

**ROUND 2 INTERVIEW**  
**April 20, 2018**

**ZACH JOHNSON (-9)**



**Q. Zach, yesterday you're 3 over. 14th tee, what happened, what did you find?**

**ZACH JOHNSON:** I made a nice 10-footer for par on 13. Actually hit a good shot, just misjudged the wind there. Honestly, that putt was the only putt I had made outside of probably three feet. And then after that I hit solid shots. I felt really good coming into the week. I had done some really good work both fundamentally on the range, I did some really good work with everybody at PXG to get me the right stuff in my hands. Confidence was there, it just wasn't showing up on the scorecard.

So truly that 14th tee box was just a matter of being patient. I hit two good shots there in the pro-am and made eagle, nice little hybrid in there and did the same thing yesterday and it kind of kickstarted the rest of my round. Obviously I made some putts, but I hit a lot of good shots.

**Q. With difficult conditions like this and you getting on a run the way you got on a run, how hard is it to keep that run going and not try to slow down, get too cautious, especially given the difficulty of the course?**

**ZACH JOHNSON:** Yeah, I mean, that's a really good point. Mentally I was fixated on just keep doing what I'm doing, clearly just each shot, keep hitting quality shots. But more than that I was fixated more on kind of keeping the pedal down, too. I was striking it well. My driver was key. I was getting the ball in the fairway for the most part with the exception of maybe one tee shot, kind of got lucky on one, too. The confidence is there, and when you can step on the tee with this kind of wind, you trust your clubs and trust your ball, that's pretty important. I felt good. It was hard, I'm not going to deny that. That was one of the better 27-hole stretches that I've had in a long time.

**Q. Yeah, you definitely made it look easier than it was, than everyone else did. So if you get your option, do you want more wind for the next two days the way you're hitting it or a little less?**

**ZACH JOHNSON:** I've never been afraid of the wind. It's always kind of been something that -- well, I certainly played well and relished, what do they call it, The Open Championship or some of those other tournaments. I play well in wind, but it doesn't matter. It's hard for everybody if there is wind. I just know that solid shots, every kind of shot using the wind, going into the wind, you've got to hit it all and that's the beauty of this golf course.

**Q. Zach, talking to (inaudible) while you were doing the interview right there and he said, man, once we got rid of DP we played okay yesterday. But I said, hey, wait a**

**minute, man, that up-and-down at 13, that really was everything because you were kind of going in a dark place at that point in time?**

**ZACH JOHNSON:** Yeah, I didn't feel like it was dark, I just felt like I wasn't getting anything out of anything. I hit some bad shots, don't get me wrong, but coming into the week, the practice rounds I was playing and everything was on go. I mean, the numbers were good on the range, TrackMan. My PXG driver was good as it's ever been, so it's just a matter of really remaining patient. But like you said, that 13th hole, I don't know how it went that far, one. Two, that's where --

**Q. In the air and on the ground?**

**ZACH JOHNSON:** Well, I landed it on the downslope so don't want to assume it's going to get there but that was a little unfortunate. But a really good pitch shot from a very difficult position, and then obviously a par putt that truly, truly kickstarted the rest of that day and probably even gave me some momentum coming into today.

**Q. That's what I was talking about, you were about 115th place at one point and like five holes through the day and five more holes or six holes this morning and in 10 holes you went from 115th to 1st.**

**ZACH JOHNSON:** Well, I think that's -- you said it right there. What would the cliché be, don't give up? You just never know, that's the beauty of this game. I didn't have anything going in putting wise. I felt like I was hitting some solid shots and wasn't getting rewarded, and you've just got to stay in it, you've got to persevere, grind it out, fight for pars. Shoot, I made some good pars all the while being 3 over. You just never know. A good tee shot on 14 after that par putt and then obviously making an eagle there, it just kind of loosened me up a little bit.

**Q. This question I don't know the answer to, but I'm hoping I've got the answer. Is this some of the best short stretch of golf that you've played? This was a hard golf course over the last 27 holes or so.**

**ZACH JOHNSON:** Yeah, I think so. I don't keep track of those kinds of things, but as far as just solid play, yeah, it is without question. I felt like I actually had a lot of other opportunities out there. Granted, I made some. I'm not going to complain. I made more than I should have probably. But I three-putted the last hole. There was opportunities. No complaints, but positives far outweigh those negatives from the last 27 holes.

