

# The 151st Open

Mixed Zone

Sunday, 23 July 2023

**Zach Johnson**



ZACH JOHNSON: Yeah, if you're going to look at a ledger, which is probably not a great way to look at it, but it's one lens to look through, there's definitely more assets than liabilities, way more positives than negatives.

17th hole got me. What did I shoot, 5-over for the week? And I played that hole 5-over. It's not a bad hole; it's just I played it poorly.

I thought given the conditions, given where the state of my game is, there's definitely way more positives than negatives.

**Q. Did it give you a lot of distraction from the job ahead or are you still thinking 24/7 about Rome?**

ZACH JOHNSON: Oh, I can compartmentalise. I'm competing. I'm obviously wearing two hats. Now I can exchange hats back and forth. But when I'm out there, it's all work.

**Q. How do you feel it's shaping up?**

ZACH JOHNSON: My game?

**Q. For the players for Rome.**

ZACH JOHNSON: I mean, I think I've got a selection of riches. Again, more positives than anything. The state of American golf is great. Some of the guys that are kind of on the fringe of starting to play really well, which is awesome.

I would prefer that my decision is really difficult. That means the guys are in a good state and in good form, which is really ultimately what's important.

**Q. We don't know exactly what's going to happen this afternoon, but could you talk about Brian?**

ZACH JOHNSON: Sure. Can you ask me some questions about Brian?

**Q. What are his strengths? Would he be a good team guy?**

ZACH JOHNSON: Well, he's a really good friend of mine. We live on the same rock, island, if you will, St. Simons Island. I've known him for years. Great family, great wife, great kids. The Harmans are dear friends of mine.

What is transpiring this week, I would even say last week and the last couple tournaments he's played in does not surprise me in the least.

He is a very formidable competitor, number one.

Number two, hey, what does Brian Harman do really well? Well, he does everything quite well. He's a very good driver of the golf ball and a very, very, very good putter.

Then if everything else is good, then it can be pretty lethal. Our games are very similar except for the fact that he stands on the wrong side of the golf ball.

He hits it a little further. He's gritty. He's got a great ensemble of coaches and a team.

What I've seen -- it's three days, but what I've seen so far in three days has not surprised me in the least.

**Q. He said to us in the media centre on Friday that he's constantly tried to get into these teams, and every time he always feels like he's -- do you feel he has an added incentive because your relationship --**

ZACH JOHNSON: I can't answer that. I'm not going to speak on behalf of him.

**Q. Do you feel him really pushing --**

ZACH JOHNSON: Well, again, that would be speaking out of place there.

I can say this: Over the years I've had discussions with him, and my advice to him, because I've been in that position, fortunately on both sides of it, I've made some teams that I thought I might miss, and I missed some teams that I thought I had a chance.

What you have to do, and this is very cliché, but you have to be simple minded and you have to be right where your feet are.



You cannot -- excuse me, I cannot. I firmly believe the more you stay right where you're supposed to be and try to improve each and every day, the other things, those other opportunities or other outcomes take care of themselves.

I've voiced that to him over the years because he's been close that I can think of off the top of my head two or three times where a couple more decent rounds here or finishes there, he's probably in the realm of discussion, if not even further than that.

He's still young enough and competitive enough that I think there's still room for improvement in his game, which is pretty scary, because I think he's really, really good.

You know, let's see what transpires today, but there's so much golf. Whether this is a great day for him or an average day or a poor day, his best golf is still in front of him in my mind.

**Q. You've done a great job by balancing competing and Ryder Cup, but the Ryder Cup duties start to increase. How much time do you think you're going to have to dedicate, and what comes next for you with Ryder Cup?**

ZACH JOHNSON: Yeah, I've got a lot of things on my plate when it comes to the Cup. Most of it is discussion and just communicating with the powers that be, whether it's my vice captains or the PGA of America.

What's next? I'm trying to think, what is next? Honestly, what's fresh in my mind is I've got my foundation event next week, which is a big deal and a big massive responsibility.

And then the next week I'm going to play Wyndham, so I'm going to compete.

And then I think I've probably got to win to get into Memphis, but that's going to be my goal. I don't know if I have to go to Memphis. I might make an appearance just to show face, but I don't think I have to. I'm definitely going to Chicago, BMW Chicago. I have to go there and I want to go there and I should be there.

Between now and, say, Chicago, it's going to be discussions. It's going to be probably solidifying my leadership team, and then starting to piece some things together.

But our point system is just so volatile because of the inflated -- our points system is based on money, and when you inflate the money, volatility ensues.

I can't sit here and say that, oh, this is going to happen, that's going to happen. I have no idea. Because you just never know what might happen based on how guys finish.

Finish the top 10 in one of those elevated events is just substantial.

**Q. You've taken initiatives that no other captains have taken before in the practice round in Rome --**

ZACH JOHNSON: It's happened before. Overseas it hasn't happened -- well, it takes different shape. 2018 it was the week after the TOUR Championship, so there's no way to do it with 12 guys.

**Q. They were playing the French Open, some of them.**

ZACH JOHNSON: But Jimmy, who was the captain, Jimmy had a Ryder Cup ensemble -- he invited, say, the top 20, top 30 guys on the points list to go to Paris either after or before The Open.

So that was the only way you could do it from a logistics standpoint.

We didn't do it in 2010. Again, it was the week after the TOUR Championship if I'm not mistaken.

2014 we didn't do it.

2006 we did. I was on that team. I was on that team, and we went either -- we went around the PGA Championship because the team was solidified.

This is what we did. We played the PGA Championship in Chicago in August. The next week was Akron, a World Golf Championship. The top 12 was solidified after the PGA Championship. We went and played Akron, we flew out of Akron to Ireland, the whole team, 12 guys, played, came back, and then went back again.

It's very hard. In the States we make it a priority because obviously it's significantly easier.

I'm very, very, very happy that the PGA of America has allowed us -- has given me the freedom and the resources to take the guys.

**Q. Will you take more than 12 guys then?**

ZACH JOHNSON: No, because we're going after the team is put together, so there's no reason to.

**Q. I think it's a big deal.**

ZACH JOHNSON: I think it's a huge deal. I'm a practical -- I think I'm practical. I think I have some common sense.

You don't know what's going to happen Monday through



Thursday of the Ryder Cup week, weather, illness. You have no idea what's going to happen. So the more we can get their feet on the grounds, the better.

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