



August 7, 2007



### Southern Hills Country Club

Hole #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Out	Total
Yardage	464	488	451	372	653	200	384	245	374	3,631	366	173	458	537	223	413	507	358	465	3,500	7,131
Par	4	4	4	4	5	3	4	3	4	35	4	3	4	5	3	4	4	4	4	35	70
Score																					

An Interview With:

## ZACH JOHNSON

KELLY ELBIN: Ladies and gentlemen, Zach Johnson, the reigning Masters Champion joins us at the 89th PGA Championship this is Zach's fourth PGA Championship, best finish tied for 17 in 2005 at Baltusrol. Initial impressions; you played the back nine yesterday.

ZACH JOHNSON: I did. My initial impressions of the golf course, very simple straightforward golf in the fact that you go down the tee, you know what you have to do. There's no tricks. If it's not perfect I'm not sure what is. I've only played nine, but as good as I've played that I can think of. The green complexes are great. Not too big, not too small.

The bunkering is fabulous. And obviously the conditions speaks for itself. I mean, the greens were a little slow. But I played late, late afternoon, and I'm assuming they're not going to be like that for the tournament. So it's perfect.

KELLY ELBIN: Open it up for questions.

**Q. This is a traditional, older golf course. Wherever we were last week was a traditional golf course. Could you define that for us, what does that mean to a player?**

ZACH JOHNSON: Well, I think part of it is traditional golf course. It's hard to define. I think the first thing is you go out on the tee box or you're in a fairway, and all you see is golf.

There's no homes between holes, down the fairway. It's just straight golf, left-to-right, straight, behind us. It's just golf. Aside from that, I don't know what it is, if it's the contouring or if it's just maturity of the land, I don't know. They always say they can't make them like they used to. And I haven't seen any modern courses that look like this ever. I don't know why. But I'm not a golf course architect by any stretch.

So I guess those guys back in the day really knew what they were doing. If you were to pull the players on Tour, I'd be shocked if they didn't, if they really didn't like all the old classic ones we play. Those are the best ones we play on Tour for sure.

**Q. What types of things will you guys as a group do to handle the heat and how much distance, we've read various things about how the ball will go farther; how much of a factor is that to you?**

ZACH JOHNSON: Well, I don't hit it that far to begin with. I think heat is kind of like altitude where the harder you hit it the further it goes; in other words, the higher you hit it. But it's going to be a factor to me. I'll hit it a little bit further. Nothing too extravagant.

Dealing with the heat, yes, that's going to be of the utmost importance. I've talked to some of my team members, if you will, as how to approach

that. And I played last week and played decent at times and so I feel like my game's at a good point to come and play and compete this week.

So I'm not going to wear myself out Monday through Wednesday. That's first and foremost. I'll play nine holes today, and play as much as I can off the golf course. I don't want to be out there whacking balls for two hours, which I've done before. I'll be more focused on just getting some of the fundamentals down and then getting the speed of the greens and really that's about it.

It's about staying hydrated, staying rested and now is the time to hydrate. I'm trying to drink as much water as possible even when I'm not thirsty. The forecast is hot every day. I don't think there's any rain, is there? So it's going to be not only a test of golf but also a physical test and a mental test. So, great.

**Q. You've had an amazing four months since April. Could you sum up what it's meant and also what you've done to discipline and try to prioritize your life to deal with all these distractions?**

ZACH JOHNSON: Yeah, I mean what it's meant - wow. From a professional standpoint, it's meant a lot: The security that comes along with it; certainly the praise that comes along with it from your peers; friends and whatnot's congratulatory remarks whether it's through mail or in-person is overwhelmingly awesome.

I think from a personal standpoint, clearly it's always something I wanted to achieve. And I feel very honored and privileged to have that jacket. But, I mean, it's not going to change me. We were just discussing it the other day. I don't think it has. I don't know how it could off the golf course. The only thing that's changed a little bit is the fact that the recognition might be a little more frequent when I'm out. But I'm not changing. I'm still in jeans and T-shirts and shorts, whatever.

There's not going to be a whole lot of changing. Plus I've got my wife there to keep me level. She's pretty good about that, when I need it and when I don't need it.

I've got a great team assembled, and they're the people that keep me grounded and keep me in the right mind frame. Prioritizing things, my priorities before haven't changed and they won't change after.

Golf is certainly not number one. But it's something I give my full attention and full effort in when I should and when I need to. But having the baby now this year has certainly become much more of a priority and certainly has been my most prominent win of the year, I guess, for sure.