**Q. Zach, I know you would like to have that putt on 9 back, but still really fantastic playing in extremely difficult conditions. Let's talk about momentum because you go into 14 yesterday plus 3, finish your last five holes minus 5 and have an early tee time today and do what you did. How much does it help finishing, playing early and carrying that momentum over?**

**ZACH JOHNSON:** I think it's huge. We were actually talking about it in the practice round I played nine holes with some buddies. They were saying do you like early-late, do you like late-early? Shoot, you're at the whim of the weather pretty much. If you can get off to a decent start or at least end on a decent round with good momentum, you can get it going the next day. So yeah, that stretch 14 through 18, even 13 making par, that stretch right there (inaudible.)

**Q. You're a guy who seems to like playing in these windy conditions. How much of an advantage or how much confidence does it give you against the field when you're playing in these kind of conditions?**

**ZACH JOHNSON:** Yeah, I've always, I guess, thrived on wind. Maybe I have lower expectations, I'm not sure what it is. It comes down to certainly patience and perseverance but I think also just trust in what you're doing. I trust certainly everything I have in my golf bag with PXG, everything I have in my pocket, my golf ball. It's nothing more, nothing less than that. You have to just go out there and grind. You're going to hit good shots and they're not going to get rewarded. You're going to hit some average shots and you're going to get in difficult predicaments. So it really is just trusting what you've got, committing to the shot and hopefully making some putts.

**Q. Looking at what you've done so far, what's the key for you the next couple days given the way you're swinging and rolling the ball?**

**ZACH JOHNSON:** Right, I think it's much of the same. We get those questions a lot, but it is much the same, keeping it in the fairways, keep putting myself in position to be aggressive on certain holes, certain pin placements. I don't want to keep my foot off the pedal because what I learned certainly over the last so many years, these young guys, there's no fear and they're going full bore so there's no reason why I shouldn't.

**Q. Just curious, when they changed the courses, how long did it take for you to kind of make your peace with that given your success?**

**ZACH JOHNSON:** Yeah, shoot, you know, the first year we came here I wasn't particularly a fond favorite of the place, but I took a couple years off, maybe a few years off and started hearing some things about some of the softening and changes and massaging, whatever you want to call it, and it fit my schedule and I came back and I actually kind of really liked it. So since then I haven't -- I don't think I've missed.

I love what Valero does here and how they do it both inside the ropes or just outside the ropes for us players, but also for this community. I guess I have a small attachment to San Antonio winning twice at La Cantera, right? So it's pretty awesome how Valero stepped up and has really taken this tournament to the next level as the Texas Open. My management actually runs the tournament so I am a little partial to that, too. They're really good people and they do a great job. This resort is awesome. It's a TPC clearly so it's ours, but the hotel, my kids love it. Granted, my schedule's probably more dictated by what they like than

what I prefer. All in all, usually it's just a tremendous week.

**Q. Are there similarities between La Cantera and here?**

**ZACH JOHNSON:** I think the only similarity is that they're probably within 30 miles. That's not a similarity, that's just a fact. I don't know. I mean, I feel like La Cantera was pretty short. There is some hills, this has some hills. It's probably hillier as far as like shotmaking goes from tee to green, that kind of thing. It's certainly not the test this is. This is a much more difficult test. But I think both have wind typically, so that's probably the only thing I can think of.

**Q. I was talking to Jonathan earlier, he was saying he likes this course --**

**ZACH JOHNSON:** Jonathan Byrd?

**Q. It actually fits your game, it's a first-shot course, that type of thing?**

**ZACH JOHNSON:** I think it does. There are certain holes here that feel like are second shots, if you will, but for the most part it's a first shot golf course, get yourself in position to eliminate the big number. But after that, wind like this doesn't really matter, it's a first shot, second shot, third shot golf course. Yeah, I've always relished certainly elevation change and wind.

**Q. Last question, out of the bunker, can you take us through that?**

**ZACH JOHNSON:** Oh, yeah. I mean, on the tee box I was like, man, if I hit it good I can get it there, and I turned it over a little bit too much. But I remember looking at that pin in the practice round or maybe it was even yesterday seeing where it was located and usually the wind's out of the right there, so if I'm in that bunker, I'm going to have an uphill lie, one; two, it's going to be back into the wind and it's just a really difficult hole to get close, especially if you're right.

So I'm like I'm going to be aggressive, I'm going to go at the pin with my tee shot. If it goes, so be it. I'm trying to get it in a four-, five-foot circle, you know, but it came out high and nice and it felt good. I said "get in" after I said it, but that's more just a -- I couldn't see it, I was so far below the pin. I figured it would be about a two-, three-foot radius.