

ROCKET MORTGAGE CLASSIC

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW

June 27, 2023



CHASE JOHNSON

ALLIE LeCLAIR: I want to welcome Chase Johnson into the Rocket Mortgage Classic press conference room.

Congratulations on winning the John Shippen National Invitational presented by Rocket Mortgage. Can you talk a little bit about your experience this past weekend and about earning the exemption into the Rocket Mortgage Classic this week?

CHASE JOHNSON: Absolutely, thank you. Yeah, it was an honor to win this weekend. The course was in great shape and I really, I'm familiar with it because I was able to play the event last year and I held the lead after the first round last year and wasn't able to get it done on Sunday. So it was nice to kind of have a little bit of my revenge this year.

It was a little different with the 27 holes the first day and then the nine-hole final because of the weather, so the final round was a little bit of a shootout. I came out and, you know, the mindset of if I make birdies, they won't be able to catch me. So I birdied three of the first five holes, then lipped out for birdie and lipped out for an eagle and tapped in, so I did what I had to do on that final round, stayed in the moment. And when I was walking up 9, checked the leaderboard and I had a cushion so that was nice, and now we're here.

ALLIE LeCLAIR: Congratulations, that's awesome. Are there any Tour players you're excited to meet or see this week while you're here?

CHASE JOHNSON: I'm familiar with some of them. I played full status on Korn Ferry so I definitely see a lot of the familiar faces.

Rickie will for always -- I don't would get starstruck too easily, but he's always been one of my favorite players. And he gave me a little bit of a shout-out earlier in the week, which was really cool, and I got to bond with him a couple times over during one of our fittings when I first signed with Cobra. He's definitely one.

Tony Finau has always been one of my favorite players since I was like 10 and he was playing the Junior PGA Championship in Ohio, I think. Ever since then, watching his career progress into the elite player he is now, he's definitely a person that I would love to actually officially meet.

ALLIE LeCLAIR: Having played the course already, what is your approach going into competition on Thursday?



CHASE JOHNSON: The approach is the same as this weekend. It's a course where a lot of birdies are there to be had and if you're able to drive the ball well, you set yourself in position to score. Because the rough is thick and now it's going to be wet out here and with the tree-lined, so get the ball in the fairway off the tee just like I did this weekend, keep the ball below the pins and then roll in some putts. Hopefully we can just rinse and repeat from this past weekend.

Q. Chase, this is the third year of The Shippen but the first year that they had a purse. You walk away with not just an exemption but \$20,000. I assume for a grinder like you that's significant. Just if you could put that into perspective a little bit?

CHASE JOHNSON: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, they already -- this is a first-class event that we play in and Sommer and Jason, everyone that puts on the event does an incredible job.

Then Greg and a couple of the DGC members here got together and put this purse together. In the beginning of the week they told us like yeah, there's going to be a purse but we're not going to tell you what it is. So we went out and we played and then they dropped the bomb on us at the ceremony and that was a big surprise. That definitely helps a lot. For someone who's trying to work their way back into status, I'm very grateful for that little surprise, 100 percent.

Q. Just curious from your perspective, an event like this, the opportunity that it affords to you, how important is it not only for you but for other golfers, and what do you hope this does for you as maybe spring boarding things for you as a player?

CHASE JOHNSON: Absolutely. The whole point from The John Shippen is to create opportunities. It stems from John Shippen himself, like he was -- he basically helped pave the path that led for me to be here.

So my goal this week is to definitely take advantage of that opportunity. And when you're playing in a PGA TOUR event, you have the chance to change your life, for sure. Like I'm pretty sure Nate Lashley Monday qualified in here and then won the tournament, and I know a couple other guys who have done that. So you play well for four days and you can definitely change the way that you're living and that's 100 percent the goal for this week.

Q. Good afternoon, sir. So I know you had an amazing week, sir, winning the Mr. John Shippen Invitational. I just want to ask how do you feel heading into Thursday's round, sir?

CHASE JOHNSON: Absolutely, I feel great. It definitely helps having an event on the course where the actual tournament is held, so I'm already familiar. I have a game plan that I want to execute and I've already done it this past weekend. So when I find myself in a situation, I'll be able to recall shots that I hit under that pressure situation and think I've already done this, let's just do it again and go ahead and knock in a couple more birdies.



Q. Yes, sir. I know you played this course before, sir, so are there any tricks up your sleeve, sir, for this week?

CHASE JOHNSON: I don't think there's too many tricks to be had. You've got to keep it in front of you and we're just going to try and keep it simple, just keep it in the fairways, keep it on the greens below the pins, but no trick shots up my sleeve.

Q. Yes, sir. And I know why you won the Mr. John Shippen Invitational, sir. It's that Puma swag.

CHASE JOHNSON: Yes, it is. #TeamCobraTeamPuma.