**Q. You were just introduced, not as golfer Zach Johnson, but as Masters Champ Zach Johnson. How does it feel to be introduced that way, and also if you could talk about the possibility of trying to keep your Tulsa-area winning streak alive having won here five years ago in Broken Arrow at the Hooters Tour event?**

ZACH JOHNSON: Yeah, I mean it's flattering. First time it was announced was at Hilton Head the next week, and I completely forgot about it -- forgot about it -- I didn't know it was coming until they announced it. I got goosebumps. It was pretty neat, and it remains very, very cool. Just to be in that fraternity and have that title more or less at least for this year is very, very special.

I mean, it's something that obviously we all want to try to get ourselves into that place in history, and I just feel fortunate to be able to have that title. It's a complete honor is what it comes down to. I know people back home, especially, when they hear me announce, from Cedars Rapids, Iowa, 2007 Masters Champion, they take it to heart. They take pride in it. I'll take pride in it, as well -- not too much. I don't want to get too proud.

**Q. And about Tulsa?**

ZACH JOHNSON: Yeah, 1 for 1. It's the only tournament I played -- that's not true. It's the only professional tournament I played in Oklahoma down in Broken Arrow. Someone yelled it out yesterday. I want to say it was like Lakeridge or Forest Ridge.

Yeah, good memories. Actually, that was two weeks after I qualified for Atlanta in 2002, and I played well there. Probably should have been top 10, but I managed a 4-putt on 18 and I came here and won. I've got good memories. Good feelings. I remember it was really, really hot.

So hopefully I can feed off that. I don't know. That was a lot of fun. Those mini-tour days certainly bring back a lot of good memories.

**Q. What did you see in Southern Hills so far; what kind of game will it take to win here and do you have that kind of game?**

ZACH JOHNSON: Yeah, first of all I think I have the game, at least I hope I do. I like it because it's not terribly long. You don't have to overpower it, which is good for me.

The type of game I think you need is certainly one this week with all the elements there are going to be, that are going to be thrown at us, obviously being a major, the heat and just the golf itself, with hills and whatnot; it's going to require mental discipline and some pretty unbelievable courage to keep focused.

Specifically on the golf course, you've got to hit the ball on the fairway, bottom line. The rough's not terribly long, but if your ball sits up in the rough, you know, it might happen once for the four days. It's very penal. It drops straight to the bottom. That's the way it should be.

It's fair. The fairways are fair. The greens are fair. Hit the ball on the fairway you'll have an opportunity to score, I think. If I can drive it well, I think I've got a good chance.

**Q. You're part of a different fraternity out here on Tour, there's maybe about a guys for the tournament that wear straight metal in their shoes. Usually for older guys, Davis, what is it like to be part of that dying breed and to hear the click-clack out there that turns some heads?**

ZACH JOHNSON: First of all, I guess my question -- I was told at the beginning of the year it was about half the Tour. Is that not true, based on the Darrell Survey?

**Q. Straight metal, no hybrid, none of the plastics.**

ZACH JOHNSON: I used to wear the hybrid and I found that maybe it's just the way I walk. I've got pretty narrow feet, that I picked up a lot of grass in the greens. With the shoes now there's so many little things coming out of it aside from the spike, that I just put a normal metal spike in that's small. It's about a four- or five-millimeter spike.

But for me, specifically to answer your question, metal spikes, I don't have a whole lot of foundation down lower part of my body so I feel like I need all the traction I can get when I'm swinging.

And a lot of these guys out here they have gears where they can just poof it out there 300 yards. For the most part, my driver, I'm not swinging full, but I'm trying to hit it pretty hard. And I need to stay balanced.

So those are the main reasons I've used it. I've used them since 2000 for the most part. Wear the soft spiking collars a little bit, but for whatever reason the metal spike just seems to -- I've gone back and forth. Just seems to better fit my golf swing.

**Q. Folks at Champ told me they're thinking of completely eliminating just supplying straight metal and go to hybrid; knowing guys are superstitious about their equipment would that bother you at all?**

ZACH JOHNSON: No. Going straight hybrid or --

**Q. Straight hybrid.**

ZACH JOHNSON: Well, if they do, someone is going to make a metal spike. There's too much of a demand for it out here.

