four PGA TOUR guys. You've got think in your mind you're the long shot but also you're as good as they are. Talk us through that.

CHASE JOHNSON: Yeah, for sure. I definitely was the underdog in the playoff, but I didn't feel it like that way at all. Eric and Cam and me, we all played together on Korn Ferry for two years, so I think I've played 40 events with the two of them.

Then being on the Cobra Puma team, I've gotten to know Rickie to a certain extent over the last couple years, and then did an event for Tiger's Jr. Invitational last fall with Max. So there was some familiarity with all the players.

At that point, you're not worried about No. 10 at Kinsale, you're just trying to keep it in play between the trees. That was where all of it went right there, but I felt at home with all of those guys.

Q. I didn't catch, who called you with the news?

CHASE JOHNSON: Reese.

THE MODERATOR: Reese Moseley with the USGA.

Q. You chip cross-handed. How does that work in this rough?

CHASE JOHNSON: So there were some experiments done over the last three days. It depends on the lie. I can access it -- when it's real deep down there, it goes to a conventional because it's just like a bunker shot. But the cross-handed was still effective in certain spots, just like got to get real steep on it, and it was fun. I played my practice round today with Fitzy, Rosey and Pavon, so we had four cross-handed chippers in one group. I think we might be the only four in the field but we were all in one group today.



Q. How did it come about for you, cross-handed chipping?

CHASE JOHNSON: There's a word that golfers stay away from. It couldn't get any worse. I remember the first time I did it, I was with my dad at a course that I grew up, Spring Hills in Ohio. I tried it and I was seven for seven with two chip-ins that day. I was like, I think we'll stick with that.

Q. On a lighter note, do you know or do you have a wedding date?

CHASE JOHNSON: Yes. September 29th.

Q. On a little bit less light note, obviously I think you were obsessed with Tiger growing up; now we're in 2025 and at least the golf course out here from a perspective of who's playing, minorities, not a lot of Black guys out there. Are you surprised, disappointed, hopeful when you see the numbers up here but also down at the grass-roots and things like that?

CHASE JOHNSON: Like as far as how many minority players are in the field?

Q. Yeah, that you're the only one here (indiscernible).

CHASE JOHNSON: Well, I mean, that's one of the missions of the APGA Tour, which is great. I was able to kind of rebuild my platform a little bit out there on that tour starting in 2023 after I lost my Korn Ferry TOUR card, and that tour has developed so much in the last two years, let alone over the 14- or 15-year history it has. Guys are good out there now. You can't just cruise around at 4- or 5-under. I just finished second shooting 63 in the first round, and I think I shot 11-under for two rounds and lost.

Guys are getting great out there, and Willie Mack played in the Open last year and qualified. It's just a matter of time. Like all these Pathway guys, like their version of PGA TOUR U, is developing some really strong players. We're going to keep on working on it, but hopefully I can continue to build my platform and build that platform for other players to just continue to grow the game.

Q. Talk about have you played here before and your thoughts about your first U.S. Open on this brutal test.

CHASE JOHNSON: I played here once. There's a member named John McMurty (phonetic) who's a donor for Kent State, so I've played once with him out here. I don't remember it being this hard the last time I played.

Obviously they've tricked it up for us. But this is kind of -- when you think of a U.S. Open, obviously there's some iconic courses that come to mind, and this is one of them.

I think Xander may have just said this the other day, that people don't want to see guys hitting 200-yard shots to two feet; they want to see carnage. I think that's the definition of this golf course. It's going to be who's going to manage it well because everyone is going to find it.

But this is how I would want my first U.S. Open experience to be.

Q. It looked like today on No. 16 watching you play out there that some of the practice shots you were taking out of the rough, it seemed as though the first couple times you were doing it, it was just mesmerizing how deep it was. Is it different being out here now and just seeing how deep the rough is this time?

CHASE JOHNSON: Yes, very. And I actually played in the BMW in 2021, which was the week after my first PGA TOUR event at the Memorial, and back then I was like, wait a minute, you guys have rough on the PGA TOUR? It's a little different on the Korn Ferry.

Then yeah, this week is just -- it's even crazier than it was at Muirfield Village, which is saying something. It's a different kind of mental strength to deal with it because you have no idea how it's going to come out. There are certain tricks that you can do to kind of help the success rate, but at the end of the day, you're just trying to advance it to a good spot for the next one.

Q. A couple other things. When are you getting married?

CHASE JOHNSON: September 29th.

Q. In Barberton?

CHASE JOHNSON: In Jupiter. My blood has thinned a little bit. I'm a Floridian now. I get cold a lot easier than I used to.

