

ROUND 1 QUICK QUOTES
March 27, 2026



ZACH JOHNSON (-8)

Q. Zach, opening 63 here at the Hoag Classic, if we can just get some comments on your round.

ZACH JOHNSON: Very solid. Trying to think where I had to escape. I made a bogey with a beautiful tee shot, probably the best tee shot of the day and I made bogey. Six?

Q. Five.

ZACH JOHNSON: Five. That's a good hole. I was in between a 7 and a 6 and hit a really terrible shot, even a worse bunker shot, made bogey. Obviously that's where my mind goes.

It was solid, there were a lot of positives. I putted nicely. I mean, I putted -- if I had an opportunity like a moderate to decent opportunity for birdie, I felt like I either made it or gave it a good run. So I'm encouraged. I have been encouraged. It was a solid day.

Q. Zach, what's the difference between putting last week and this week on the poa annua?

ZACH JOHNSON: Well, the speed's different, number one. These feel definitely a little faster. We're kind of -- I mean, we're obviously on a hill here for the most part so you've got to take into effect the direction with which this whole area goes.

You know, the beauty of these, these are some of the best poa I've ever putted on. If you hit a good putt, it will go in, even late in the day. I was really impressed with the speed and the lack of seeding if you will. I know they're seeding, but it wasn't that significant. I'm very impressed with how good the greens are.

Q. And the whole course in general?

ZACH JOHNSON: The best way to sum this place up, I think one of my peers out here who shall remain nameless, we've played a lot of really cool places. The Who's Who of golf, right? Golf courses. Number this, number that rankings, all that good stuff.

But he was saying at our age now -- I think it's a really good spectrum, a really good barometer, if you can play it every day, that's a good golf course. I could play this course every day and not get sick of it because it's really, really good.

Q. Zach, you've been super generous to our members here at the club. You've got your first tournament round in under your belt. Tell us how you feel about the golf



course in the competitive sense today.

ZACH JOHNSON: Well, I feel fortunate that I got two rounds in prior to today, number one, because it's foreign turf to me, so I think the more I can get on it the better. Last week I only got one practice round. Having two here was nice. It's not so much where to go.

I think one of the best compliments you can give this place, it is out in front of you. You've still got to execute, but you know what you have to do, you know what you can't do, right? But the subtle nuances of pin placements on the greens, where to miss it is a big deal.

I don't have it all yet, but I'm learning as I go. On the PGA TOUR, I played out there obviously a number of years, so I don't -- much of our job is playing the whole backwards and knowing where you can't go. The ultimate compliment for this place, outside of the shape, which is pure, is it is so right in front of you. But it does have nuance. You've got to pay attention.

Q. And you just made a comment on the poa greens. Would you mind resharing how the poa greens are rolling?

ZACH JOHNSON: Yeah. I'm a Midwest guy. Obviously a lot of bent, but we see a lot of poa in the Midwest. I've always had a bias to bent and Midwest poa, but this is the best West Coast poa I've ever putted on.

I don't know what they do or how they do it, but it is really, really good. The mornings are obviously really good, right, but as the day goes on and the traction picks up, you would expect it to be more difficult and treacherous. I was extremely impressed with how -- still how quality they were. If a solid putt was hit, you're going to get rewarded. That's a true compliment.

Q. And last question for you, you mentioned earlier about the golf course. You played a lot of top golf courses, but this is pretty special. Can you expand on that one more time about how you like this golf course and what your peers think of the golf course as well?

ZACH JOHNSON: Yeah, I'm not going to speak on behalf of everybody, but the common sentiment before I even got to Newport Beach was you're going to love the golf course. I think that might be an understatement.

We have played everywhere. We have played unbelievable facilities, high-ranking facilities old and new, and this one right here, I could play it every day and not get sick of it, and actually be motivated to play it and try to take it down because it's spectacular.

Not a lot of wind today. If there was some wind today, it would be a little harder, which you expect. But it's just fun. I mean, golf's supposed to be fun, and this is fun.



Q. Let's hope you take it down because you've got a lot of local people rooting for you.

ZACH JOHNSON: I appreciate you.