**Q. Three first-time major winners this year what do you make of that, is more made of that than needs to be?**

ZACH JOHNSON: I played with Padraig last week on Sunday in Akron, and we chatted about it briefly, very briefly. But I think that is too much made of it. Bottom line is everybody's good. Doesn't matter if it's a Tour event or a major. I mean any one of the guys can win. Doesn't surprise me. It surprises obviously sometimes the media and certainly the fans, some of the names they haven't heard of or aren't household names like myself at the Masters. But this game, there's so much parity involved and talent, it's not that surprising.

There's extreme examples, maybe like a Ben Curtis who literally just got his PGA TOUR card that year and went out and won the British Open. I've known him for years I was in the Nationwide and it didn't surprise me in the least; I knew what he was capable of. You're going to hear more stories about those type, and it might surprise you for the most part it might be a little shocking to us, but comes down to it, anybody who has a good week can win.

It's just a matter of executing when need be, and finishing it in the end.

**Q. Did Padraig ask you for any advice how he should handle things having won his first major championship? And secondly, is it more difficult to motivate yourself having won a major when it's been a career goal for so long and how do you carry on with that when you've won?**

ZACH JOHNSON: First part of the question, he didn't really ask many questions. The one thing he did ask is what's been the best thing and what's been the worst thing since. And it was pretty -- I'm answering this question to a guy who has been playing golf professionally for so many years, and arguably one of the best players to have never won a major prior to the British Open in my opinion. So he knows what comes along with success.

And basically that was the hardest thing for me was what came along with that win. It was just overwhelming chaos at times. Controlled at a point, but it was just hard to get through everything. The amount of stuff that came to our plate, what we had to go through was mindboggling. All very worthy, valid requests and issues that came about, but just difficult. And I wouldn't want to change one second of it. And then the best things, as I told them, I think the best thing that came along with that was obviously I'm in a fraternity that's pretty special, to say the least, much like he is.

And the other good things that have come about is just the opportunities that for my family and ones that we've taken up on and ones that we haven't but just great opportunities we have now on our plate. Aside from that, probably the congratulatory remarks from our friends, family, cards and emails I've received. That's basically what I told him.

What was the second part?

**Q. Motivation.**

ZACH JOHNSON: Motivation is not hard for me. I'm self-motivated. I love golf, but I can motivate myself to go play a game of Ping-Pong in a matter of seconds. I like competition. That's what drives me.

So it doesn't matter where we are, when we play. I love to take time off when I'm tired. But when comes to the PGA Championship I'll be ready, especially any tournament for that matter, I'm ready to get up. I want to win.

After winning, I had to set some new goals. But now I've got goals for the rest of the year and certainly this is one of them.

**Q. I'm not sure if you've been asked this already, but you talked about the three first-time winners and guys talented, finding a way to close it and get it done. On the flip side, Tiger finished second or was basically near or close to the lead in two of those and didn't find a way to finish second, didn't find a way to get it done, which has been rare for him throughout his career. Is part of maybe the intimidation factor gone? I mean, obviously you handled it at the Masters. Is there some explanation that guys are like, okay, he's there, but as long as I can manage it and find a way to close I can hold him off?**

ZACH JOHNSON: The intimidation factor, it's more of an expectation. You expect him to always be there. Typically he always is. Finishing and coming through with the win is certainly not easy. For me, I can't speak on behalf of Angel, but personally for me it was one of those I didn't look at the board. I didn't know where he stood. I heard a roar. I was on 15 I heard a roar on 13. I didn't know he made eagle. At that time he could have been two shots ahead of me. Fortunately he was four, now he was two. So maybe ignorance is bliss in that respect.

But, I mean, you know, there is a Tiger factor. Unfortunately, in my professional career, there always will be because he's my age. That's a good thing. He's the guy that drives our Tour. He's the guy that drives our sponsors and makes us better. He's raised the level of the game. Anybody that says otherwise is foolish in my opinion. He's transcended our sport both on and off the golf course.

In majors, you expect him to be there, and clearly he will be at some point. And I don't know why he didn't come through. It's good to know he's human, I guess. Plus he's got family matters now that are I'm sure very, very important to him, and that can add to it; I don't have any idea.

But I know that in knowing him as much as I do, he's certainly a family-oriented man, but he's still driven, as you saw last week. Looked pretty impressive.

**Q. Still, given a choice on Sunday, going down for a win, would you rather not**

**have him in the mix or do you relish the challenge, or does it maybe not matter anymore?**

ZACH JOHNSON: Yeah, I think I rather would. I want to win regardless of the situation. But knowing that you're going head-to-head against the best player, an individual that right now is probably the number one sports icon, yeah, I'd want to have him there, whether I win or lose. It's just going to make me better in the end.

