

THE PLAYERS Championship

Tuesday, March 9, 2021

Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, USA

TPC Sawgrass

Dustin Johnson

Press Conference

RACHEL NOBLE: We would like to welcome Dustin Johnson to the interview room here at THE PLAYERS Championship. You're making your 12th start at the event and coming into the week with four top 10s this season and ranked No. 1 in the world. Just some opening comments on your week ahead here at THE PLAYERS Championship.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I'm looking forward to it. I think I've played pretty well here the last couple events, and obviously this year the golf course is in fantastic condition and I feel like the game's in pretty good form coming in, just I put in some good work the last couple days and feeling pretty good.

RACHEL NOBLE: With that we'll open it up for questions.

Q. How much more comfortable are you playing this golf course now? How much more comfortable are you with the golf course, seeing as you've broken par seven of your last eight rounds here? Are you more comfortable playing now?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I like the -- obviously I like playing this time of year better, I think. The golf course plays a little better. Obviously the rough's a little thicker, it plays longer, but the greens are a little more receptive, you can actually -- you can hit some shots. So I think the course plays better overseeded and playing this time of year and I definitely like it better. Yeah, I definitely, I feel like I play it a little better too.

Q. Different course across the street, you had three good years in college at the Sawgrass Country Club at this time of year and I'm just wondering, is there something, do you feel comfortable with the wind that comes in this area this time of year?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, it's all about how the golf course plays. Obviously playing in May, the course is in great condition, but it plays really fast, it plays really short. So I think this time of year it plays a lot longer, it's a little more receptive, doesn't play near as fast -- even though



the greens are probably just as fast, especially this year. The golf course is in immaculate condition. So they have done a fantastic job with that. But, yeah, I definitely like the conditions definitely play a little bit tougher, I think.

Q. Two questions for you. When you recovered from COVID, did any of your off-course habits change, whether it's restaurants, not at a tournament but just your whole lifestyle, but anything change after you had COVID?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I've never been known to skip on the dip.

Q. So you skipped?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: No -- repeat the question, please.

Q. I'm almost ready to go to question No. 2.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: No, just repeat it. No.

Q. Did any of your habits change after you recovered, whether you ever went out to restaurants, who you hung out with, whatever?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: No, not really. I don't feel like it's -- I don't feel like anything really changed. Well, especially not after you get it, because you can't really get it again for awhile, so you know if anything maybe habits loosened up a little bit. But obviously now with the times, don't really do too much, so, yeah, I would say nothing really changed.

Q. Secondly, what is it you look forward to about this tournament and why, assuming you do?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I definitely look forward to coming to THE PLAYERS. It's one of our biggest events. We always say it's kind of the fifth major, so it's got a great field, it's at a great venue. Like I said, I really like it playing this time of year with the course overseeded. The golf course plays really good this time of year and the conditions are -- I feel like the conditions are much better. It plays tougher but the conditions are better.

Q. I know you're an RBC guy and past champion. Your thoughts on the cancellation of the Canadian



Open for the second year.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, it's obviously that's a bummer. I always look forward to going up there and playing, and I've had a lot of success at the event, so, yeah, hopefully this will be the last time it's canceled. I know they're bummed about it too. RBC is such a great ambassador for golf and what they do for the game, so I know they're bummed but so am I. But I'll definitely be at the RBC Heritage, for sure.

Q. You're on the list of all-time winners, tied with Gary Player right now. If you win one more you'll be tied with Johnny Miller, Macdonald Smith and Tommy Armour. Do you have any kind of a goal in mind for victories, or are you just trying to win as many as possible?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yes, ma'am, I'm trying to win as many as I can.

Q. Does anything ever intimidate you or make you uneasy about the tee shot at 17? And secondly, does the long walk from 16 have any impact?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: No, I mean obviously 17's just a -- it's a good hole. It all depends kind of on the wind. I guess this year it will play into the wind so it plays a little more difficult when it's into the wind. But, yeah, it's always a challenging hole, just because you know if you mis-hit your shot, you're probably not going to -- you're probably going to have to re-tee. But, yeah, I would say wind would be the only factor that would, how difficult it plays.