Q. This is your first U.S. Open, first major?

CHASE JOHNSON: Yes.

Q. What did your dad say?

CHASE JOHNSON: So I was a little shocked with my dad's response. He was like, this is amazing. It's Father's Day weekend. I couldn't ask for anything more. I was like, I think we could think of one thing by Sunday that we could



get for you.

But no, he's super stoked, super excited. My family is coming in tonight, mom, dad, fiancée, soon-to-be father-in-law, everyone is going to be here tonight. Very excited to share this with all of them.

Q. What's your fiancée's name?

CHASE JOHNSON: Katie Howarth.

Q. What's the big key for you this week? I think it would be keep it in play, but --

CHASE JOHNSON: Yeah, it's a pretty cliché answer up here with everyone who I'm sure you've brought in here. But keep it in play. Like it's one of those courses where you're better off having a 4-iron in to hit the green because if you bomb it up there, maybe Bryson could get it out, but I know I'm not strong enough to get it through this stuff unless you miss it big and you're in the trampled down grass from the gallery.

No, it's just keep it in play, and lag putting is going to be incredible this week because they all have funnel spots. So the ball is going to find its way to 50, 60 feet every once in a while, and you're going to be putting over three or four humps and like 6-degree slopes. You've just got to grind.

Q. I wanted to ask, how do players on Korn Ferry adjust to finally meeting the big-name stars? And then you finally get introduced to them. How do you handle that? That's an adjustment, you're playing with certain guys on Korn Ferry, all talented players. Now you're going to be meeting Scottie Scheffler, you're going to meet Rory McIlroy. How do you get zoned out of not being so star-struck that you're watching them play versus when you want to be out there doing your own game?

CHASE JOHNSON: I mean, you want to beat them. It boils down to that. Yeah, they're role models for a lot of players, but at the end of the day, you want to compete against the best players in the world and you want to beat them.

It depends on the generation that you're talking to. Scottie and I, I think, are the same age, and I've been playing against him since we were juniors. Obviously he's figured something out a lot quicker than I did. But eventually I'll get to the point that I want to be at.

But again, other golfers are the best coaches. You can always learn something from other players, and you kind of just take that with a grain of salt, and then at the end of the

day you're trying to post a lower score than the next guy.

Q. How was the game arranged today between Pavon, Fitzy and Rose? Did you ask them? Did you just happen to meet on the tee?

CHASE JOHNSON: So I always like to play early on Wednesday so I can just kind of relax, especially with an early morning tee time tomorrow, and when I had first signed up it was just me and Fitzy, and I know his little brother Alex. So we play at the same course in Jupiter, so I played with him a couple times, and I've seen Matt a couple times in my gym.

Then when I checked yesterday, it filled out with the other two in the group. It was just nice. Didn't really ask too many questions. Just kind of observed.

Obviously Rose has played a couple U.S. Opens here. I'm pretty sure -- did Fitzy play here in 2016? Maybe. But just watching how he kind of navigated the course and just tried to pick up what I could from afar.

Q. Was there anything different from the time you played it the first time with the member besides the rough? Is there anything that you saw from what you've seen this week as opposed to when you did it the first time when you were here? Anything that come about that's noticeable?

CHASE JOHNSON: I don't know if they lengthened it since then, but it feels a lot longer. I mean, yesterday or Monday I didn't even hit that bad of a drive into 18 and I had 246 yards in, and I'm not the shortest hitter out there. I was like, yeah, I don't remember that being the case. But today I had hit mini driver and I still had like 215 in, which was a little bit better, but it felt a little longer than the last time. Granted, that was seven years ago, so I could have just lost distance in the time.

Q. Going back to your fandom of Tiger, when did you become a fan? What was the first big memory there, and what did you -- everybody loves Tiger, but what did you love about him?

CHASE JOHNSON: It's probably one of my first memories. We loved the Tiger Woods video games growing up as a kid. My dad actually based part of my training as a kid off of the video game, so in the game when you got accomplishments like back-to-back birdies or first eagle, you would get a Tiger trophy ball, so every time we would go out and practice as a four-year old or whatever, I would have tasks or challenges to complete to get a daddy trophy ball, which usually was a pack of Yu-Gi-Oh! or Pokémon cards on the way home from



Toys-R-Us, but he used that method to teach me how to win and achieve goals without kind of getting overwhelmed. Yeah, just staying patient and working to get it done.

Tiger is everyone's role model, but especially mine, and I was able to meet him a couple times, which is pretty surreal.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for being here, and best of luck this week.

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