

**ROUND 2 INTERVIEW**  
**June 10, 2023**



**ANDY NORTH**  
**DEREK JETER**  
**ZACH JOHNSON**  
**MICHAEL PHELPS**

---

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, and welcome to our news conference for the 2023 Am Fam Champ celebrity foursome. I'm Jim Buchheim, American Family Insurance community and social impact officer, and I'm honored to be here today and to introduce our celebrity foursome this afternoon.

I'm going to start with our host, Andy North. Andy is a two-time U.S. Open champion, a dedicated local philanthropist and he's been an ambassador for the Am Fam Champ and host of the celebrity foursome since its inception in 2016.

Also pleased to welcome back to the celebrity foursome for a fourth time, a real fan favorite, Major League Hall of Famer, 14-time All-Star, and an American Family brand ambassador, Derek Jeter.

Excited to have two new members for our celebrity foursome this year, and I will start with Zach Johnson, who's been a PGA touring professional since 1998. He has 12 career wins, including the 2007 Masters title and 2015 Open Championship. This fall he will serve as the Ryder Cup captain in Rome, Italy, where he will lead the U.S. Team, and I would just also add that it's great to be with a fellow Iowan, as well.

Finally, Michael Phelps. Michael Phelps is the most decorated Olympian in history with 28 medals, 23 of them gold. He's also become an avid golfer who's participated in several programs around the world.

Andy, Derek, Zach and Michael, thank you so much for being here. Your presence helps draw more crowds, more fans. All that leads to more money for charity. Then today you're also playing, the winner gets a \$25,000 donation made in their names to the American Family Children's Hospital, as well. I'll kick off with a question to each of you and then we'll open it up to the media.

Derek, you're a veteran in this event. What do you like about playing in this event, and what advice do you have for your teammates?

DEREK JETER: First of all, I have no advice. None whatsoever. Let's just get that out there in the open. I'm not a good golfer at all. Don't expect much from me. I've got four kids that are under six. You had to make a decision are you going to be a good parent or are you going to be a good golfer; I'm leaning towards the good parent side even though I want to get out here.

But no, this is fun. This is a great event. I enjoy coming here, playing against Andy every year. It just seems like he talks more and more. Every year he's got excuses, and we get that out of the way early on, but we just like to have fun and raise money.

THE MODERATOR: Zach, you're a newcomer to this event. Based on what you know about the event, what are you looking forward to?

ZACH JOHNSON: Certainly looking forward to the day. When I got the ask, it was a very quick yes once it fit in my schedule. Specifically speaking for me, it hits home just because I am a Midwesterner, number one. My hometown is situated two and a half hours from here.

Number two is the Stricker family. They're some of my best friends and individuals that do things right, and obviously the gentleman far left here, Andy, known him forever. Appreciate how he's loyal and giving to his community.

This event from what I can tell so far, it's not even a question that it's all about serving and helping the community in which they reside. I think that's special. That's what we're all about as a tour and certainly what the Strickers are about. A lot of fun to be here.

THE MODERATOR: Michael, I'll go to you. You've developed a great passion for the game of golf. How did that develop, and what do you enjoy most about the game?

DEREK JETER: He just told me he hasn't been golfing a lot, either.

MICHAEL PHELPS: Yeah, I started with the Haney Project just learning the game of golf and fell in love with it. As a competitor, I guess this is what retired athletes do. We just come out here and frustrate ourselves on the golf course.

Yeah, I've become a huge fan of the game. Basically Thursday to Sunday, I pretty much watch every single swing the TOUR takes. It's something that is just a passion of mine.

Yeah, being able to get out here, play -- my oldest plays a little bit. Having him chase balls down the fairway is always enjoyable, and my wife loves the game, too. Excited to be here. Great weather. Seems like we've got some good scores out there, too. Hopefully the captain and I can take care of business today.

THE MODERATOR: Andy, I'll wrap up with you. You've seen the fan enthusiasm for this event. What does that mean to you, and how does that motivate you for this event?

ANDY NORTH: Well, first of all, Am Fam has been an amazing partner in this effort. Can't thank the guys for coming up. This is always fun to get friends back here and have a little bit of competition that sometimes gets spirited, which is always fun. Going back to the very first year when Steve was in Zach's position, where he wasn't quite 50, and I don't know, we must have had 25,000 people that first year around the 10th tee. It was unbelievable. It's going to be a lot of fun out there.

Derek has seen some pretty good crowds here. It's fantastic. The way Madison has supported the event from day one, what Am Fam has done from day one, it's a great

marriage, and we've created a ton of money for a lot of people who can use it here in town.