Q. Yes, sir. Last question, sir, is like I said before, this is a very difficult course. So if you had to have one superpower from the Marvel comics to tackle this course, what would it be?

CHASE JOHNSON: You've got to help me out with this one. Is there anyone with like telekineses?

Q. Yes, sir.

CHASE JOHNSON: Well, as long as I can make the ball do what I want to do, I think I would have a good chance of winning, hole-in-one every hole.

Q. Thank you so much for your time, sir, and I wish you the best of luck this week, sir. Thank you so much.

CHASE JOHNSON: Thank you very much.

Q. Chase, I remember being with you at Memorial in 2021.

CHASE JOHNSON: Yeah, that's right.

Q. And I wonder when you get that taste and you have those two days there, you missed the cut by one shot --

CHASE JOHNSON: I did, um-hmm.

Q. When you're that close and then you have to spend that time kind of trying to get back to where you probably think you belong, what's that journey kind of like?

CHASE JOHNSON: You have to take it in stride. During my 2020-21 season between that event and other ones, I'm pretty sure I missed 10 cuts by one and six by two. At that point you just have to stay patient.



I realized that I was still kind of raw when I was out there. Like I could will the ball in the hole, but over this last year and a half during that off time, got the body right, figured out a lot of things and learned how to own my swing. That's definitely going to come in handy in pressure situations.

And I've seen my game trending each and every time I tee it up over the last six, seven months and have been close. Already have been able to Monday qualify into a Korn Ferry event and finished high enough to earn a spot in the following week.

So the game is trending and I've had the right mindset and I've had the right team. My parents, my mom, my dad, my fiancée and a core group of people, they know who they are, have helped keep my morale up. And I'm sleeping good at night, so that's always a good sign that what you're doing is going in the right direction.

Q. And when you get an opportunity like this and what's the fine line between wanting to kind of play smart, stay in this and have the approach you want versus like knowing you need to make birdies? Just based on the history of this place and where the cut line usually falls, like there's a fine line between aggression versus kind of being in the moment. How do you kind of navigate that?

CHASE JOHNSON: So I don't know if this makes sense, but to me it does. I've always kind of taken a conservatively aggressive approach, I think. I use my length to my advantage so I'm not going to shy away from driver. Driver's my favorite club, it's my best club, so I'm definitely going to use that to my advantage to put myself in scoring positions.

But I also have enough trust in my putter to where I don't need to go after every single pin. Like I can hit an aggressive shot to 15 feet away from the pin and then trust that I have the ability to make that putt.

It's a place where you need to make birdies, but even last year when Tony won, it's not like he was making two-footers on every single hole. You've just got to put yourself in the correct spots to give yourself the best opportunity because when you're above these pins, some of them can be dicey. As long as you hit the right shot, you can make a longer putt without having to go pin hunting all day.

Q. The Shippen tournament being in Detroit, what difference would it make for players having access to the game if this was done at more stops?

CHASE JOHNSON: I mean, that would be huge. This event is so unique in its own, like in its four-year history you've seen how it's grown and the opportunity that it presents us and now on the women's side as well with them getting their chances. It's nice because with the sponsor exemption you have to go out and earn it, right.

And so with more stops, it's nice because it shows who's ready at that moment to take



advantage of that week. It gives them the opportunity to do that where they might not have. Monday qualifying is obviously very hard and this is not any easier to win, but it's another opportunity and it will definitely help throughout the -- throughout more stops, give more players opportunities like Shippen gave us this week.

Q. As a real quick followup, whether it's you or other players in the locker room, how have they talked to say, hey, you know what, thank you for the opportunity, this is a look I might not have got otherwise? Have you heard any of that?

CHASE JOHNSON: Yeah, all the guys like throughout the whole weekend and stuff, we're all fighting for the same spot but we're also all supporting each other and we want to represent Shippen and Detroit and DGC and everything well. So it's like a camaraderie even though it's an individual sport. We all want it for ourselves, but we're going to support whoever was fortunate enough to earn that spot.

Q. I have one last question, sir. Say if you were to win a really big tournament, what would be your go-to celebration meal, sir?

CHASE JOHNSON: Oh, celebration meal? You know, I think I've got to go with Italian. I don't know, nice little glass of wine and a good pasta dish, I think that's where I would go.

Q. That's a good choice, sir. For me, I would probably have steak and a loaded baked potato, sir.

CHASE JOHNSON: OK, well, yeah, I think we can make that work.

Q. Yes, sir.

CHASE JOHNSON: Absolutely.

ALLIE LeCLAIR: Thank you very much, Chase. Good luck this week.

CHASE JOHNSON: Thank you very much. Appreciate it, guys.

