

RBC Heritage

Wednesday, April 14, 2021

Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, USA

Harbour Town Golf Links

Dustin Johnson

Press Conference

DOUG MILNE: We'd like to welcome world No. 1 and South Carolina native Dustin Johnson to the virtual pressroom here at the RBC Heritage.

Thanks for joining us for a few minutes. You're making your sixth start here at the RBC Heritage and fourth consecutive. Just some thoughts on being back to a place with your history of South Carolina, a place that's near and dear to you.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I love playing this event. I think it's a great golf course. It's always in good season, and it's a tough course, too, so you know you don't have to shoot real low, which I like.

I feel like the last few years I've played it pretty well. So yeah, somewhere I look forward to. Got a lot of support here from South Carolina, and yeah, it's just a fun event. It's kind of a great week after Augusta.

DOUG MILNE: You're coming off of four big events with mixed results, two World Golf Championships, PLAYERS Championship, and then obviously the Masters last week.

Assess the state of your game coming into the week if you would.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: The game is okay. Obviously last week I really struggled with the putting, so I'm putting in a lot of work this week on it.

I mean, probably the worst I've putted in a long time last week. But it's better, feels better, a lot more comfortable. Feel like I'm hitting putts on my line, and yeah, I put in some work, but that was kind of the big issue last week.

Other than that, yeah, I feel like the game is in pretty good form.

Q. Just curious, how did it feel to leave the green jacket at Augusta National?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I mean, I would have liked to have



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kept it, but yeah, I've got one, so it still felt good.

And obviously very happy for Hideki. He played great. I think it's great for golf. It's great for him.

Yeah, it was definitely neat to be a part of the ceremony, and I enjoyed being their champion for five months.

I don't care how long it was for, it's still cool. I'm always going to be a Masters champion.

Q. Did you actually play Sunday at Champions Retreat?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I did. I went out and played Sunday morning.

Q. How did that come about?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Well, I mean, I had to be in Augusta. I had to stay for the ceremony. I didn't do anything Saturday really. I went out -- I actually hit a few balls on Saturday afternoon at Augusta. I just was bored, so I went out and played.

Q. Could you expand a little bit more on what makes this a really good golf course this week?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, you just have to -- you use every club in your bag. You've got to hit all different types of shots. You've got to shape it around here. It's tree-lined. It's kind of style of golf course I grew up playing.

I really like it.

Yeah, you just really have to golf your ball. Small greens. You hit a lot of greens, you're going to play good.

Q. Kind of a random question here going back to the PGA Championship from last summer at TPC Harding Park. The 16th hole was a drivable par-4, but for an extremely long player it might have put you in a little bit of an awkward position. Where were you in terms of club selection? Could you hit driver or would it have gone sailing way over the green?

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DUSTIN JOHNSON: I think I did hit driver on Sunday, and I just pulled it left. But yeah, it was -- I couldn't get there with 3-wood, and driver was probably too much, so I was trying to kind of chip it and just pulled it.

But yeah, obviously I was trying to knock it on for sure.

Q. When you say "chip it," do you mean trying to -- maybe 80 percent?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: A little cut, yeah. Just a little chippy cut.

Q. Had you driven it the whole week? I can't remember.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I think it just depended on the flag locations. There were some flag locations that it was tough to kind of go for it, but yeah, I went a couple times, maybe half the time. I don't know, I can't remember, either.

Q. Just wondering, how strange is it to actually have to wait around on the weekend at Augusta when you have to present the green jacket, and would you ever consider asking Augusta National if you could just skip it and go home?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: No, I would not do that. Yeah, obviously I would have preferred playing on Saturday and Sunday, but yeah, just like I said, I just really struggled with the putter.

But yeah, no, I would never have asked. It's an honor to be a part of the ceremony, and so I was happy to stay and be a part of it.

Q. You mentioned the putting; have you worked out what it was that was the problem at Augusta?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I have.

Q. What was it?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Just setup. I was just -- yeah, my speed was really bad and my setup was a little funky, I think. I don't know. I got it fixed, so...

Q. How disappointing was it to leave -- you were there all weekend, but how disappointing was it to not put up a better defense of your title?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, it was disappointing. I felt like -- it played tough. Thursday was tough. But still, a couple three-putts on Thursday and then double the last hole, even though I kind of got it around pretty well.

And then the same thing on Friday; I played good enough to shoot a good score, I just -- you've got to hole putts if you want to play well, and I did not do that. I had four three-putts on Friday and missed the cut by a couple. Hit it in the water on 15, felt like I hit a really good shot there.

But yeah, you take those away and I'm right in the mix starting the weekend.

Q. Obviously driving distance is important at any course, but I would imagine at some courses it's less important just because of the way the course is designed. What courses on TOUR make driving distance less important, and is this one of them this week?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I mean, for sure. But for me, driving distance really isn't important anywhere. It's hitting the fairways. I want to play from the fairway.

I can hit it further than I do if I want to, but I don't have control, so I'm trying to hit fairways.

But yeah, this is a golf course where you can hit -- I hit quite a few drivers, but there's a lot of holes where you can't just because you run out of room or it's doglegs or whatever it might be.

Even still around here, you've just got to drive it straight no matter what club you're hitting.

Q. To follow up on some of the earlier questions, what time did you get to Augusta on Sunday, and what do you do while you're waiting? Do you just kind of hang out and watch TV, or how does that go?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I got there at 5:30 and sat in -- I got on my outfit that I was wearing for the ceremony, and yeah, just watched the end of the golf.

DOUG MILNE: Dustin, I think that's it. We appreciate your time and wish you the best of luck this week.

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