

ZACH JOHNSON (-12)

Q. Zach, bogey-free 9 under 63 today. Tell us about your round and what was going right today.

ZACH JOHNSON: I did a lot of nice out there. Drove the ball great. I mean, you know, I think at Wakonda, getting the ball in the fairway is a premium obviously. The wet conditions lent itself to a whole lot of -- you know, there's not a ton of roll, so given that you can be aggressive both on your tee shots and I would say your approach shots, spin management is still paramount, especially with the wedges. There's a couple shots in particular where you're using a club, club and a half more just to take spin off. You've got to manage your distance control there, but nothing we haven't done before.

Today was good. I mean, I putted nice. I still feel like I left some shots out there. Kind of eats at you, but at the same time I made a couple putts that you're not supposed to make so it probably all evened out in that regard.

Yeah, excited. I put myself in a place now where I can make a run tomorrow. After my round yesterday or my start yesterday, who knows what was going to happen, but I feel good about things.

Q. Seventeen out of 18 greens leads to 9 under I would imagine?

ZACH JOHNSON: Seventeen out of -- yeah, and the one green I missed, I was trying to make an eagle and I hit it to about two feet.

Yeah, I did everything pretty solid. I drove it great, hit a lot of crisp iron shots. Again, you know, you try to leave yourself below the hole here, but with the conditions, you want to be aggressive. You take what you get in some respects. Those downhill putts, the sliders, even though -- probably had a 15, a 15-footer that rolled 22 feet just because of the break. It is what it is.

Yeah, I hit the ball nice and gave myself opportunities, that's all you can ask for.

Q. I want to know about the camo pants.

ZACH JOHNSON: They're a little too big and baggy. I think they may be done, one and done. But they're great, they're great. You can get them at RLX.com, Polo.com, Ralph Lauren. Check 'em out, they're pure.

Q. With the rain delay after the string of birdies that you had, how much did that



change your game plan, if at all, and how did you kind of keep momentum moving with that hour and a half break?

ZACH JOHNSON: Fortunately, the game plan didn't have to change. Again, I was aggressive off the tee and then I could be aggressive, had a lot of loft in my hands, given loft, wedges around this place, you feel like you can push it.

Again, I felt like I left some out there, but I made a couple, too. It comes down to spin control with the wedges. I mean, I had 80 yards on 12, 80 yards on 12. I mean, I can hit my 60-degree almost 100 yards, upper 90s, and I hit a 56, just punched it down there. It's those kind of feel shots that you've got to be an athlete out here. That's what my caddie and I -- it's one of our things. It's kind of generic and cliché, but you've got to be an athlete. Clubface, who cares where it's lined up, just get in there, feel it and execute a shot. At some point it comes down to that.

No, my plan didn't change after the weather. I had a nice bit of lunch, delicious Greek food.

Q. What did you eat?

ZACH JOHNSON: I know I had tzatziki sauce and hummus and salad -- I'm a salad guy -- and some chicken. And I don't know what the meatballs were, I don't know if they were lamb or what. But I'm not a picky either, I can mow some food.

Q. You mentioned getting athletic and you had to do so on 15 or you're stuck behind those trees. Got yourself out of it though.

ZACH JOHNSON: Oh, man, that was a great shot.

Q. That was a great shot.

ZACH JOHNSON: I forgot about that one.

Q. And the crowd, one of the better pops of the day watching you get out of that.

ZACH JOHNSON: Yeah.

Q. How have these folks just motivated you to just stay in the fight and battle throughout this round?

ZACH JOHNSON: Well, fortunately, I've had that response for quite some time. I do not take it for granted. The fans are amazing.

I do zone out, so apologies if I ignore or don't hear you because I'm zoned out. There's not a whole lot -- I'm thick skulled, like there's not a whole lot going on up there so I've got to keep it simple and not try to get too distracted.



But I can feel it and that's everything, pushing me. Again, if I make a bogey, a double or five pars in a row, they're right there behind me the whole way essentially on every green. I can't deny that, nor is it something I take for granted, it's amazing. These lowans are special.

Q. (indiscernible) throughout the back nine was just a lot of emotion, a lot of excitement a lot of times, shared a little bit of frustration as well. How does it help you just bowing to the emotions and using those to your advantage?

ZACH JOHNSON: I think I take emotion out of it. I mean, you might see some reaction out of me, but it's quick and it's out. I try to play a-motional golf. I think the best players in the world for the most part do that. Some guys can harness it and utilize emotion good and bad, but I really do operate right where my feet are. I don't let the past dictate what I'm going to do, I don't let what's in front of me manipulate what I'm going to do. I stick to my plan and I know how to navigate this golf course.

Ideally, you take emotion out of it, but you're also human and you have to embrace whatever emotion comes and let it subside and get back to business.

Q. What is it like going toe to toe with Retief for a good chunk of that front nine?

ZACH JOHNSON: Yeah, I didn't -- it was one of those I really wasn't paying much attention because I was kind of in my own -- again there's not a whole lot going on up there -- in my own world. But then you kind of look at the scorecard, man, I don't know what it was, three or four birdies in a row, I don't know what it was, five, five. I think he did, too. It hit me.

There's something to be said about that when you've got somebody in your group that's playing great. It's almost like there's a draft, you almost kind of feed off it in some regards. I've played so much golf with Retief. Obviously he's world class, he's a Hall of Famer and he still swings at it great. You know, I shouldn't say still, he's not that old, but he stayed in great shape. He's put himself in a position where he still can win a lot of golf tournaments.

I always play with him, I feel like he plays great and then I feel like why is he here, he can go play on the PGA TOUR, but this place is pretty fun, I get it. He's a good dude. Man of few words, but still, I say that, very easy to talk to and obviously a good human, so fun times.

Q. Zach, on 15, go back to that shot. Did Smitty talk you out of a 3-wood or a hybrid there to punch it through?

ZACH JOHNSON: Yeah, I hit 5-iron. I only had, I can't remember, 212 front maybe, 210 front, something like that. I needed to go low to get it underneath the trees. I could have got it on the green obviously with a longer club, but I'm glad he said it. That was a really good club by him.

If I could have dropped my ball right there, I would have placed it there. And I still managed



to not make a birdie. Actually, executed it kind of like I wanted to, just didn't check. Yeah, you know, I got a great caddie. I've got a guy that knows my game and knows my idiosyncrasies and nuances and things of that nature. And he was right, that was one of those moments where I can overthink things at times and he was right.

