

# Senior PGA Championship

The Concession Golf Club

Bradenton, Florida, USA

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## Zach Johnson

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Zach Johnson is with us now at the 2026 Senior PGA Championship. Zach, welcome to The Concession. How has your week been so far, and how are you feeling going into your first Senior PGA?

ZACH JOHNSON: Yeah, it's good to be here. I feel good. I mean, my game feels fine. Always trying to get better, little things here and there. You play Augusta. That obviously magnifies things pretty quick, which I love. Whether you play good or bad, it still magnifies things.

Yeah, excited to be here. I mean, I've never played Concession. I played it yesterday for the first time in the pro-am. It's going to require every piece to be on. Certainly the greens -- well, your approach shots and your short game is really what's going to separate you, from my vantage. And then wind, depending on the elements of the wind. What direction it's coming from can play a massive factor given pin placements, given the severity of the greens.

It's going to require a lot of patience and some really good, steady, consistent golf, which I can appreciate. So excited to be here.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take some questions.

#### **Q. Zach, with your background being the Ryder Cup Captain, how much does the PGA Senior Championship mean to you?**

ZACH JOHNSON: A great deal. Any time you have this organization, this entity behind a championship, nothing but the utmost of respect and admiration for really the root and foundation of what the organization is about.

In my opinion, in my mind I guess you could debate otherwise. I think it's pretty clear that the growth, the cultivating, and the fostering of the game starts with the PGA of America and the many, many members that make up its organization. Certainly in the United States.

I'm a product of that. I can think of two individuals off the

top of my head that, you know, are the ones that I would attribute to that fostering of the love of the game for me. They're both were and are PGA of America members.

#### **Q. Who were they?**

ZACH JOHNSON: Mike Bender, my swing coach, and then the gentleman that started me in the game Larry Gladson, who was at the club that my folks joined at a young age Elmcrest Country Club. He actually retired there. Still helps my foundation out.

#### **Q. Is there anything that you can take from Augusta that will actually help you in this week's championship?**

ZACH JOHNSON: Yeah, I mean, I think that goes week to week. Regardless of what was behind you and what's in front of you, you can certainly pick it apart. However, the Masters, Augusta National in particular just identifies pretty quick. Like I said earlier, it magnifies exactly what's good and what needs attention, not that we don't know it going into it. And it may not just be, Oh, man, I got to hit my irons better, I got to putt better. It may be my preparation. It may be the mental side. It may be the physical side. Any of those many aspects of the game that can be refined.

I didn't have my best. I didn't drive it great. I hit a lot of fairways, but I didn't drive it great. That sounds really weird. I have to hit fairways there given the length.

Then after that, I mean, it was really for me to miss the cut, which was absolutely no excuse, it was really I would argue two shots but you could say three or four shots that were just idiotic in nature. That part is really frustrating, you know, but that's Augusta.

Like I said, somehow I birdied 11, which means I have the honor on 12. You birdie 11, you're probably going to have the honor on 12. It was one of these. Just poor execution. Maybe a little bit of impatience at times, which I prided myself on. That was poor.

Part of it's technical and physical, and part of it's mental.



As an athlete and as a competitor, especially a veteran, it kills me to say that, but at the same time, that's part of my job. That's what I've signed up for, and I'm full embrace. I can make that better.

So I have another opportunity this week. Golfers are really good at turning the page, whether it's shot to shot, hole to hole, week to week.

**Q. As you were preparing to come out on the PGA TOUR Champions, what did your peers who had gotten here before you tell you about it, and how is what they said compared to what has actually transpired?**

ZACH JOHNSON: Yeah, obviously you don't know until you immerse yourself in it. At the same time, some of my best friends are out here, so I was proactive enough to at least ask questions and got some nice nuggets of wisdom, I'd say.

I mean if, first and foremost, the one that stands out is kind of two-fold. It's really fun, and it is. I mean, whether you are talking about the camaraderie or just maybe it's a little more laid back than the PGA TOUR off the golf course. That's one element, but then the biggest one is once you get to the first tee, I mean, it's competition, and everybody is still really good. Those are the two common sentiments.

You know, for me, I don't want to say it's been trying, but what's been different, because it is different -- I'm a creature of habit; most of us are -- has been just the rhythm of the week, the cadence of the week. It's totally different than a PGA TOUR.