**Q. Derek, you've played with a lot of winners. You've also golfed with a lot of winners, between Michael Jordan, obviously now Michael Phelps, as well. What does playing with winners that aren't in golf or baseball do with you as a person to develop that relationship with them but also as a competitor?**

DEREK JETER: Well, it starts with admiration. You admire athletes who are in other sports. You get an opportunity, even if it's just playing nine holes, you get an opportunity to pick people's brains and see what their mentality is. You can learn a lot from individuals in other sports. We're all fans of other sports, and the great equalizer - doesn't count for these two - is golf because no matter how good you are in your individual sport, it's all equal when you start playing golf except for he's an avid golfer is what he was defined as.

ANDY NORTH: This is embarrassing, the excuses already.

DEREK JETER: But I really enjoy meeting guys, getting to know their personalities, what drives them, and I enjoy listening. I've been fans of everyone up here on this podium for years, and to get a chance to know them even just a little bit, it's so much fun, and I look at it as a learning process.

**Q. Michael, is this your first time to Madison?**

MICHAEL PHELPS: I think so. I believe so.

**Q. What's kind of been your initial impression so far? I know you haven't been out on the course yet.**

MICHAEL PHELPS: For me, I'm a water lover, so the hotel is right on the water, so it was fun for me. I basically just stared out looking at the lake basically all morning today. Yeah, it's been very peaceful, very relaxing. I look forward to getting out on the course. I saw some of the scores earlier, and as Derek says and everyone else, I'm an avid golfer, so I'm excited to be here.

**Q. Michael, as someone who did an individual sport, is there any carryover to another individual sport?**

MICHAEL PHELPS: I guess the only thing I've tried to do is get out of my own way when I'm on the golf course and stay out of my head. I can't expect to hit a great shot every single time, but I know the basics, and if I can do that, then I give myself a chance.

I don't do it like he does. Like I'm not out here every week playing on TOUR. Yeah, just keeping it simple for me I think is the biggest thing.

I guess in the sport of swimming, I trained for 20 years, so you expect greatness. I didn't put all that time into golf. Over time, maybe. Maybe I'll go on the Senior Tour.

**Q. Zach, given everything that's going on in the golf world right now, have you started to talk to players who expect to be on the Ryder Cup team for you about**

**how they're going to manage some of the emotions or things that are happening, or do you trust guys to be able to put things aside when you get to that point?**

ZACH JOHNSON: Well, since the news of this week hit, I have not spoken to any -- some of them are competing, and I'm not going to interrupt their prep nor their competition. Then for the most part, I think we're all just trying to figure out where things are going. There's still some ambiguity out there. There's still a lot of questions. I don't think it's fair to really pursue it. I'm just trying to collect data and info as I go. I really don't have much of an opinion yet or a perspective on it. I just don't think it's fair. Given what's going on, the waters are a little unsettled right now, but hopefully at some point the game is going to be better off, however that may look.

**Q. Is there any clarity in terms of your picks or how that part of it will work?**

ZACH JOHNSON: When it comes to the Ryder Cup, as to what's happened as of late, there's really no connection. My situation as the captain has not and will not change. I have six picks. There's six earned berths. The guys that earn their way into the top six, however they do it, they're on the team, and then we'll formulate the rest of the 12 utilizing a number of different aspects.

There's still a lot of golf left, a lot of points out. Given lately, it has no effect on what we're trying to do.

**Q. You've got some vice captains playing out here this week. How much of this trip for you is meeting up with them, comparing notes, catching up on some of those things --**

ZACH JOHNSON: We may or may not be meeting tonight over some barbecue, put it that way.

**Q. Andy, the banter between these guys trying to get strokes from each other notwithstanding, how has the celebrity golfer evolved and improved over the course of your career? You've brought a lot of them to town. There were some pretty ugly swings out at Maple Bluff in your old invitational. They're getting a lot better, aren't they?**

ANDY NORTH: Well, depends on the quality of athlete that's trying to play. We've been bringing in some guys that are pretty damned good at what they do. But I think golf is in a wonderful place right now. COVID was one of the worst things that ever happened to our country in a lot of ways, and it was wonderful for the golf business. It gave people an opportunity to get outside and do something, which was great.

Michael and I talked this morning about how he played a ton during that time, and you get a chance to sort of maybe figure out some things in your life. But we're lucky that we play a sport that everybody wants to play, be it good, bad, indifferent. It doesn't matter. We were talking again this morning, I'm sure Zach has had the same conversations, there's nothing better than watching somebody who was

the greatest at what they did in their sport and they struggle like crazy in the sport we play.

