



ZACH JOHNSON (-10)

Q. Amanda told us you weren't coming as a prank. Do you find that funny?

ZACH JOHNSON: Who?

Q. Amanda Herrington.

ZACH JOHNSON: Never heard of her.

Q. Serious question about your round today. Does it feel like with the wind, obviously much different, but you're kind of sort of fighting the course to a draw today?

ZACH JOHNSON: Can you say that again? I'm sorry.

Q. Just talk about your round, how about that?

ZACH JOHNSON: Well said.

My round was really good. I hit a lot of solid shots, some panned out, some did not. I think when you have winds and gusts of this nature, that's gonna happen. There's a couple times, I can think of three shots right off the top of my head, where my caddie said "great shot" and two times where my playing partners said "great shot" and I'm trying to make a par. That's hard, but it's the nature of the beast right now. I was telling Fred over there, the only commonality between yesterday and today was that we played 18 holes. It was vastly different, but that's a cool thing, too. It's a cool thing about golf and these conditions.

Q. What did you hit into 18 and what was your number?

ZACH JOHNSON: I hit 9-iron.

Q. Eighteen?

ZACH JOHNSON: Yeah. Oh, wait, that was my 18th hole. Sorry, my ninth hole. I hit my 4 hybrid. I had -- I towed it, but I hit it straight. Gosh, what did I have, 224 cover, 222 front, 220-something like that. We figured -- honestly, it was one of those shots where I was like, I'm going to stay a little left of the right trap and if it goes over the green, because it's so straight downwind, it's fine, I'm putting, chipping back into the wind, but it landed right in the tier. My divot was wet and huge and I'm surprised it stayed on the green. It was the longest two-and-a-half-footer I've ever had with that wind. I had to back off once. Again, it's just because the wind's going one way and if there was any break, the break was going opposite

of the wind, so that made it somewhat difficult.

Q. You've obviously got a lot of Ws, a couple of majors. Of a nonmajor tournament, how close is this to one you really want to win before --

ZACH JOHNSON: This tournament means a lot. I mean, there's probably two or three tournaments outside of the four big ones that I feel are just -- have just a bit more weight than the others. Certainly John Deere, I would probably throw Colonial in there, the Charles Schwab. THE PLAYERS is good, too. Man, THE PLAYERS is awesome. And this one's right there, it is.

Certainly it has to do with being at home and representing Sea Island and St. Simons, playing in front of friends and family, but it also probably more has to do with the fact that the three letters on my chest, the RSM, is very special to me. It sounds cliché, but it's the opposite of that. It's a unique situation. The individuals behind -- behind that company are just tremendous individuals and I'm very, very fortunate to be with them. I mean, I adore them. I love what they do for me on the course, but they certainly support me more off the golf course, which I don't know if that's unique, but I think it's probably somewhat rare.

They started this tournament, this is their own little baby, they've created the identity here and I'm happy to be a small part of it. And then you couple that with Davis, it's pretty dang good.

Q. Talking about the randomness of golf, that there's never been a Sea Island resident (no audio.) Do you have any explanation why?

ZACH JOHNSON: Well, it's hard, it's hard to win. No, I guess I don't really know where I could dig deep and find one there. Maybe there's a little bit of added pressure because of who you're playing in front of and that kind of thing. I think I'm seasoned enough to understand that they don't care if I shoot 85 or 65. I know they don't because I've done both. I just kind of go out there and try to have fun. I know that the support is unconditional. Maybe that's part of it.

I think the other -- well, I think it's going to happen. Shoot, I feel like we're -- every year if we lose one, we get two more guys. And there's a bunch of mini-tour guys here that will probably be on Tour at some. I think the odds are in our favor.

I would love to see our host. Gosh, he almost had it that one year. I guess I came and knocked on the door there for a little bit, two years or -- I can't remember. It's hard, I think it's hard, it's hard to play in front of family and friends sometimes.

Q. What was your best par out there today?

ZACH JOHNSON: Best par, let me think about that one. Holy cow, that's a hard question. Well, I guess I'd probably have to say the longest par putt I made. I was trying to make a

birdie on 8, which was the par 5. I hit a great drive, I'm in between clubs. I hit the longer club to kind of take the water out. My caddie and I are like, if it goes long, it's barely going to go long, it's an easy sand shot, and I couldn't keep the sand shot on the green. I putted it basically from the rough and I had six feet for par, and that was probably the best putt I hit all day because I just three-putted from -- I hit a great shot on 7 to 17, 18 feet and three-putted. I hit it six feet, seven feet past the hole. It was awful. That was my only true brain fart today. And didn't hit a great second putt, so that putt there was -- that was -- the best putt I made for par was on a par-5. That stinks.

