

**JOE DURANT**

---

**Q. Joe Durant, our defending champion back here in Tucson. First off, can you just walk us through last year's win and kind of what it was like going through that last round?**

**JOE DURANT:** Well, it was a very up-and-down day. Stewart had a pretty big lead starting on Sunday and got off to a good start. You know, for a while we all maybe thought we were playing for second.

It got a little closer as we made the turn. Then he had a couple unfortunate holes on the back nine and I found myself leading with four holes to go or five holes to go. You know, just knew I had to have a strong finish.

But it was quite a day and I was very fortunate to come out on top.

**Q. After the round you were very emotional talking about what the win meant to you and how your family had been impacted. I see the ribbon on your hat now. Can you just talk about kind of how your emotions were and what this tournament means?**

**JOE DURANT:** You know, this is actually an event I was looking forward to. My nephew, Lee Stewart, who was like my little brother, passed away last August and it was very emotional for my family. He had battled pancreatic cancer for a year and unfortunately he didn't win that battle, but he fought like a champion all that time.

So coming here I just felt an emotional connection to the tournament more than I ever had. We've all been impacted by cancer, our families have been impacted by it. So to pull out a win and to kind of look up into the heavens and just kind of think that I felt like he was around me that day and to see all the people behind me that were here either in memory of people who had passed away from pancreatic cancer or colon cancer, excuse me, or were battling it was just emotional, kind of got a hold of me a little bit. So it's just an amazing week and I was just very fortunate, like I said, to win.

**Q. As a defending champion of a tournament, when you come back to that tournament the next year, do you approach it any differently, same?**

**JOE DURANT:** Typically it's a little busier, you have things like today, a few more media requests and things like that, but those are good problems to have obviously.

Coming back to a place where you've played well is obviously exciting and you know you can get around the golf course. If you play well, you have a chance to contend so that's

always a good feeling.

But there's 77 other guys here who have the same idea in mind and you have to go out and you have to play three really good rounds of golf. It's going to be a test tomorrow with the weather, and then the weekend looks really good. It's going to be quite a challenge like it always is every week.

**Q. How do you expect the weather to impact the play on Friday?**

**JOE DURANT:** It's going to be much cooler, be breezy, maybe a little bit of rain. Hopefully it will taper off by the time we get going.

But we've been doing this for a long time. You have to just get in your mind it's going to be a rough day, scratch out a lot of pars, throw in a few birdies. Pars never hurt you on a bad weather day.

So anything in the red, anything under 70's going to be really good in my opinion tomorrow.

**Q. When you come out to Arizona I'm sure you expect the weather to be nice. Do you just kind of prepare for anything when you come to a tournament?**

**JOE DURANT:** Yeah, we've had a little bit of a history here in Tucson with some snow and some cold weather. I was looking at the long-range forecast about 10 days ago and it looked great. Three days ago, heck, it's flipped a bit. But we're prepared, my caddie's prepared. Like I said, we've played in this weather numerous times so you just have to get in the mindset that you're just going to grind it out.

**Q. What did you think of the golf course when you played it last year? I know there's 27 holes here and they kind of picked the 18 best ones, different kind of style and layout than Omni. What did you think of how it played?**

**JOE DURANT:** Yeah, it's a much more traditional desert type golf course, you're either in the fairway or you're in the waste areas or cactus or whatever. It has a totally different look and feel than Tucson National. It's very much an off-the-tee golf course, you've got to put the ball in play. The first time I played it last year I felt really good about it because I'm usually a pretty straight driver of the ball. It's not one of the longest courses we play, it's much more a position golf course. You have some very difficult green complexes where they can put the pins in some corners that makes it, you know, very small targets to shoot at. So I was excited to play, I was hitting the ball well and made some good putts all three days. Fortunately, it worked out.

**Q. Last one from me is kind of where your game's at right now, how you're feeling heading into the weekend?**

**JOE DURANT:** I'm feeling pretty good. I played good at Chubb, I tied for eighth. I've still got

some rusty areas. I didn't touch a club for seven weeks after the season was over last year, which was awesome. I would kind of like to do that again before too long but unfortunately we're going to be in the middle of the schedule by then.

It was a good break. Consequently, when you come back you're going to have some rust. I put some new clubs in play, new driver, so it's a learning curve right now, but I'm playing pretty well so hopefully I can play well this week.