Q. What was it like being back in South Carolina last week for your junior tournament and how has your home state kind of played a role in the golfer you are today and the person you are?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, for sure, it was great to get back up there. I was only there for a day. Obviously we got a busy schedule, but it was great to see the golf course, see all the juniors out there doing their practice rounds and getting to talk to some of them.

The golf tournament, it's come a long ways. It's become one of the best tournaments in the country, so definitely proud of that and for me it's just obviously growing up playing the South Carolina Junior Golf Association tournaments, it's something that I can do to try to give back to junior golf a little bit but, yeah, it ended up being a great event and I think we got a good champion.

Q. As far as growing up there, South Carolina being so important to you, how has that played a role in

where you are today?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, a big part of it. I mean I grew up playing golf there. I went to college in Myrtle Beach, which is in South Carolina, so it's definitely a big part of where I'm at today for sure.

Q. I know you're not one to harp on the past or a couple bad rounds, but last week at the Concession or two weeks ago, sorry, that was your worst finish, I think, since July. Can you just talk chalk it up to one of those bad weeks or was there something in your game that you were trying to get right before this week?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: No, it was just, didn't drive it my best and so I played pretty poorly. Pretty simple.

Q. How did you fix that?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: How? A little bit of practice. Ball position was getting a little too far back, which causes me to hit it kind of both ways and so fixed the ball position and drove it great today, so hopefully that will continue, because I went for a long time where I was really driving it really well and it kind of -- if I'm missing it left, generally something's off and so that's kind of what I was doing at Concession, and even at L.A. But obviously L.A. you can kind of get away with it a little bit.

But I think just from, obviously all the wind Saturday and Sunday, especially on the range, kind of get the ball a little too far back, a little too far on my left side and so just takes a little bit to work on that, but fixed it and feel pretty good over the driver now.

Q. Secondly, how many fans do you personally need to have out there to feel something different, whether it's nerves, pressure, excitement, whatever?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I mean, I think any amount of fans really definitely helps. Definitely just brings a lot better vibe to the golf tournament, and obviously this week we'll have a few fans out there, so it will be nice. Concession had a few. I didn't play last week, so I didn't get to see, but yeah, I'm looking forward to it. I like having the fans out. It makes the tournament a lot more fun.

Q. Going back to last week, Bryson kind of turned the 6th hole into a long drive competition. I'm wondering if the top-10 longest guys on TOUR, including yourself, if you guys had a long drive contest, do you have an opinion on who would win?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Not me. I mean, I can hit it far, but I



can't hit it that far. I want to hit it straight though. So that's my goal is to hit it in the fairway, not to hit it far.

Q. Everyone has memories of Augusta growing up. You in particular, I guess, from stuff you've seen on TV, I'm just curious if you have any memories of this tournament watching on TV that stand out to you before you started playing it?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I mean obviously one of the probably iconic shots was Davis Love out of the kind of left pine straw on 16. That's what I remember for sure. But, yeah, I think there's a few -- obviously, well Tiger's putt, but they play it like every five seconds so, you know.

Q. It's on right now.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I'm sure. Just wait a minute, it will be on again. But, yeah, so those are two, Freddie dropping it and holing out for par.

Q. In the water and holing out?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah.

Q. Okay. Keep going if you want.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: No, I'm good.

Q. Has your life changed dramatically since you won the Masters?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: No, but my closet has a Green Jacket, that's the only thing that's changed.

Q. That's all that matters.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yes, yes, you are correct.

Q. Have you been traveling around with the Green Jacket, speaking of it?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: It's traveled a couple times, but most of the time it just stays in the closet.

Q. Have you settled on your menu yet for the Champion's Dinner?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I have not. I'm actually going to work on that this week.

Q. What is working on it? How do you do that? What are you going to do?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Just write it down.

RACHEL NOBLE: That's it for questions, Dustin. Thanks so much for the time and good luck this week.

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