

John Deere Classic

Wednesday, July 5, 2023

TPC Deere Run

Silvis, Illinois, USA

J.T. Poston

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: I'd like to welcome the defending champion of the John Deere Classic, J.T. Poston. J.T., thanks for joining us for a few minutes. Obviously always nice to come back to a place where you've had such great history, and you certainly did that last year opening with your 62, 9-under in the first round. If I could take you back to that and get some thoughts on how special of a round that was and also what turned into obviously a very special week.

J.T. POSTON: Yeah, it was obviously a great round, great way to get the tournament started.

But, yeah, I was coming off a really good week at the Travelers and being in contention there. Just to kind of keep that momentum going and get off to such a good start was perfect. I was really confident in where my game was and was able to keep it going.

THE MODERATOR: How fun was it to come back here this week and obviously see your name and face and all that kind of decorated all throughout?

J.T. POSTON: It's pretty cool. This was my second win on tour. My first win, the Wyndham, was in '19. So when I was defending there, it was 2020 and COVID and missed out on a lot of that stuff or did a lot of it through Zoom.

So definitely was looking forward to getting back here and trying to do it again.

THE MODERATOR: With that, one more question from me, and we'll open it up to questions. Just a few minutes on how you're feeling coming into the week. I know you've had three top-10 finishes so far this season. Just assess the state of your game as you're heading into the week.

J.T. POSTON: I would say kind of mixed emotions. I would say I feel confident in my game. I feel like I can obviously play well here. I have a lot of good memories here.

I would say as far as form coming in, I feel like I've been



hitting a lot of good shots. Kind of just not getting much out of it.

I feel like it's close. Honestly, a lot kind of how it felt this time of year last year where I feel like I was playing good, but the results weren't really coming yet and hopefully can turn it around this week.

THE MODERATOR: With that, we'll take a few questions.

Q. Is the frat house open this week?

J.T. POSTON: Yes, we have the same house. We have six of us in there this week. Myself, Chris Kirk, Patton Kizzire, Greyson Sigg, Sepp Straka, and Denny McCarthy.

A lot of us were in the house last year, and so we jumped on it and got the same one again. A lot of cards and having fun back at the house after the rounds.

Q. Back to how you're playing right now and how you came in last year, what is it about golf that makes it so hard to just keep that consistency going? You had a nice run earlier in this year and highlighted by the ninth at the match-play, but this game doesn't stay that way. Why?

J.T. POSTON: I wish I knew the answer to that. I'm trying to figure it out right now.

I think the answer is, it's golf. I think everybody goes through are kind of the highs and lows no matter what level you play in. I think you see guys get on runs that last what seems like a couple of years, and then all of a sudden it gets hard again.

For me it feels like it's been getting on nice little runs a few weeks at a time. Then it feels hard again.

I'm just really trying to figure out how to be a little more consistent, like you said. I have not figured out the answer to that yet, but I'm going to keep trying and keep working at it and see what happens.

Q. Do you have a sports psychologist?

J.T. POSTON: I do not at the moment. It's definitely something -- it's a conversation that I've had. I know some



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guys out here have had a lot of success working with different people.

I definitely think that it can be beneficial, but for me personally it's not something I've started doing yet, but it's on my radar.

Q. I think you're 85th in the FedEx Cup. Now that we're getting to the final stretch of the season here, have you started to think about that grind to get inside the top 70 and stay inside the top 125? What's it like? This is kind of desperation time for a lot of players that are on the bubble for the playoff events. Does that add any extra desperation for these weeks coming up, and when do you start thinking about that?

J.T. POSTON: Yeah, it's definitely part of the thought process. I actually just added a tournament to my schedule, the 3M Championship, 3M Open.

Love the golf course. I was planning on having a week off before Wyndham and playoffs, but right now I have to make sure I'm in the playoffs.

Yeah, it's a little different with it being 70 this year. Usually being 85th and the playoffs being 125, you obviously want to make a nice push, but there wouldn't be as much stress on whether or not I was going to make the playoffs.

So it is a little different kind of end of the year push. I don't know if desperation is the right word. I think for me I'm fortunate enough with the win last year I know I'm -- if I don't get it done, I can still work hard in the fall and get some momentum going into next year no matter what.

Q. Just following up on you adding the 3M, did you change your schedule at all or how you approached it knowing the playoffs were going to be shortened for who would get in this year, and how did that go for planning out your season so far this year?

J.T. POSTON: I didn't. That's the only change that I've made as far as schedule goes based on playoffs, and that was -- the plan was always I kind of had -- I was able to set my schedule pretty much all year and stuck to that pretty well.

Now it's just kind of one of the -- it's just kind of that time. Like you said, it's crunch time. Trying to make a final push and not just get into the top 70, but get into the top 50 and give myself a chance to get back to Atlanta.

Q. Does getting into the top 50 have a little added importance in terms of qualifying for the elevated events next year? Are guys really thinking about that

now?

J.T. POSTON: I think guys are. I was having a conversation with another player yesterday, and we were talking about schedule and who is playing what.

He said he was kind of right in that bubble where he feels like he could have a good week and sort of lock up the playoffs, but then if he has that good week, he really wants to lock up top 50 in Atlanta.

It's just that time of year where guys are trying to push and push and push because there aren't as many tournaments left. Every playoff event that you make it through and on to the next is going to be a huge bonus, whether it's going from Memphis to BMW or BMW to Atlanta.

I don't think guys are really pushing too much, but it's definitely -- I mean, it's part of the thought process for sure.

Q. Going back to the house, is that common? Do you guys do that a lot?

J.T. POSTON: Yeah, a handful of us will stay together all the time in AirBNBs. Rarely do we get one that's big enough for all of us to hop in and where all of us are playing the same week, so this is kind of unique in that sense where it's a lot of fun.

