

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
September 19, 2017



DUSTIN JOHNSON

LAURA VESCOVI: Good afternoon. We would like to welcome Dustin Johnson to the interview room at the TOUR Championship. Dustin, you're in an incredible position this week at No. 3. How are your preparations going and what are your thoughts going into this week?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I mean I'm in the position that I want to be in the top-5 coming into the TOUR Championship. Feeling good. I feel like the golf game's in good form. Had a good practice day today and the golf course is in really good condition and it's a golf course that I enjoy playing. Played it pretty good last year for 63 holes maybe; the last nine I didn't play so well on it. I'm right where I want to be. I feel like the game's in good form, so I'm looking forward to this week and contending.

Q. Did you feel any different pressure going into the tournament last year than you would at any other tournament?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: No, or at least I don't think so. It was a year ago, so I don't remember a whole lot about it. But no, I don't think I felt any different other than I had a chance to win so obviously I could feel that.

Q. The money didn't change anything?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: No. I mean obviously that's a lot of money but it's not going to change my life or anything. You know, it's more -- for me it's more about winning the TOUR Championship and becoming the FedExCup champion than it is about the money. Obviously that's just a very nice bonus.

Q. Two questions, Dustin. Why do you like playing this golf course?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Well, it's just a really good golf course. It's right in front of you, there's nothing really tricky about it. There's not a lot of trouble that's in play. It's just a really good course. You've got to do everything well, you can't really fake it around here. You've got to drive it well, you've got to hit your irons well. You've got to -- I mean your whole game's got to be in good form.

Q. And can you take us back to last year in player dining after you signed your scorecard, what was it like for you to watch that playoff?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, it was very interesting. I don't think I've ever rooted so hard for another player to win a tournament, that's for sure. I mean, it was interesting to watch but it

was fun. I had a good time doing it.

Q. Where were you?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I was in the locker room.

Q. In front of a TV?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, watching it on TV.

Q. Beer in front of you at all?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I can't remember. Maybe. I'm not sure. Probably, I would imagine. I was already done, so sure.

Q. Your results the last four or five times here have been a lot better than your first few times. Is there something you realized about how to play this golf course better?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: No, I just think I got better. The golf course is, I mean it's kind of right in front of you. There's nothing really to figure out about it. You've got to play good. Fairways are narrow and you've got to hit the fairways. It's very difficult to play out of the rough around here, but I mean yeah, it's a lot to do for me with driving. If I drive it well at this golf course I'm generally going to shoot a good score. Just the way this golf course plays. There's some long holes but there's some short holes, it's kind of a mixture of everything. It's definitely crucial to play out of the fairway.

Q. Dustin, the TOUR Championship wraps the 2016-17 PGA TOUR season. What will be the most memorable moment from this season for you?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: It was a pretty good year, but definitely getting to No. 1 in the world, winning at the Genesis earlier this year and then, well, winning three starts in a row definitely will be a big memory for me. That was kind of huge for me and for my career, then hopefully we can talk again about this on Sunday afternoon or Sunday night when we're -- after this tournament's over, we'll have to see.

Q. Marc Leishman's win last week, was that impressive or surprising or what?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Oh, I really don't know how to answer that. I mean it was a good win, he played well, but Marc's a good player. It's definitely not surprising. But yeah, it was a good win and played well four rounds in a row. It was an impressive win for sure but not surprising.

Q. Dustin, the 15th hole here, par 3 plays about 40 or 50 yards longer from one tee than the other. Can you just talk about the difference in that and the way you approach that, the way you prepare for that hole?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I mean they kind of play it the same every year, we use the back tee about three times and the up tee once. Yeah, when the tees are on the back -- actually, you would take three on that hole every day, doesn't matter where the tee is. It's a good hole. It's definitely tough to make birdies on it, but you're just trying to hit it right in the middle of the green every time no matter where the tee is.

Q. If you remember, if you look at yourself last year, Rory and 14 probably of guys that clearly were the best that year didn't win the FedExCup. Is it working, is it the right formula if we're having that happen twice in the last couple years, or do you just accept the FedExCup and the way it plays out for what it is. Make sense?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, kind of. No, I think I get the gist of it. Yeah, I think with all sports the playoffs, they have playoffs, it's not necessarily the team that's had the best year all year win the championship. They don't always win their games in the playoffs.

So I think the FedExCup has done a very good job with tweaking it over the years. I think the first few years obviously it was a little bit off, but I think it's very good now. It kind of -- it puts a lot of importance into the Playoffs of playing well. Obviously playing well at the last event, if you've had a good year, you're going to be in that top-5 pretty much coming into Atlanta. So then if you win the TOUR Championship you win the FedExCup. So I think they've done a really good job with that and the fact that even though, say last year or this year I've had the best year or Justin's had the best year, doesn't mean we're going to win the FedExCup. I think it's who has the best Playoffs wins the FedExCup, which is just how every other sport is.

Q. Where would you rank it amongst achievements, the FedExCup?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: It would be up there with anything else I've done, for sure. It's one thing I haven't -- I don't have. I got my first major so I would like to be a FedExCup champion, too.

Q. Dustin, there's a new trophy given to the winner here at the TOUR Championship, it's a Calamity Jane replica. What does that new trophy, what would it mean to you and given the significance of Bobby Jones' history here at East Lake?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: You know, yeah, it would mean a lot. I've never won the TOUR Championship so it's something that I would really like to win and I would really like to have that trophy for sure.

Q. What about the significance with Bobby Jones?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Well, obviously East Lake's got a lot of history with Bobby Jones. It would be great. I would be very excited to have it.

Q. Just looking at 18 specifically and your second shot in there if you get a good drive down the fairway, how do you play into that green, do you usually go for it, and what kind of club are you trying to get in your hand there for 18 into the green?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Well, it just depends on the wind and where I drive it. Today I hit driver, 5-iron on the green. Yeah, generally if I'm going for it, though, I'm trying to hit it right on the front left. There's just -- there's not really much room to hit it anywhere else. But yeah, no matter what club I'm hitting in, generally probably just trying to hit it right in the front center of the green.

Q. I've got to go back to last year. Do you remember planning for the Ryder Cup after this?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah.

Q. Were you at all thinking about how much money you could have won if Chappy would have made a putt here or there, or Ryan Moore? Did that linger with you at all?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: No, probably not. But I still give Chappy, because he's a buddy of mine so I still jab at him every once in a while about how much he cost me.

Q. Does he ever give you anything back?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I'm sure.

Q. Play better?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Well, it cost him, too.

Q. That's true.

LAURA VESCOVI: All right. Well, thank you for being with us, Dustin.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Thank you.