

SIMMONS BANK OPEN FOR THE SNEDEKER FOUNDATION

ROUND 2 QUOTES
September 15, 2023



MICHAEL JOHNSON (-9)

Q. Five under today, great week so far. Just kind of walk us through your round and then how your week has felt.

MICHAEL JOHNSON: Pretty patient today. Made a couple putts early and that always helps kind of, not settle the nerves, but not -- I don't have to be as aggressive when I don't need to be. Played pretty patient, like I said. I only was aggressive from 8-iron down. I played the par 5s pretty conservatively, hit some good wedge shots.

I was telling my caddie, anytime you make the turn on Friday and you're not even thinking about the cut line, I think it just mentally helps you. The reality is a lot of times you're just trying to make the cut and have a good week.

Q. Yeah, but how's it feel to not only make the cut, but you're in contention going into the weekend?

MICHAEL JOHNSON: Yeah, I mean, it's pretty nice. I haven't really been near a leaderboard in a while. Last time I think I had a lead was 2018, so that was a long time ago.

Yeah, it feels good. I don't think I've really thought about it yet. I'm sure tomorrow will be hard, but it's what you play for.

Q. What's the key to this course? A lot of guys say they love it. It's playing a little more difficult than what you usually have. Just how do you like it?

MICHAEL JOHNSON: Yeah, it's a different wind typically than when we played, what, in I guess early --

Q. May last year.

MICHAEL JOHNSON: May, yeah. Keeping the ball in the fairway, the fairway's pretty big, but the greens are really firm, so you've got to be precise with where you want to land the ball. A lot of it's three or four short. Really, just not making doubles. You're going to make some birdies out there. There's I wouldn't say gimme holes, but there's holes you should birdie. Yeah, just keeping the ball in front of you and not making 6s.

Q. How would you assess the 2023 season for yourself just in your own words?



MICHAEL JOHNSON: It was pretty solid. I never had -- I think my best finish was -- I don't know, Kev would have to look it up, but I want to say like 15th or 16th in Raleigh maybe. I just had so many chances to finish top-10 and I didn't. Pretty frustrating, but I'm just trying to look at it as like I had a lot of chances, so I was playing well. We'll see if I can do that this week.

Q. How do you feel your game is now compared to kind of five years ago when you had that last --

MICHAEL JOHNSON: I think it's a lot better. Just technically I think it's better, and I think mentally I kind of know more about my own game. I was pretty, I was pretty, what's the word, just young and dumb, like didn't know a lot. I think that helps certain guys, but I think I know my tendencies a little bit more. Yeah, I feel like I'm a much better player than I was in 2018.

Q. Are you -- like the way you approach the game in terms of technical versus feel, creativity, different shots you play, is there anything in that regard that's different now?

MICHAEL JOHNSON: I'd say I'm definitely more -- try to be more precise like how far I hit the ball. Used to be like, all right, 135, let's hit 135. It's like, well, it's kind of hot outside, the greens are firm, just all sorts of things.

Like I said, I was just kind of young and dumb. Not that I'm smart now, but I like to think I'm smarter than I was in 2018.

Q. How do you think you've kind of I guess as a person just from when you -- like in terms of how you approach life, how does that compare to when you were first --

MICHAEL JOHNSON: I mean, I like to think I have much better perspective. Playing golf, you know, my wife has a real job, so I'm consistently reminded what it's like to be in an office.

But, I mean, just the fact that I didn't have status two years ago and now I have status, you have to have better perspective. If not, you're just a pretty negative person. I've been known to be pretty negative at times, but I like to think I'm a little more positive and just better perspective.

We talk about perspective all the time. I mean, this last year in Q-School I had to shoot 6 under just to get through second stage. So just right there like I could have missed and who knows what I would be doing.

Q. What's kept you going? What's kept that kind of fire to try to get to the PGA TOUR?



MICHAEL JOHNSON: I think all of us out here, you know, I think we all know we can make it. I think we just want to make it. I mean, I bet half the guys out here if not more, other people grew up going to summer camp and all this stuff, like we were playing golf tournaments. Not that that's a terrible life, but we were focused on trying to make the PGA TOUR at a very young age. So I think it's just fulfilling that dream.

Q. How did you spend the last two weeks off in between Boise and here?

MICHAEL JOHNSON: I went and saw my swing coach, putting coach, played some golf, hung out. Didn't go to the Auburn game.

