

Korn Ferry Tour

Sunday, July 3, 2022

Zecheng Dou

Press Conference



Q. We talked a little bit earlier but how has it sunk in that you've got your third Korn Ferry TOUR Tour and you are headed to the PGA TOUR?

ZECHENG DOU: Yeah, it feels real now. When I was getting on to 13, 14, I don't know, I felt a little more heat, and then I almost felt like fading away in the heat. I gave a lot of signatures. It felt really real, and signing them. Yeah, good to know that now.

Q. Just kind of reiterate how this time heading to the PGA TOUR, the difference in your game, the difference in yourself and how you feel heading back out there?

ZECHENG DOU: Just more prepared. My game is every bit more solid than before. Hitting it longer, irons are better. Just putting today, gave away a couple putts, but still shot 17-under. I just feel more confident in every situation, leading or a couple behind. I know I can play good.

Q. That leaderboard was insane today. Guys going low, matching your score. How often do you look at that and how much did that put pressure on you?

ZECHENG DOU: In Nashville I was one back, so I played with Kevin Yu in the last group on the last day, and after four holes there was no crowd with us anymore because we were two or three behind. So I knew that I had to go out there, get all the chances I can, which I caught pretty good in the front nine, shot 2-under with the birdie on 10, kept it in there. I always like the crowd following me, and I like that pressure and hanging in there. Stayed focused, and everything went pretty well.

Q. You knew you needed that top 10 today for the points, but you went above and beyond and got that win. Coming into today, was your mindset more so a score or getting that win?

ZECHENG DOU: I was thinking about it last night. I was looking back to my three round leads. A lot of players try not to think about it, but I like to look into everything. The past three leads I had two wins and one runner-up, lost in a playoff this year. So I knew that I should be confident. I shouldn't be scared of anything. If there's anybody more

nervous, it's not me. I should be the one that's relaxed because I know I have a better chance of playing good.

Q. What is it about your game or your mentality that allows you to come in with a lead and stay confident about yourself?

ZECHENG DOU: It's more from practice last week and got really good rest after the three missed cuts. I feel like my mindset was -- everything was resetted. Yeah, practice.

Q. How much of an advantage was it for you? I know Carl has won before, but you've won a couple times. A lot of the other guys haven't won. How much is it an advantage when everybody is in contention for you?

ZECHENG DOU: Thinking about my first time, I was really nervous on the last day, but today it wasn't that bad. It wasn't like my first time. That's kind of the advantage. You know your way getting out here, starting off with the tee shot and finishing the first couple holes, how to play it with the nerves. I'm nervous but I'm not nervous like shaking and affecting my golf swing. I guess that's an advantage there.

Q. How was it for Carl to come out and spray you afterward, after you sank the winning putt?

ZECHENG DOU: It's great. All my buddies out here, like they keep me motivated. I try to do the same and keep them motivated and play good together and be somewhere at the top of the PGA TOUR sometime.

Q. How well do you know Carl and how long have you known him?

ZECHENG DOU: I know him really well. We've played since seven or eight years old.

Q. In China then?

ZECHENG DOU: In China.

Q. You are TOUR bound; what is the first purchase?

ZECHENG DOU: Whoa. The gas is going up, so we'll see. I don't know. Like after this, I'm like, I might as well



just keep calm and get a good finish on the PGA TOUR and then think about something.

Q. You're not getting a car?

ZECHENG DOU: I'm in between right now. I was thinking about that walking up.

Q. What car is it that you want?

ZECHENG DOU: Just an electricity car, most leaning towards Tesla right now, but not sure yet because gas is just really expensive.

Q. You have won three times now; which win would you put at the top and how does this one compare to the others?

ZECHENG DOU: You know, every win is really special, but if you really wanted me to rate one I'd say the one in 2019, the first event, because that was the biggest fallout I've had, and it was a really tough season on the PGA TOUR. I didn't even make it to the Korn Ferry finals, and then coming back to the Korn Ferry on the first event I had conditional status and going out there and winning, which got me to here now. That was one I'd say that kept me moving instead of like -- I wouldn't say I would give up, but it's that motivation that really held on there, or else I could have been anywhere. I could have been in China playing the China Tour or something.

Q. With that hindsight, having gone on the TOUR and having come back, do you think you can appreciate it more going back to the TOUR and are you thankful for that time when you did have to come back?

ZECHENG DOU: You know, the first year I got there, I kind of felt that I wasn't ready. But it's been three years now from that time, and I do feel like -- all parts of my game are set for the big Tour. Looking at Collin, Scottie out there winning those events, it makes me hungry to want to go out there and compete with them. I feel like I really want to get back there instead of that year it just happened.

Q. How bleak was the game, and were you worried about the rest of the season and not getting the card?

ZECHENG DOU: You know, yeah. I got to a point where I missed a third cut. I got really worried because after -- on this Tour it's so tough, the field and everything, and cut lines get into your mind so much. I missed two cuts, and the third event I was at 6-under and I was still thinking about the cut line, which was at 4-under, and made three straight bogeys, missed the cut by one.

From there I'm like I've got to take everything really serious now. My golf game could fall apart right away. It just happens in no time.

Yeah, last week was really important for me. Good that we had a week in between this week, and worked on a lot of things and got me here.

Q. Is that what happened in 2019, you kind of won and something just changed and fell apart after that? Or was that a different scenario?

ZECHENG DOU: That was a little different. I think my physical wasn't as good as this year because I have more weight now, and my mental is better. That year it was just -- it could be something like after a win I feel like there's no pressure and stuff. But this year I learned a little bit from that year, as well, definitely.

Q. So for the rest of the season, how are you going to approach this having this win and already having that TOUR card?

ZECHENG DOU: I need probably another win on the playoff final event and move up a little bit more, and hopefully, like Carl said, we're going after the Player of the Year and see who gets it.

Q. How does it feel to battle it out with one of your best friends?

ZECHENG DOU: Really good. At least I've got the chance now. He's playing really well.

Q. I don't know if you know, but you're No. 2. He's No. 1 so you're right there.

ZECHENG DOU: Yeah, finals makes a big difference, like 1,000 points for the first place, and that's worth going after. There's a couple more events on the regular season I might take a week off or so because I want to prepare better for next year.

Q. Was that your girlfriend eating the Dilly Bar with you?

ZECHENG DOU: Yeah.

Q. What is her name?

ZECHENG DOU: Muyu Wu.

Q. A couple interviews you've kind of mentioned how she's kept you grounded and reminded you of some

key factors of the game. I know she's going back to China soon; what does it mean for her to be here to witness that win and for you to secure your card?

ZECHENG DOU: During the past three years it was really tough when COVID hit and I was here by myself. I couldn't really go back to China because of all the quarantine. I had to stay here, practice and be ready for the tournaments. Spending time only yourself, it's just brutal, especially when you're on the road and missing cuts. That's where golf is really hard. Your mental can fall apart.

I convinced her this year, and she came over -- everything feels much more relaxed for me on and off the road.

Q. So were you glad to have her here for this moment?

ZECHENG DOU: For sure, yeah.

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