We do that a lot. I mean, the hotels can get old pretty fast, so try to mix it up with some AirBNBs and house rentals.

Q. Are you keeping track? Is there a series in terms of the gin games and what not?

J.T. POSTON: Yeah, there's a scorecard.

Q. Is there a FedEx Cup for the gin?

J.T. POSTON: I wouldn't say FedEx Cup, but there's some cash being pushed around. We have some fun with it. It's more bragging rights with that crowd because we play and hang out all the time, so it's more just trying to beat your buddy than it is seeing how much money you can win.

Q. Who is number one in the OWGR, the official world gin rankings?

J.T. POSTON: We're one night in, so I think it's too early to tell, but Patton Kizzire has the early lead.

Q. Are you trying to keep everything pretty similar to what you did last year to kind of recapture that feeling? Are you superstitious that way at all?

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J.T. POSTON: Not really. Not as much of a superstition, but just doing it because it's fun. We had a great time last year, and a lot of us played well.

We're just doing that again. We would do it at any tournament if given the opportunity. Not as much of a superstition, but definitely something that we are going to probably try and do every year.

Q. Talk about this tournament in particular. How tough is it? It's tough to win on tour. How tough is it to win here, especially with all the youngsters that are out here with playing with nothing to lose? Also, talk about those youngsters and what this tournament can mean for them in terms of their careers.

J.T. POSTON: Yeah, your first question, it's just hard to win anywhere, but I think here any time you have a place where there's going to be some low scores, if you are the guy with the lead, it can be kind of a tricky spot.

I remember that last year. That was kind of the first time for me or one of the few times for me playing with a lead and trying to get it done and close it out. It's walking that fine line of still staying aggressive and trying to extend your lead and also trying not to give any back because you know guys are going to be making birdies.

As far as the young guys go, I think it's an awesome opportunity. This time of year some of the guys are coming out of college and getting exemptions, and this is a tournament that does a great job of giving those guys chances to prove themselves. They're obviously doing a good job of that.

I think these guys coming out of college are so good, and they're ready to win right away. I don't think that's always been the case, but it's pretty cool.

And for them, like you said, they don't really have anything to lose, but they have a lot to gain. So it's a great position to be in.

Q. Does it kind of give you a jolt too, looking back over your shoulder a little bit knowing those guys are back there?

J.T. POSTON: Not me personally. I mean, I tend to stay in my own lane and just focus on my golf game. I know that's cliché to say, but the reality is I can't control what they're going to do. I can only control what I'm going to do.

If I start focusing on what other guys are doing, then I'm going to not spend as much time worrying about me. I just try and play as good of golf as I can.

That old saying "good golf takes care of everything" still stands pretty true, so I just try and focus on that.

Q. You talked about the push for the top 75. So how much does the familiarity factor with this course and what you did last year help with that?

J.T. POSTON: Yeah, it helps a lot. Obviously good memories and good finish here. Winning obviously and getting in contention. Definitely feel like I can do that again and give myself a chance.

Obviously the goal is to win every week, and I do feel like getting back to a place where you know you've done it before and you know you can play well definitely helps kind of give you that extra bit of confidence to get in contention and, like you said, make a push towards the playoffs.

Q. (Off microphone)

J.T. POSTON: I haven't really seen much. As of right now I've only seen the back nine. Playing the front nine in the pro-am today. Didn't really see any -- the course is in awesome shape.

I would say just as good if not better than last year, but as far as changes to the layout or anything like that, I really haven't noticed anything yet.

Q. With this tournament obviously you've talked in the past about having to go low out here. Is that in your head right from the get-go, and what is it going to take to win this year?

J.T. POSTON: Yeah, I'm not sure I understand what your question is.

Q. Usually it's 20-under or better to win here. Does that change your approach at all? Is that in your mind when you step up to that first tee on Thursday morning?

J.T. POSTON: I wouldn't say changes approach, but you know that the scores are going to be low. So I think your game plan going is probably being pretty aggressive.

I think the golf course itself just yields a lot of scoring clubs and birdie opportunities. I think it's one of those scenarios where I think you can get ahead of yourself and kind of look at the leaderboard early in the week and start thinking, man, I'm way behind, but I think I've learned over the years that it's a four-day tournament.

If you get behind early on a Thursday, that's okay because

you can catch up by Sunday. You never know when you're going to reel off some really low rounds and can catch up.

As far as a number or a score, I don't really know. These guys are really good. Somebody could go shoot 25-, 30-under par. I wouldn't really be surprised. Or it might play a little tougher and be 15. It's pretty hard to know.

Q. J.T., you spoke in media day and spoke after the victory about this being a special place. Beyond being defending champion and the prize money up for grabs, what is it that differentiates TPC Deere Run and the John Deere Classic in your mind from other events that you compete in throughout the year?

J.T. POSTON: I just love the community and the atmosphere here. It feels a lot like home from where I'm from in North Carolina. Kind of a smaller town feel.

Yeah, I have just always enjoyed being here. The crowds and the volunteers and staff and just everybody that is associated with the tournament has been so nice and supportive of me. I don't really have a connection here up until last year.

I've just always loved being here and enjoyed coming back, and I have played it I think just about every year in my career so far and plan to do the same.

Q. You think the cold winters up here have the fops embracing summertime golf even more when you think about how special it is for you players, how welcome you feel here?

J.T. POSTON: Yeah, I think it definitely could play a part. I guess people love their golf in this area, and they get a chance to come every year and show some support to this golf tournament and see some of their favorite players play.

This golf course tends to provide a good finish, some low scores, some exciting scores. So I think it can be very fun to watch and entertaining. So I think that definitely draws them over here.

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