

**ROUND 3 INTERVIEW**  
**August 29, 2021**



**JOE DURANT (-17)**

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**Q. Here with Joe and his wife, Tracey. Joe, it's never easy to win. What was going through your mind coming up 18 here?**

**JOE DURANT:** I haven't been in that position in quite a while and I had a lot of things in my brain that shouldn't have been in my brain. I'm a good driver of the ball, too, but I just stepped up there and I didn't have a clear picture of the shot I wanted to hit and I just completely flared it.

Then I was very fortunate to be in the other fairway, but still had to get the second shot up over the trees, and I clipped the tree. Actually had the perfect yardage for me, a 60-yard wedge shot is the perfect yardage for me, but that just shows you how nervous I was and I dumped that one. I was somehow fortunate to just wiggle in that second putt.

**Q. You talked about you didn't think you might get back here. It's been since 2018 at the Chubb Classic where you got your last win. Did you think this day would come again?**

**JOE DURANT:** You know, the way I played this year, no. I've just really been struggling.

I've got to give thanks to one of my best friends at home, Steve Fell, who's a golf coach, my son's golf coach, and Ray Schuessler and Brad Faxon. They've all been trying to help me with my putting because I've been putting so poorly and those three guys have really just made some changes in my mind that helped me a lot this week. I putted beautifully and just fortunate to hang on by one.

**Q. Joe, how does this sort of feel?**

**JOE DURANT:** It feels really -- I'm really relieved. It's been a while since I've -- go out today and beat the best player on our Tour head to head with a couple other guys. Doug Barron played great, too. KJ had a nice round. Just to prove to yourself that you can still do it means the world to me because I had a lot of self doubt coming into this week.

**Q. What have you done differently since the U.S. Senior Open to get your game back to where it is now?**

**JOE DURANT:** I took about five weeks off. I didn't go to Senior British, I didn't go to Calgary, I didn't go to Seattle. I just had to get away from it. I was just really frustrated. Sometimes you've got to step back and kind of think about why you're playing in the first place; are you playing for other people, are you playing for yourself, to enjoy the game? I

really kind of lost my love for the game. I love the guys out here, but lost that joy of playing and I kind of made a decision I was going to come back out and just enjoy the playing experience.

**Q. What do you remember about that tournament where you finished behind Tiger?**

**JOE DURANT:** I played great that week, I really did. It was either his 60th or 70th win. A reporter asked me when I finished, he said, well, you just shot 20 under, had a really nice week, how do you feel? I said I'm totally demoralized, I just played really well and I'm going to loose by six or seven.

You know, that's just the nature of the game sometimes, you can play great and not win, you can play not so good and somehow win. Just have to keep trying.

**Q. When you were walking up 18, did you think about where you've been, the journey from where you almost quit to where you were on the cusp of getting that first win in three and a half years?**

**JOE DURANT:** I hate to say I was going to quit because that was probably a little bit of a slip, but I'm certainly going to start cutting my schedule back anyway. That was always my long-term plan, just to play the events I want to play, not to feel like I have to play every week. When you're not playing well, you do start thinking about things like quitting, but this week I didn't even think about that, I just came here -- I love this tournament, I love coming here. The fans are great, such a fun course to play, it really suits my eye very well and I just wanted to come and have a good time and take the pressure off of myself, and played really well. You never know if you're going to win or not, just one of those things that happened this week.

**Q. (Question about the tee shot on 18.)**

**JOE DURANT:** That was the worse shot I've hit all week by far. I just was so nervous and just totally lost focus as to what I was trying to do. Fortunately there's another fairway over there. Hit the fairway, just the wrong one. So I had a hard second shot because the trees were right in my way. Actually laid it up to a perfect distance, but I was so nervous, I chunked that one but fortunately I got the two-putt.

**Q. Joe, what were some of the worst moments when you really were thinking about, man, this is just not working out?**

**JOE DURANT:** Well, the back nine in Omaha, I was actually hitting the ball fine and I missed about four putts inside of five feet, and I was just so demoralized because not only am I not going to probably make the cut, but I have no chance of even being competitive putting like this.

Went home and worked with my son's golf coach, University of West Florida, Steve Fell, and

then one of my coaches, Ray Schuessler, who's a golf pro in mobile. Then I got on the horn with Brad Faxon, we swapped messages.

They all were kind of telling me the same thing. Brad was a little more between-the-ears stuff and Ray and Steve were more fundamentals and those kind of things. The combination of things really helped me this week, it freed me up and I rolled the ball beautifully this week the whole week.

**Q. Where would you put your confidence level at now after winning today?**

**JOE DURANT:** I honestly don't know. It was such an out-of-the-blue kind of thing because I played so poorly, but it certainly gives you a shot in the arm, makes you feel like okay, I can still shoot some numbers. Once again, I'm going to go home and kind of look at things and see what I want to play in the rest of the year. We get to go to Hualalai, which is our favorite place to go, so I'm looking forward to that.

**Q. Lanny Wadkins said you were putting your right hand on the bottom, he said that really turned things around for you.**

**JOE DURANT:** I did. That's one thing, I've always been kind of a conventional grip putter, but for the last seven or eight years -- well, at the end of my Tour career I started getting kind of yippy with that kind of a setup. So then I went left-hand low and that worked out great for about five years, and then I started getting yippy with that.

So Brad kind of said, why don't you go back to conventional grip and just open your stance up a little bit and not worry about getting over it and watching the putter go back, because I have a bad habit of watching the putter go back and then my eyes shift real quick, which is not very good for putting.

So I just kind of went conventional this week, was really trying to dial into speed, just matching the line and the speed. Wasn't really worried about my stroke at all. I made some great long putts this week. My putting was the key this week. I've hit the ball better during tournaments, but I putted so good this week, I had to be first, second or third in putting for the week, and I'm never there, so that's why I won this week.

**Q. As you get older, do you kind of savor these wins more, especially since it's been a little over three years since the last one? Do you kind of appreciate it even more?**

**JOE DURANT:** Yeah, I'll be 58 next year and I'm at the tail end of my deal. To still be able to go down the stretch and hit some shots and win a golf tournament, that's what you work for but you don't ever know if it's ever going to come to fruition or not. I'm just so thankful it did this week.

**Q. Before you were presented the trophy, they were able to shout out your wife. What does it mean that she's been on this journey with you? What does it mean to you that**

**she's followed you along this entire tournament?**

**JOE DURANT:** Well, we've been married 33 years, she's my best friend. We've been through a lot this last 18 months or so just struggling with what we're going to do. We got shut down for 10 months, basically we didn't play golf for 10 months between the first break and the second break. It was hard. We were just kind of sitting around like maybe we should do something else, don't know if we're going to come back to full speed or somewhat full speed, you know.

But she's always been my biggest supporter. She knows what to say at the right time, kick me in the rear end when I need to be kicked in the rear end. She knows how hard it is, she was a good player in college and she knows it's not an easy deal when you've got 81 of the other best players in the world at our age playing every week, it's hard to win.

So to answer your question again, you really do savor as you get later on in your career the ones you do win because I don't have that many anyway. I savor all of them.

**Q. She's wearing a shirt that says, "We're in this together." I asked her about it. What does that sort of mean to you?**

**JOE DURANT:** Well, we've always been in this together. She's, like I said, my bigger supporter and she's the one when she knows I'm depressed, she picks me up and helps me stay motivated, work on my game, get in the gym and work out and stretch and do those things that you don't see until it shows up on Sunday when you need to play a good round and that's when it shows up. I've been in the gym, I've been working out, working on my game. I've been working pretty hard and for it to come, like I said, to fruition like this this week kind of blows my mind honestly.