More times than not, this is an exception, you start on Friday. You have multiple pro-ams. Sometimes you are playing two. Sometimes you are playing one. Sometimes you're playing on Wednesday. Sometimes you're playing on Thursday. New golf courses. All of that is different. I mean, there's a few venues that I've seen before, but for the most part, it's foreign territory.

My prep and understanding that rhythm of the week, the travel in and out, the tee times. I mean, for the most part it's, like, 9:30 to noon, which is amazing. It screws your lunch up, but it's amazing. All of that, like it's just different. I'm starting to get used to that. You know, I'm only three in.

So, yeah, I mean, it's nothing negative in that regard. It's just different. I've welcomed it, and I know a lot of -- shoot, I think this week I'm like the sixth or seventh youngest, you know what I mean? First week I was the third youngest. So there's more guys coming, and that will continue to happen. I think all of us are still kind of getting our feet wet.

**Q. Competing full-time on the PGA TOUR Champions, have you set goals for yourself, and are you a goal-setter, and what does it look like for you this year?**

ZACH JOHNSON: Right. I'm not a bulletin board goal-setter. I'm more objective-based. I like kind of plotting my day-to-day. I like staying with my feet are. I like trying to improve every day.

The moment I get complacent or stagnant in what I'm doing is the moment I feel like I take a couple of steps back. So it is a game of maintenance, don't get me wrong. Especially if you're a plumber and you need three-inch PVC pipes, but -- sorry, had to lay it in there, buddy.

**Q. Oh, my God.**

ZACH JOHNSON: But the moment I get into the maintenance side of things, you lose track of really what's important, and that's improvement.

Yeah, I just think I can appreciate and respect gentlemen, women writing their goals down and trying to -- but I've always just more get better today, and these are the aspects, these are the elements, these are the pieces of the pie that I'm going to address.

They've changed. The physio side, the fitness side, the orthopedic, chiropractic, PT side of it is way more important now than what it was probably when I was 22. If I could tell myself one thing back then, that would probably be it, even though I gave it its attention. Golf fitness is an industry now. That element requires the bulk of my attention now. I wish it was the practice from a time standpoint, but it's not. You throw in sleep.

I'm doing stuff in the morning, and I'm doing stuff before I go to bed. You know, I'm 50. So knock on wood, I haven't had to see -- I haven't been horizontal on an orthopedic table yet, but I'm winning in that regard.

**Q. You obviously had a lot of success coming out here as a newcomer. There's a couple of newcomers this week from the LIV Tour. Not talking about the LIV aspect, but as their playing ability with Henrik and Patrick Reed, just talk about what you feel about their game and how successful you think they're going to be out here?**

ZACH JOHNSON: Sorry. Patrick Reed?

**Q. Henrik Stenson and Pat Perez.**

ZACH JOHNSON: Oh, Pat Perez. Yes, that's more relevant. I mean, you're talking about two good friends, first and foremost. I competed against them essentially my entire career. Obviously they're my age. Two young bucks, but they're my age.

I saw Pat on the range yesterday. I mean, literally we played together in the '90s. I consider him a good friend. I'm sure he would say the same. If you get to know Pat, there's not an individual that doesn't want to be around Pat. He's, for lack of a better term, a breath of fresh air. He's pretty real, but he's witty, sarcastic. He's much more intelligent than probably people give him credit.

From a playing standpoint, I get it. I understand he wants to keep competing, and he's kept his body in good shape. He has every right to do so. I mean, I don't know how many times he won on the PGA TOUR, but he's earned it. Same with Henrik.

I'm not privy to those discussions. I don't understand what goes on. I have been off the committees and boards for quite some time. While I enjoyed that honor, I don't need to do it anymore, so I don't need to know what's going on in the back in those discussions.

However, I respect my peers and certainly the executives of the tour, the independent directors that make those decisions. They're hard. You know, things change. Times evolve. Sound like golf is doing the same thing.

**Q. I'm just kind of more, do you think Henrik can come out and contend right away?**

ZACH JOHNSON: Oh, I have no idea. You're talking about a world champion. The man is a major champion winner, won tournaments all over the world. Yeah, but I have no idea what he's been doing in the last so many odd months, years. I haven't had the opportunity to ask him.

I mean, he's in great shape. He's always been in good shape. He's actually a lot bigger than people think. He's strong.

Part of it is just at 50 is having the capacities and capabilities to navigate week after week, this week even four rounds. It wouldn't surprise me if either one of those guys won, if that's what you're getting at.

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