If he's not, so be it. I'm not going to change -- my approach won't be any different if he's there or not. Can't be. Otherwise, things will go astray.

**Q. In the four or five years you've been playing majors, courses have gotten harder, over-par winning at the U.S. Open, and if so, how do you define the line between fair and unfair?**

ZACH JOHNSON: I don't know if they've gotten harder. I'm certainly not a veteran of majors. That's hard to say. My first major was at Shinnecock and that golf course was phenomenal. It was a little tough on the weekend due to some conditions.

I don't remember what the scores -- I know for example PGA at Whistling Straits, I played that five weeks prior to tournament and it was the most difficult golf course I had ever seen. I thought if I shoot 15-, 20-over, I'd be right in the thick of it. Then we get there, I shoot even par for four days. Golf course had totally changed. PGA of America did a phenomenal job made it very, very playable.

So, I don't know. That's a hard question. We're still playing old, classic golf courses. Just the courses have gotten longer. I know the USGA is certainly putting a premium on hitting the ball on the fairway, much like any major for that matter.

The conditions at Augusta this year, I think, were probably a little strange. It was very cold and dry. The ball was rolling. It made it very difficult. Typically you're 60s and 70s, wet conditions. This year it was 40s and 50s and cool, dry. I don't have any idea. I'm probably not the one to ask.

I know this golf course here, I know they lengthened some holes, but if the conditions stay the same, it's not playing terribly long if you hit the ball on the fairway.

**Q. Fair, unfair?**

ZACH JOHNSON: The course setup, that's hard. It's a fickle -- it comes down to what you determine as unfair. I mean is unfair -- everybody's got to play it, so it's fair in that respect. It's not like it's going to be different for the guys that tee off at a different time, as far as course setup; conditions can obviously dictate things.

But, yeah, there was holes last week, for example, in Akron, that's a major-style golf course where you pretty much have to hit a slinging hook to keep it in the fairway. And if that's unfair, then sure. Everybody's got to play it. I don't think it is unfair.

Some of the majors, Oakmont was like that too. Some of the holes you pretty much had to hit a banana slice to keep it in the fairway or a hook to give yourself an opportunity.

It's tough. But they're supposed to be. It's not just a physical thing, it's a mental struggle. That's what majors are about.

**Q. When you said you weren't looking at the leaderboard at the Masters, were you still aware of Tiger in your head? Was his name popping up there and did you have to keep securing it or how does it work?**

ZACH JOHNSON: His name is always going to be there. Clearly he was in the final group, as well. He's there. I knew he was there. Like I said. I didn't look at the boards.

I might have looked at the boards like 1, 2, 3 -- excuse me. 3 was the first time I saw a board. But after that I didn't look at the board until 16 tee box, and my decision was pretty easy. First of all, I felt like I was playing decent and I could -- I just maintain what I'm doing, I can get in the thick of it.

Once I made the turn at the back nine, things started to go my way a little bit. I started hitting it well and putting it decent. I figured there's no reason to look. Let things fall -- basically my mind-set was regardless of where I'm at, maybe I am in the lead, but who cares, why not me. There's no reason why I can't win. I'm not supposed to. So no pressure. Let's go play golf.

**Q. So he wasn't even popping up in your head? I know you weren't looking at the leaderboard.**

ZACH JOHNSON: Not until 15 green. I heard a roar walking down to the green, I believe it was, and I pretty much knew his ball was getting closer and closer to the hole on 13. And obviously

I heard a roar on 15 green and he made an eagle. At that point I'm thinking, well, either he's got a one-shot lead or two-shot lead or whatever. I did not know.

Then I realized that I still have a two-shot lead going into 16, and then that's when things started to change. But I was still able to execute and make a birdie on 16. It wasn't just my decision, too. It was a decision of me and my caddie, and we felt like that was the best way to approach the remainder of the holes.

And I can't change my game plan on a golf course like Augusta based on somebody else's score. For me, it's very simple. In fact, it's long enough I've got to get the ball on the fairway, and from there, I've got to get it on the green to give myself a chance. I can't overpower it, swing a driver on a hole then hope to have a wedge in. That's just not the game I can play. So there was no reason to, if that makes any sense.

My strategy next year will not be any different, unless somehow I can gain 20 yards in the next eight months. It's not going to happen.

KELLY ELBIN: Zach Johnson, thank you very much.

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