Q. What's the best part of going home versus having to go to a hotel tonight?

ZACH JOHNSON: Well, for me right now in my season of life is the fact that my kids are going to be there because right now they don't travel with me. There's too much going on at home, obviously school's a commitment and extracurriculars, too. I mean certainly to sleep in my own bed, but I get to be with my family and my kids. That's not normal.

My sister's flying in today with my brother-in-law, niece and nephew, which is pretty awesome. Through Thanksgiving, that's kind of cool, too. There's a lot of positives. Man, home cooking. Making spaghetti tonight, there's a good chance I'm going to be having a lot of carbs for tomorrow. Pretty excited about that. There's a long list. I wouldn't know what the best part is.

Q. Some of the best golf you've played over the last year is here twice.

ZACH JOHNSON: Yeah.

Q. Is it too simple to chalk that all up to sort of home course knowledge?

ZACH JOHNSON: Certainly course knowledge is a part of it. It's funny, Dr. Mo, who's my sports psychologist and dearest of friends, works here. We committed to -- I had three weeks off and I committed to playing Cancun and Houston before this.

And I didn't see him after my round yesterday, but the first comment he made when I saw him this morning was, "This is why you played the last two." I'm like, "You're 100 percent correct."

I figured some things out in my golf game. I would have liked to have figured those out probably in August. I did some really good work with PXG and the drivers that they've now given me. If I'm going to get really specific, it's -- it has everything to do with the driver. I have a driver that matches my iron swing and I haven't had that in a while. That's my own stubbornness to some degree, but Joel Kribel and everybody there, they've done a great job with getting me the right thing in my hands and just trusting it.

I saw some things -- Houston's not a great golf course for me. I drove it so good on the weekend and got nothing out of it, so it's just kind of overlapped into this week. I played -- I

played the Monday pro-am for Davis and BMW and that's when I like, okay, those are the feelings right there.

And my coach was with me and he's like, "Oh, my gosh, where was this," you know? It's just been patience, it's been time, it's been a grind. I had some nice momentum before I got COVID, too. That set me back, I think I missed three events because of that.

Q. When did you get COVID?

ZACH JOHNSON: I got it Sunday of John Deere, so I couldn't go to The Open. I talked to Collin. I said he's lucky, you know what, because I wasn't there. He's lucky, right?

Q. Totally is.

ZACH JOHNSON: Anyway, I'm just living pure now. Anybody else?

Q. One quick one, every year we talk about the Sea Island curse because we find things to talk about, but do people, Sea Island players, you guys on St. Simons Island actually care? I mean, is this something you talk about?

ZACH JOHNSON: The Sea Island what?

Q. The curse. It's a made-up fake thing, but do you all ever talk about, hey, it's weird, one of us should get it?

ZACH JOHNSON: I've never heard any of my peers that live here mention that. I'm not suggesting they haven't with the others.

I'll tell you what's more rare is for all of us to be together because we've all got crazy schedules and different seasons of life, too, right? Obviously Davis, myself, Jonathan, we're probably the elder statesmen of the island. Kuch just moved so he's kind of still a resident, but he doesn't have a home here.

But no, I don't know, I've not heard that, nor do I -- yeah, hopefully it's broken someday. I don't know, I haven't seen the leaderboard today, but that's irrelevant.

Q. How much do you play these two courses throughout the year?

ZACH JOHNSON: Not a ton. They're fairly busy and that's a great thing because Sea Island promotes it and people pursue it. I would say that as far as the east coast goes, I don't think you can find a better golf destination. It sounds like I'm supposed to say that, but give me one and I don't know what it would be. Pinehurst I know has great golf, and more golf, but man, we've got -- we've got four championship golf courses and a fifth one that's really good, too. On a small little island like this, you know, I think that's -- I think that's pretty unique and pretty awesome.

Then you've got the five-star amenities to go along with it. The secret's kind of getting out, you know. It's a hard place to get to, which we like, but it also -- it's -- the hotels, the lodge and the Cloister, they're booked up a lot now. So the secret's certainly out.