

Zurich Classic of New Orleans
TPC Of Louisiana
Avondale, La
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First-round leader quotes

AN INTERVIEW WITH J.J. HENRY

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome J.J. Henry into the media center. Our first round leader in the clubhouse, 34, 33, 67, made a nice putt on 18 there.

Why didn't you talk a little bit about your final hole.

J.J. HENRY: You know, it's obviously a hole, it's one of those holes today, obviously the wind is blowing and to kind of end it on a good note was, I thought, very important. I knew tomorrow the weather is supposed to be similar. I figured I was playing well and kind of in a rhythm. So the more I can hit today I think the better off I will be tomorrow and the rest of the week.

Like you said, it was a great way to start the week. You know, it was nice for some reason this year, I really haven't gotten off to a good start like I did today, regardless of what happens this week it's nice, at least kind of get off to that start where hopefully you can play with a lot of confidence and momentum this week.

It's windy out there. I'm glad I'm sitting in here and not playing golf.

Q. This is your fourth New Orleans tournament on TOUR. You had spotty success, made one cut. You are in good position after the first round, maybe talk a little bit about the golf course.

J.J. HENRY: Well, this is my fifth year on TOUR but it might as well be everybody's first because obviously it's a new golf course this week. There is no experience from a course management or knowledge standpoint with the exception maybe a couple of players that live in the area, or have played out here a couple of times. In a way it's kind of everybody on an even playing field. Obviously, it's a pretty demanding golf course. Extremely long and with the weather conditions windy, I knew I would kind of have to pick my spots. I was lucky I got off to a great start today. I birdied the first two holes right out of the box to kind of set the tone for the day and made a couple of good up and downs.

But to be honest with you, I hit a lot of good shots. I hit a lot of greens. Again, once I got a couple under par, I knew it was going to be a tough day. I just tried to make sure that if I didn't make that putt, whether it was 20 feet, or 40 feet, it was kind of a nice little tap-in. It was kind of stressless really. I drove the ball in play for the most part. When I didn't make a birdie, it seemed like I had a tap-in most of the time.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

Q. With the winds, how long did it make the course for you?

J.J. HENRY: Well, obviously with wind, I played here Tuesday afternoon for the first time and it was pretty much a different wind.

16, for instance, was like a 3-wood or a driver and a wedge. And today, I bombed the driver and had a real good 6-iron. So I think the wind was a little different. I didn't play in the Pro-Am yesterday. I know the wind didn't blow too hard, but the wind was definitely different than it was on Tuesday which was probably the first day a lot of people came out and saw the golf course.

So to be honest with you, it was almost a brand new golf course. To really answer your question, you know, some holes were extremely hard, and yet sometimes, you know, some holes played short. But at the same time there was some pins on the front. And even if you had an 8 or 9-iron to some of those downwind holes, it was tough to hold the green and get it close to the hole.

Q. J.J., how did the par-3s play for you?

J.J. HENRY: Par-3s, the third hole was very difficult. It played long today. In a really good kind of a front right front pin, it kind of brings the water and bunker into play today. You probably see a lot of guys bail out left and have a turkey chip down to running away from you.

9 was downwind today. It was still a very difficult pin spot over one of those big humps on the right. Unless you are really familiar, I thought I hit a great shot 20 feet left of the hole, and I still had a pretty tough putt to make sure I didn't run it four or five feet by.

14 was downwind too, the tee was up, which was nice. There were a lot of guys are probably hitting seven or 8-irons in there today.

And then 17 was very difficult, even though the tee was up, and the pin was front right, it was into us coming off, indeed from the right. Again, I am one of the longer hitters out here, and I had to hit a pretty good 5-iron which barely got to the front of the green.

Q. J.J., how difficult is it playing a course like this in competition for the first time when you really don't have much of a game plan? Or did you?

J.J. HENRY: You know, I guess you can look at it two ways. I looked at it as, hey, everybody is kind of in the same boat, I'm just going to try to go out. It's a golf course that's -- it's not one that you are going to be -- you can't sleep the night before. There is no hole that jumps out where, you know, you are really sweating it out. Obviously, there are some tough holes, and there is some of those tiny little pot bunkers that you can get in some bad spots. For the most part, there is not a lot of rough. You just have to kind of miss it in the right spots and when you do, take advantage of your length. Or excuse me, my length, and I was able to do that today.

