

ROUND 2 INTERVIEW
May 3, 2019

JOEL DAHMEN (-10)



Q. Joel, obviously disappointed to finish off the round that way, but it's been some great playing not only so far this week but this time of the year. What's been the key to that for you?

JOEL DAHMEN: You know, it's been about, what, six weeks now of pretty good golf. Just kind of worked hard with my coach for a couple weeks and it's just kind of paying off. Sticking to what I do well, hit a lot of fairways, hit a lot of greens, and putting's obviously been a lot better the last couple weeks. Just trying to stick with that and stay out of my own way.

Q. Just that one bogey on your card for 36 holes. This morning were conditions really good for playing some good golf?

JOEL DAHMEN: Yeah, they were. We had that kind of mist, kind of a fog-misty thing for a little bit there, but me being from the Northwest, I didn't mind that at all. And it was cool out, which is nice. Yeah, the wind was down, greens were a little softer in the morning, so try to take advantage of that.

Q. You're in your third season now on the PGA TOUR, but a little over a year ago you were paired in the third round in the Quicken Loans with Tiger Woods. Was that kind of an aha a moment for you?

JOEL DAHMEN: Yeah, a little bit. That was my first maybe, you know, like big stage where I felt like millions of people -- and I hung in there, I played okay. I think I shot 1 or 2 under that day, finished okay in that event.

Then the weeks after that I played really well. I think if you can handle a weekend gallery with Tiger, it really prepares you for pretty much everything else.

Q. Did that obviously give you some confidence going forward; wow, I'm paired with this guy, almost like I know I belong here?

JOEL DAHMEN: Yeah, absolutely, that was. Because (inaudible) wasn't great and even till that point last year, wasn't real good, so that definitely gave me a huge confidence boost. Actually he had some nice things to say about my game as well, so when one of the greatest of all time is going to tell you some good things about your game, you should probably believe in it yourself. Yeah, it was a great steppingstone and hopefully there's a couple more.

Q. Joel, another solid round and you put yourself in great shape going into the weekend. You must be pleased with that.

JOEL DAHMEN: Yeah, certainly. Didn't hit it great on the range this morning, but got out there and hit it great again. Made a couple putts. Yeah, happy where I was. Obviously that bogey at the last is not great, a little frustrated there, but yeah, 10 under through two rounds out here is pretty darn good.

Q. What happened on 9?

JOEL DAHMEN: Golf. No, I had a good number there, I just pulled a 6-iron a little bit. I had a decent chip, I just missed a five- or six-footer. I've made them for -- I mean, eventually you're going to miss one and unfortunately it was there. Yeah, I just didn't hit a very good putt.

Q. I say that because ShotLink was all over. It didn't say accurately what happened.

JOEL DAHMEN: I had 205 flag middle of the fairway, pulled a 6-iron left, easy chip, chipped it to four feet, five feet and just missed it.

Q. You've been at the top of the leaderboard after the first round a few times, but how does it feel to be up there right next to --

JOEL DAHMEN: I mean, there's four steps, Thursday through Sunday. Step one, I seem to have figured that out every now and then. Today was step two, so figured out this one. The weekend's a whole other animal. There's so much golf left that. You know, I could go out and lay an egg and no one hears from me again. Yeah, step two is great. Hopefully there's more to come.

Q. Going from (inaudible) to second round on the weakened?

JOEL DAHMEN: What's the biggest difference now? I don't know. I mean, there will be more people around me on Saturday probably final group-ish around at least. I don't know, just more golf, more people. There's more people around 16 yelling at you than when I normally go through there, so more fun.

Q. What's your best Canadian Tour story?

JOEL DAHMEN: You don't want to know.

Q. Did you know James Hahn had to make the cut to keep the career alive there?

JOEL DAHMEN: I was so lucky with that. I had a great financial backer named Bobby Osidis (sp) who was overly generous when I was starting out and let me struggle for a while and still kept with me. So I never had to worry about a dollar on the financial -- you know,

golf world, which I'm so lucky to do. To have really actually played five years up there is shocking, and to do it pretty much financially free, I was so lucky to do that. So I don't have any where I was like down to my last penny or anything. That certainly wasn't the case.

Q. Were there any doubts during that time?

JOEL DAHMEN: Oh, yeah, certainly. There's always -- you're missing a bunch of cuts, seeing players who you know you're better than moving up, getting on the Web Tour and the PGA TOUR. Yeah, there's always doubts.

I had a tough I guess it was the winter of '13-'14 before I played well that summer. I missed the Q-School again at second stage, was pretty bummed out. Didn't play golf for about a month and a half, bought a dog and then that whole story. My now-wife gave me \$200 to go get a lesson and it kind of kick-started my '14 and now the rest of my career.

Q. Do you still have the dog?

JOEL DAHMEN: Oh, yeah. I've got a ball marker with his name on it. He's my baby.

Q. What's his name?

JOEL DAHMEN: Murphy. Five-and-a-half-year-old black Lab.

Q. Who did you get the lesson from? Is he still your teacher?

JOEL DAHMEN: No, he wasn't willing to work with me. I didn't have any money to pay him, I just said let's work something out and he didn't care to help me. So I moved on to Rob Rashell, who's been incredible. Thankfully, I moved on to Rob.

Q. We talked yesterday about the confidence you've gotten the last couple weeks and the better finishes obviously from THE PLAYERS as well. Now that you're back in this position, how much can you sort of feed off of where you've been before and learn from the momentum the last couple weeks?

