

The 150th Open

Mixed Zone

Thursday, 14 July 2022

Zach Johnson



Q. Open Championship again at St Andrews, here we are again. How do you assess day one for you and how you performed?

ZACH JOHNSON: I'm a little frustrated because, I mean, holy cow it could have been a lot worse. I didn't make any putts -- I mean, the putts I made for birdie were all within five feet. But I say that. I actually putted pretty good, kind of, six, seven feet in. I'm not frustrated with that.

It's hard to hit it close. And I hit some errant shots that was really frustrating. Errant shots kind of middle of my round were very frustrating. A couple of really poor 3-putts that kind of derailed me. I guess my frustration, if I have any, which I do, is the mere fact that I think the golf course is absolutely spectacular.

And I don't know if it necessarily favours anybody right now. Style, cut, draw. I just think it favours the individual that hits it the most in the middle of the face, and obviously has great speed on their putts, because it's really difficult to get the ball close.

8-under is a joke. But 3 to 5-under is out there. That's really good golf. Those are my frustrations.

I think the positive is that I ended I think I birdied my last three out of six, out of five, I don't recall, but they were all short, opportunities, and on the ones I didn't birdie coming in, I hit solid shots and played it really smart.

So my frustration is what it is. I'm going to go with the momentum and the positives. I birdied my last two holes. It felt like an eagle on 17. Frankly, I don't think I've ever birdied that hole. You don't birdie that hole. Holy cow, I'll take a birdie-birdie finish and be happy.

Q. What's it like to have your first competitive round again at this venue for an Open Championship since your win, do you know?

ZACH JOHNSON: It's amazing. I don't know if the first competitive day is that special. Just being back here on Monday for the first time in seven years, is special. I hadn't been back.

Really grateful and appreciative of the R&A and how they welcomed me back. Certainly love the Champions -- whatever that's called, the Champions thing Monday afternoon. Competition. And I thoroughly enjoyed Tuesday night with the former champions, legends of the game, and current studs of the game. So it's the home of golf for a reason.

Q. As you look at tomorrow, is it just a matter of overcoming those frustrations?

ZACH JOHNSON: Yes, some of the frustrations were with speed, with my putter, but I think everybody's -- that's everything. Very rarely are you pitching it or chipping it. I didn't score -- I mean, making a bogey on the fifth hole, the par-5, was just awful. I mean, that hole is going to play at four and a half today, probably. That's a shot and a half right there.

So made a couple of errant shots that kind of got away from me. But then I hit some solid shots and made bogeys, too. You've got to take the good with the bad.

To get in with even par, considering I was 3-over at one point, I can't be too upset. My frustrations were minimalised, or leveled out, I guess you would say, with the last, whatever, five, six, seven holes.

Q. I know you have a lot of time before your next round. How do you feel about getting back out there and making a move?

ZACH JOHNSON: Motivation to play, one, on this golf course, and, two, in this championship, is not hard to find. I mean, it's why it's my favourite style of golf. Has been since I first stepped foot on it and will continue to be.

If we played this style of golf every single week, I'd certainly love it. I would. But it would get a little mundane. I'm just grateful how the game was invented, because this is, it's the home of golf, one. And two, you get a new understanding, and I would say, appreciation for how the game was invented and meant to be played. Whatever Mother Nature decides to do, golf course will accept it and you have to accept it too.

Q. Speaking of favourites, you played well at Muirfield when you played there nine years ago, top six --



ZACH JOHNSON: Top ten.

Q. The women going there is big deal because they had just opened it up to women a couple years ago and now they're playing a major there. How cool is it for the women to have an opportunity, the LPGA and LET players?

ZACH JOHNSON: Muirfield is a gem. It's one of my favourite golf courses I've ever stepped foot on. To host any championship there and be a participant is fantastic. I wish them well.

Q. Is there any advice, I know it's been a while since you played it, but any little nuances about the course?

ZACH JOHNSON: I don't know what condition it's in. The year we played it, that's the only venue where the greens were faster than the fairways, that I've played. It had teeth, sharp ones, too.

You've got to hit fairways. It's narrow. I think the beauty of it is you have to have every piece of your game on. You have to be able to draw it into the wind, draw it with the wind, cut it into the wind and cut it with the wind. I don't know the condition, but if it's anything like we played in 2013, solid shots are rewarded. Man, it's hard.

If it's anything like this right now, I mean, every shot you're wondering is it a 9-iron or is it a 6-iron, or somewhere in between, because if you draw it or if you cut it into the wind, it could be 50-yard difference.

I don't know what the conditions are. But they're going to thoroughly enjoy it because it's awesome.

Q. What you're saying, one thing you can is you think they're completely capable of hitting those shots and the level of women's golf is very --

ZACH JOHNSON: Capable of hitting those shots? Oh, my gosh. You said that. I'm not saying that. I'm not asking that question.

They're really, really good. I've played with a lot of them. And, sure, I mean, heck, I can relate. They may not hit as far as some of the guys out here, obviously. But their skill level is easily as good. I would argue that some of their rhythm is better than -- certainly better than mine.

Q. Any rhythms in mind you're thinking of, certain swings from the ladies, the LPGA players?

ZACH JOHNSON: I wouldn't know where to start and end on that one.

Q. Anything you admire especially about women's golf that you think men should replicate or try to imitate?

ZACH JOHNSON: Tempo and rhythm. I would say turn, too. It seems like most of those gals don't struggle with getting behind the golf ball like I do. I'm 46, and my back hurts. So maybe that's my own fault.

Their rhythm, the way they get the club set at the top of their swing, is something that I thoroughly admire.

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