

2026 PURE Insurance Championship

Pre-Tournament Transcript – Sept. 17, 2026

Zach Johnson

Q: Okay. Zach, you're coming off a win at Sanford, and now you're at Pebble. This is your first time playing the PURE Insurance Championship? How are you approaching this week?

ZJ: Yeah, you know, my prep is pretty much of the same. I mean, you know, I think, you know, when you've got two golf courses you got to prepare for, a little more time, a little more, you know, studying and things of that nature, using the yardage book, kind of plotting yourself around. I don't know spyglass all that well, but you know, I'm pretty fluent Pebble, thankfully. It's as good as I've ever seen it. Fred, Henrik, and I were talking about it. Like the condition is. I've never played it in September. It's always been June or February, so guys are saying the conditions usually pretty good. It's better than pretty good. It's really good. So that's fun. The format's fun, you know, I'm excited about that. I'm a people person, so we're going to play with some good dudes and a youngster and it's going to be a lot of fun.

Q: When do you come into a week after winning? Does that change anything with your preparation?

ZJ: Not at all.. You know, my sports psychologist, Dr. Moe, we've always had it kind of a mentality or even a protocol that we try to implement, and I'm not going to get too involved with it, but the gist of it is each day is preparation for the next. Each week is preparation for the next. So there's a lot of good last week, clearly. However, you know, just because you play good last week doesn't mean you started a certain score this week. You got to go out and prove it. And if I improve last week, that means I can improve this week. And that's my mentality. I don't want to get stagnant. I don't want to get complacent. Um, I'm going to keep grinding. That's all I know how to do. So, uh, but certainly good vibes. I mean, there, there's certainly some confidence that you can put in your pocket. I've had that before, and it's worked out well. I've had it before, and it's, you know, I play terrible. So, you got to stay right where your feet are, and that's where I'm at.

Q: Do you look back at Sanford and think of maybe the shot in 17, the shot on 18, and maybe try to bring that along with you or no?

ZJ: Yeah, the last three shots of that tournament, you know, both ball striking. Obviously, the putts are one thing, and that goes without saying too. But the six iron on 17, really the drive on 18, giving myself an opportunity to make a three, was massive. And I told my caddie on the 18 tee, "We need one more". I know my boy, Ben. He's one of the best competitors I've ever played with, and he's going to step up and he's going to hit good shots, and he did, and he made a three. So, I needed to step up and do the same, or at least create an opportunity do the same. At that point. It, you know, it's about capitalizing on your opportunities. But those three shots were huge, especially considering I didn't play great on 1, really on 15 either. But, you know, a couple misjudgments and poor shots. So, yeah, that was huge. We getting to 17 tee, there's really only one thing I could do, and that was to execute.

Q: Zach, appreciate you taking the time. When you reflect on your junior golf days, what are some of the early memories?

ZJ: You know, I had a great group of dudes, a great group of guys and gals that I played with in the junior golf program, there at Elm Crest Country Club. And if I really look back, I don't have to look back very far. I had an amazing mentor, I had an amazing teacher that, you know, knew the golf swing, but knew more than just the golf swing, and that was Larry Gladstone. So you know, as a father now, you know, when your kids have other mentors that are not, your parents or, you know, me, for that matter, that's a luxury. And so I am very fond of my time and as a junior. I was very lucky playing a little junior tournaments, nine holers, 18 rollers. It was a lot of fun. That's where it all started.

Q: Our junior golfers would love to know your favorite hole here at Pebble.

ZJ: Oh, that's easy. It's one of my, if not my favorite holes in all of golf, would be the eighth. Tee shots are probably not something you're going to write a story about, but you still got to get up there and execute on the eighth tee, the par four. But that second shot is one of the most epic shots in olive golf. I get caught up in the beauty of it, I get caught up in just the absolute view of it, but you got to execute, because you're gonna make a big number in a heartbeat if you don't pay attention. But I just appreciate it. It's almost as if there was a piece of land and somebody just dropped a hole right there. And I think that as a natural naturalist, that hole right there stands out.

Q: Some of our parents want to know when their kid maybe is in a tough time on the golf course, going through a rough patch, or maybe some things that you did or you think are helpful for getting them out of it?

ZJ: Yeah, well, I mean, obviously, I'm experienced because I'm 50, and I've learned a lot, but I'm still learning. The first thing that comes to my mind right off the bat is, it's maybe kind of the opposite way to look at it. You got to embrace it. Like, you almost kind of like, I don't want to say you want it, but when you have a valley, those are the opportunities, those are the structures, those are the times, the periods you're going to learn the most. And you're going to be better off in the end. If you can stay positive in the sense that, hey, I know it's gonna come, and when it comes, this is how I'm going to handle it, I think you can be better off. Certainly, from a learning and a growth standpoint, but also from a challenge standpoint. I mean, golf's about all sports, for that matter, are about challenging yourself and trying to get comfortable when that's really uncomfortable. Those are life lessons, because life's not easy. Sports are not easy. Golf is certainly not easy. So I think if you can almost embrace it and get comfortable in the uncomfortable, you can be better off.

Q: Finally, what is your recollection of your favorite, or maybe best, junior golfer that you remember growing up, and maybe some attributes of him and her?

ZJ: Oh, gosh. I'm 50 years old. There's a certain individual that's two months older than me, is it? name Tiger Woods. I don't know how much I have to elaborate on that one. I mean, he's arguably one of the best amateurs of all time, and arguably, for one of the best golfers, professional golfers, of all time. His numbers objectively speak for himself, and I consider him a friend, too. So, I mean, I was battling against a guy that was taking golf to another level. He was a torch bearer at that time, so it's not hard for me to think about that. It's so obvious.

Q: Thanks for the time, Zach. Enjoy this week.

ZJ: My pleasure. Thank you.