JOEL DAHMEN: Yeah, certainly. I've won, I mean, it hasn't been out here, it hasn't been on the Web, but I've been around enough. I think if -- I mean, to me there's not a lot more -- you can only be so nervous, right? It can only get so nerve wracking and your hands can only shake so much. Like 17 tee at THE PLAYERS when I got, I don't know how much money was on the line but it's a lot. If you can finish par-par on those two holes under the gun when it doubles my net worth, that's some pressure. It doesn't get much more than that. Yeah, I'll be nervous, but I'm looking forward to it and that's why you play.

Q. In terms of nerves, how would you compare 17 at Sawgrass on Sunday to the first tee at Potomac with Tiger on Saturday?

JOEL DAHMEN: I was more nervous with Tiger, for sure. Yeah, that one didn't really go away all day. Yeah, I could get my tee in the ground just fine. I had played enough holes to be comfortable, I kind of knew what was going on out there at least enough to get the ball in the air. I wasn't sure I was going to get the ball in the air on the first round with Tiger.

Q. I think I read somewhere that somebody asked you about the top-10, and you said (inaudible) better than me. Could you ever get to that point, though?

JOEL DAHMEN: Yeah, but I don't know if -- I don't know, I've never really set goals. Could I be? I mean, probably. I don't practice as much as a lot of the other guys out here. I'm really happy with where I'm at. I'm getting better every year, I'm getting better weekly. So if that gets me there, then great, but I don't have like -- I don't want to be No. 1 in the world, I don't have this extreme goal. I don't need to win a green jacket, gold jacket. I mean, I don't need to win those things. I love this game, it gives me a great career, a great life. I don't really care about trophies, to be honest. I love competing, but I love money, too.

Q. So what would you rather be doing if you weren't doing this?

JOEL DAHMEN: I mean, if I could be like Mike Greenberg with ESPN. Like I don't necessarily need to be on TV, I don't have a face for TV, but if I had a radio show, that would be awesome. I would love to have a huge radio show, talk all sports and then everybody could yell at me on the Internet when they don't agree with me. I would love that, I would love a radio show.

Q. Why don't you think you take golf too seriously, not like a lot of people do?

JOEL DAHMEN: I've been through life and death. This is not it. I mean, sometimes I probably act like it out there and have to remind myself, but I've been through so much more. I mean, I'm a kid from Clarkson, Washington, who's on the PGA TOUR. That just doesn't happen. With my best friend out here I grew up with, we're just living the dream. I'm leading a golf tournament, around the lead, I get to play with Tiger Woods, get to play with Rory. I mean, that's pretty cool. I get to play, they give you free food inside, you can hit pro Vs on the range. That just doesn't happen where I grew up. I mean, yeah, you dream of the stuff, but to actually be doing it and be appreciative of it, I think I'm probably more appreciative than other people and I continually remind myself of that.

Q. What do you think of Fred Couples?

JOEL DAHMEN: He's awesome. Never met him, unfortunately.

Q. What?

JOEL DAHMEN: Yeah, I got nervous. I almost said hi to him at Riv this year. I've only been around him once or twice and that was my only real chance to say hi to him and I panicked.

Yeah, as I grew up, he was my favorite, he was my dude. I think we won the same tournament a couple times, like state titles in Washington and stuff and I've always looked up to him just, you know, he's Mr. Cool, right? Just the way he goes about his golf swing is awesome. He's kind of a Seattle icon. Yeah, I always looked up to him. Hopefully I can meet him one of these days.

Q. Is there any part of you that ever tried to model anything after him as a kid?

JOEL DAHMEN: I don't know if I ever -- I'm sure, you know, you watch people on TV, you kind of mimic what they do you. I mean, I have a lot of my dad's mannerisms unfortunately. But so yeah, you watch enough of some guy you're probably doing that.

I missed kind of most -- I missed a lot of his great stuff, you know, of the Masters. I think his PLAYERS win was in '95 maybe, so missed that even really. So I didn't get like his great -- I didn't get to watch him basically, but I've always followed him and yeah, always looked up to him.

Q. Do you think he knows who you are?

JOEL DAHMEN: He has no idea who I am.

Q. What kind of kept you going in Canada during those few years instead of giving up?

JOEL DAHMEN: I didn't have anything else to do. I didn't have a degree, I don't have a degree. I always knew I was good enough. I've always been good enough, but it's nothing to like -- I mean, you've got to put a lot of time into this, it doesn't just happen.

So I was good enough to be on the Canadian Tour forever, probably good enough to get on the Web, and then I had to kind of actually start working with some purpose and doing the right things to get out here and to stay out here.

Yeah, I just -- I don't know. I didn't want to fold shirts. I really didn't enjoy -- I love the golf course and stuff, but I didn't want to be there all the time, and they don't make great money so I didn't want to do that. Yeah, I guess it's what I was supposed to do.

Q. Speaking of time, you're going to have a late tee time tomorrow.

JOEL DAHMEN: Lady Antebellum's playing tonight at (indiscernible) so my wife and I are going to go over there, watch them. She'll probably take me to dinner. In the morning, I don't know. Netflix? My trainer will probably make me work out. I don't know. Sleep in hopefully.

Q. Any movie that inspires you for tomorrow?

JOEL DAHMEN: Movie? I don't really watch movies. I think the last one my coach made me watch back in high school, Miracle, before we went on a state playoff run. We lost first round, so that was a terrible idea, Coach. Yeah, I don't -- I mean, Free Solo's pretty cool. If you're nervous about a golf shot, you can just watch Free Solo and nothing's as scary as that.