

Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions

Thursday, January 19, 2023

Orlando, Florida, USA

Lake Nona Golf & Country Club

John Smoltz

Quick Quotes

Q. Great playing out there.

JOHN SMOLTZ: It was a battle.

Q. Can you describe your round a little bit?

JOHN SMOLTZ: If I was a punching bag, I would have beat myself up. I was struggling. I'm physically struggling, so the front nine was good, and then I tried to hang on the back nine. Really disappointed in some of my shots coming down the stretch. I've got to hot tub and stretch and try to get my body in shape because it's no good.

Q. You're up there at the top of the leaderboard; how do you feel going into tomorrow?

JOHN SMOLTZ: Well, this format unfortunately doesn't allow you to get too far behind because if you do, you're never going to -- I'm already six behind Annika, and this is her course. I missed an opportunity with the start I had to kind of post a good number. Tomorrow I'll have to post a good number if I have any chance because our scoring system doesn't allow you to catch up. If you've got a lead, you make pars, you're going to win.

Q. Do you get a sense that Annika is looking to finish a little better than last year?

JOHN SMOLTZ: Yeah, anytime Annika is in a tournament, you're looking at the leaderboard just seeing where she's at. She just doesn't miss shots, and she loves this course, obviously, because she lives here.

I was watching it, and I was right there with her, and then I went double bogey, bogey, bogey, bogey, and that was it, which on 18 from 125 yards, it's the way that golf is.

Q. What is it about the mentality of pitchers? It seems like of the athletes you see, you see Mulder is up there and Derek Lowe winning --



JOHN SMOLTZ: Yeah, I just think we have more opportunity to play. It is a hand-eye coordination sport, and baseball has some similarities. But it's more the opportunity we get to play than the other guys because there's some hitters, like Josh Donaldson, I think he's got a ball speed of 202. When he gets it all lined up, he's 70 yards in front of me.

Q. For you, what makes this course so difficult? I know people say it's one of the hardest courses notice Orlando area, but it's also one of the nicest and best. For you, what makes it challenging?

JOHN SMOLTZ: The greens and the pin placements. They were pretty nasty. They were nasty today. It almost felt like Sunday pins. That's the difference. If you don't hit it in the right spot, you're going to have a hard time making par.

Q. Compared to last year with the weather, it's not as cold and rainy --

JOHN SMOLTZ: It's great. The weather, this is what it's all about down in Florida.

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