

RBC Heritage

Wednesday, April 11, 2018

Dustin Johnson

Press Conference



JOHN BUSH: We'd like to welcome Dustin Johnson into the interview room here at the RBC Heritage. He is making his first start at the event since 2009. Welcome back to Harbour Town. If we could get some comments about being here.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I'm definitely excited to be back. It's always good to play in your home state, being the 50th anniversary, it's going to be a great year, great event. Weather looks like it's going to be all right. I haven't been here in a long time so it's definitely nice to come back and play. I'm excited about the event.

JOHN BUSH: Comment a little bit about the state of your play coming into the week and your season up to it this point.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I think the season has gone pretty well. I've contended in most of the tournaments. Obviously got off to a great start there in Hawaii, winning one of the first events. And I've been up there around with a chance to win on Sunday pretty much every event I've played in this year. So that's always my goal is to just give myself a chance to win. I felt like I've done a great job with that, not a great job at winning, but the game is definitely in good form. I've got a lot of confidence in the game right now, and I'm really looking forward to this tournament.

JOHN BUSH: You mentioned the Sentry Tournament of Champions, that was your 11th consecutive season winning on Tour. Talk about the longevity and what that means for you.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: As we all know, it's very difficult to win out here. The talent level of the guys on Tour is very high, and it's hard to get it done. So to win consecutive years is something I'm really proud of. And I want to continue that streak as long as I can.

Q. At first glance people would look at you and this golf course and think it's not necessarily a good fit. You made 10 birdies today. How do you see this golf course fitting you and how do you modify off the tee what you do?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I mean obviously it's a different golf course than we play. It's just like any other golf course. There's a spot you're supposed to hit it to and you go from there. It doesn't matter where you play or what course it is, you've still got to hit good golf shots

no matter what you're hitting off the tee. I like this golf course. I like tight, tree-lined golf courses, it's what I grew up playing. It's not like it's anything new.

But I don't hit many drivers, I get to hit a few around here. No matter what club you're hitting, you need to hit it straight and place it in the correct side of the fairway and kind of go from there.

The greens are small and they're tough greens. They're fairly flat, but they're small, and you don't really want to miss them. So controlling your ball coming into the greens is very imperative, too.

Q. You obviously have been the No. 1 golfer for a while. A lot of fans probably expect he's going to win every time. You had a great Masters finish in the top-10. Do you look at it, as, yeah, I've been consistent and been in the top-10 in majors or do you look at last week as something that I expect a little bit better for myself?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Well, I definitely expect better. I felt like I played well enough to win last week. I just -- I didn't putt well. It wasn't -- it was pretty simple. I know exactly what I need to work on. And it was the putting. I struck the ball very well. I drove it good. I did everything really well, just didn't -- the thing that's most frustrating is it wasn't that I was hitting bad putts, I was actually hitting good putts, they just weren't going in. I think I was more frustrated about that. At least if I was hitting bad ones I know why they weren't going in, I pulled it or I pushed it. But I was hitting good ones and they weren't going in it felt like on every single hole. It gets frustrating. I kept grinding and trying my best, but they just weren't going in.

Q. South Carolina is a tiny state, yet there's so many good golfers out of this state, why is that?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Well, there's a lot of great golf courses in South Carolina. The South Carolina Junior Golf Association, one of the reasons, they do a pretty good job. I feel like there's a lot of good junior programs here in South Carolina. But does seem that there's a lot of good players that come out of South Carolina.

Q. You've got a chance to look at the course again today. Where did you hit driver and where do you plan on hitting driver this week?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: It kind of all depends on the wind, but --

Q. With no wind?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: There's maybe like once or twice on the front. And then I think I hit it on 3. Maybe on 7 today -- 6, right after the par 5; maybe there. And then on the back nine, 18, 15. But I'll probably hit it four, maybe five times in a round. Just kind of all just depends on how I'm feeling.

Q. If on the first tee Westley dared you to take the driver out, just beat him without one, would you take the dare?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Well, no (laughter.) I have a hard time beating guys with all my clubs, without taking one out.

Q. It being such a short course, would it benefit you more if it was wet all week? What is the most valuable thing your dog as chewed or destroyed, being a bull dog owner?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Everything (laughter).

No, the golf course firm, fast, wet, doesn't really matter. It's still going to play pretty much the same. If it firms up it's just a little bit less club off the tees. I feel like the course -- it's soft, but it's not too soft right now. I think it's in really good shape. Best shape -- well, I haven't been here in a while, but it seems like it's in very good shape right now and that's always good.

Q. What did you think about that antique equipment that you just got to try out? What would you think if you had to use it every week making a living?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I think I would be okay. I'd figure out how to play with it. I mean I've played -- I'm messed around with some of those a little bit. I don't mind it, actually. It's fun. It doesn't go quite as far as the stuff does now, but it's still fun to play with.

Q. You played here back-to-back earlier in your career. Why such a long drought before returning? And also because it's the lone South Carolina Tour spot, does this one hold any more meaning to you, if you pull off winning this week being a native of the state?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, it would definitely mean a lot to win here in my home state. One of the reasons I haven't been back in so long is it just always -- with scheduling, it's right after Augusta. And usually kind of -- I usually take a break right after the majors. But I'll wait until next week to take a vacation. But that's one reason I haven't been back here, pretty much the only reason. But now I'm an RBC ambassador, so I'll be back here for the next few years.

Q. Understanding that it's been nine years since you've been here in this tournament, but with your rolling up and coming down to play this event or that event, when you look back at your two times here, is there a part of you that says how could I not have made the weekend on either one of those occasions?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, definitely. But it's a long time ago. Definitely. I don't even remember. Or I try to forget, at least, because I didn't have a very good showing the last two times I was here.

But hopefully it will be a lot different this year.

JOHN BUSH: Dustin Johnson, thank you, sir.