ZACH JOHNSON: That's a true commentator right there.

ANDY NORTH: That part of it's always fun. We've been so lucky hitting a golf ball around, the people we've gotten a chance to meet and become friends with and hang out with is really special. It's a great game and a great way to luckily enough to have been able to make a living or a partial living. We appreciate these guys coming, and we really do appreciate the talent that they bring.

**Q. You and Zach, what's your experience with baseball and swimming? And how would that look?**

MICHAEL PHELPS: That's what I just said; nobody ever asks me to go swim. Nobody ever wants to get in the pool and race me. Like what the hell.

ANDY NORTH: That's because it's a losing proposition. No, treading water is about what I can do. I can follow the boat. I'm okay for a little while probably. After that, who knows.

ZACH JOHNSON: I just love sports. Competition is embedded in me, and however that looks, it could be competing against my wife in a board game. It doesn't matter. If I'm not competing myself, I'm watching it.

Obviously these two guys -- well, Michael is younger than me, but we're essentially peers, so I grew up watching him.

What I appreciate about the individuals up here is that in their endeavor when it was the most trying and the most pressure-packed and the highest gravity situation, it's when they excelled the most. That's what's impressive about this panel, all the way down. Andy has won two U.S. Opens. That's the hardest tournament in golf. I don't need to speak to what these guys have done. It's impressive.

**Q. Derek, did your baseball skills translate to your golf game?**

DEREK JETER: Well, people always say all the time, if you play baseball, you should be able to hit a golf ball. I can hit it, it just doesn't go straight. I can make contact. It just unfortunately doesn't go where I want it to go.

ANDY NORTH: Don't undersell yourself. You were the star last year, absolute star of this event.

DEREK JETER: It's all negotiations here. But the thing with golf is there's too many things to think about. It's like, elbow here, shoulder here, feet here, you hit it and then say, I forgot about the wind. There's too many things. It's one of the most frustrating things I think I've ever done in my life, and I don't know why I started it. We'll talk afterwards. It's a much longer answer.

**Q. Zach, you had mentioned just how close you are with the Stricker family. Working alongside of Steve at the Ryder Cup in 2020, what is the biggest takeaway from him as a leader that you're going to try and bring to Rome in the fall?**

ZACH JOHNSON: We may need to talk after, as well. If I were to try to condense everything, I think Steve's approach to the game is pretty similar to mine, I mean, in how our game planning of golf courses is very similar. We just have to be pretty boring in our attack.

But that also kind of correlates to I think his leadership style. He's not boring. That's not what I'm getting at. But it's simple. He's not creating something just because of the magnitude of the event. He's going to keep things on track and a track that he thinks is efficient and effective, which it was. It was effective in New York in '17 as a Presidents Cup captain, and then you know what the scoreboard showed at Whistling Straits. The simplicity of his approach is just that.

However, I know there's a lot of thinking behind the scenes. What he did for those guys is he tried to create a week in the most uncomfortable situations, the most pressure packed of situations, the most trying week, and tried to make it as normal as possible, and that's going to be my role.

He took himself out of it and made the story about those 12 guys and those 12 -- I guess we're athletes. Those 12 players. I think that's the way you need to approach it as a leader.

I know it was in Wisconsin, and no offense to you all, but y'all made it about him, and that's great, because he's an awesome individual, an awesome man, but it was about those 12 guys and the way they hit the golf ball, and that's going to be my role in Rome.

**Q. It seemed like he kind of prided himself in building that camaraderie in 2020. Are there any concerns for you about camaraderie given the news of this week and building that team for Rome in the fall?**

ZACH JOHNSON: Well, the news of this week I don't think affects it one bit. I shouldn't say that. I guess I don't know where things are going to lie. But as far as prior to this week and the wedge in our game, I'm not that concerned about it at all.

The bottom line is, if I can get into the nuts and bolts of it, the Ryder Cup is the PGA of America, not the PGA TOUR, so I'm wearing two hats in that regard. In Rome I'll be a part of the PGA of America. Then number two, we're Team USA. These two guys can tell you, too, as American athletes, you put everything else aside and you represent your country and your team.

I don't think it's much more than that. I think it's pretty much that simple. Yeah, camaraderie, chemistry, everything in the team room is going to be an element and a factor, and I've learned a lot from Steve in that regard and Davis and Fred Couples, Jim Furyk, all these guys that have sat in a similar seat. But the beauty of it is we've got a

good system; however, I can still make it my own, too. I think that's the flexibility and the beauty of it.