I really putted well. This is my 5th year out here. I have been close a couple of times, and I have been a little frustrated to start the year. It really hasn't gone the way I liked. I've made a lot of cuts but I really haven't put myself in a position to obviously have a good finish or win my first event.

So this is definitely something that I've looked forward to for the last couple of weeks to get off to a good start.

I putted well, that's the difference for me. I always seem to drive it well, and for the most part, hit pretty good irons shots. But when my putter gets hot, I can usually kind of climb the leaderboard.

Q. With the winds picking up this afternoon, you must feel good?

J.J. HENRY: I can barely hear you now. Without a doubt, it's going to be like this way tomorrow from what I understand.

I kind of enjoy playing golf courses where you don't have to shoot six or seven or eight under par to kind of keep pace. I enjoy trying to think your way around a little bit, missing it in the right spots.

If you've seen some of these first 12, 13 holes, especially there are a lot of mounds and they slope off. If.

You miss it in the wrong place, you're going to have a tough time getting up and down and making par.

Again, not everybody has seen it. I think it's the type of golf course, the more you play it, the more comfortable you get. But with the wind picking up and the greens drying out tomorrow, and on through the weekend, it should be pretty interesting.

Q. How did you play 13, did you go for it?

J.J. HENRY: You know it's funny, I didn't. I was kind of kicking myself for not doing it. Again, it's one of those situations where I knew I could carry that first big bunker, but I wasn't quite sure with all of those little pot bunkers and funny things.

At that point in my round I was 4-under, I didn't really want to do anything stupid. I knew if I just hit it out there, I would have 70 or 80 yards into a front pin and have a full shot. So, second-guessing, I probably would have went for it. If it's a similar wind tomorrow depending on where the pin is, I probably will take a whack at it. But I laid up right of that tree today and hit a wedge onto the green.

Q. How long is 13 playing today?

J.J. HENRY: 13 is playing, again, there is some luck involved. You probably have to carry it, I would guess probably 290 downwind, 295 to carry that big, big huge bunker on the left. And then you have those mounds and some of those goofy pot bunkers short left of the green.

THE MODERATOR: Can we go through your card. You opened each set of nines with back-to-back birdies.

J.J. HENRY: Yes, it was nice to get off to that good start. I hit a gap wedge to about 12, 15 feet on the first hole and made that putt.

The second hole is a par-5, I hit a great drive and a great 3-wood in the middle of the green and tapped it in, so I'm 2-under through 2.

THE MODERATOR: Bogey on 5.

J.J. HENRY: The fifth hole, actually my only bogey of the day, and I hit two great shots, it's kind of a short downwind hole dogleg left, and I hit it just in the right rough and had a pretty good lie, and I hit a shot right at the pin, it landed just short, again downwind. With this wind it was hard to hold the green, and it rolled over, and I had a tough chip in, and I made a bogey, I missed about a four-footer for par.

I then came back on probably the hardest hole on the golf course, the sixth hole. I hit a drive a little bit right actually, and hit a good 6-iron to about 30 or 40 feet and made a great putt. A really good putt there to get that bogey back.

And then 10 I hit a 3-wood off the tee and just a sand wedge to about probably 12 feet, made that.

11, I hit a driver and a 3-wood just short right of the green and actually almost chipped it in. I probably had a 40 yard chip shot, and I had another tap-in birdie on 11.

And then 18, I hit a really good drive, and my second shot just left of the green, chipped it up to about ten feet and made that for birdie to end the day.

Q. You had some significant saves?

J.J. HENRY: Meaning I did?

Q. Yes?

J.J. HENRY: Well, saves meaning for birdie for the most part. Any significant saves?

Q. Yes.

J.J. HENRY: I'm sorry, I made a great save on that par-3 hole, the third hole. I hit it left of the green and made that. I'm trying to think besides that, I really didn't miss many greens. I missed 3, 5. I missed two greens on the front. I hit 10, 11, 12. I don't think I missed a green on the back. Going over my round quickly, with all of this wind, I might night have been on the green, but even if I was on the fringe, I was putting 16 of the 18 holes today. It worked out good to for me. I think I hit probably 15 or 16 greens.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks J.J.

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