



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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2012 Champion's Corner

With 2011 Defending Champion, John Dailey



John, on behalf of the Endicott College Invitational, our valued sponsors and supporting fans, we are delighted to not only have you here for a pre-ECI interview – and as co-chairman, no less – but also to have you back once again in arguably one of the best fields of amateur golf.

You've always emphasized how important it is to you to play well in front of your former teammates at Endicott by showcasing your improved game. Over the past five or six years, your game has tremendously taken shape, not to mention a handful of personal achievements on the Connecticut amateur circuit. If you don't mind, I'd like to talk to you more about the past, and how you intend to prepare for this very special year of the ECI, that is the 10th anniversary celebration – ready??

MZ: John, you've won the ECI three times – tied for most all-time with Nick Turczak. What would you say of the three titles, was your most memorable and why?



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JD: Marc, first and foremost, great to be back with you for this special interview. I love this golf tournament for reasons that go beyond just teeing it up, most notably seeing all of my good friends and competitors. With regards to my three victories, the one that stands out the most was back in 2009 when I shot 74 to win and birdied the 18th hole to beat Brian Gill by a shot. I remember playing pretty solid on the front nine; in fact I think I was under par. During the middle of my round the wheels were falling off just a bit, but I made a huge par putt on 17 to stay 1 behind Brian, and then the two shot swing on the 18th hole was very much unexpected, but super exciting and turned out in my favor. I'll never forget ramming that putt in for birdie.

MZ: Though this event is considered a "major" for you, I've heard you say a handful of times in the past, that you have won the ECI, so the pressure's off. Having said that, is this event not as important to you to win now that you've earned three crowns?

JD: This is one of my favorite weekends of the year. Seeing old friends, the laughs, the beers, and all of the camaraderie that goes along with it makes the entire weekend! No doubt winning here is special and it's still very important to me. Anytime I tee it up I want to win, no doubt about it, but it's definitely a little bit easier having won here in the past to just come out, have fun, and let it rip. All I can do is play as hard as possible, stay in the moment and hope it's good enough.

MZ: Right, right, right...but isn't winning as much as you can more important than having a more lackadaisical approach where "if you play good enough to win and you do, great...?"

JD: Everyone in this field wants to win, but golf is a hard game, and you can't predict what happens. All I can do is go out there, play tough, commit to shots, and see what happens. I'm going to prepare hard this week like I always do and have a game plan for each round. I hope it works out!

MZ: Obviously, this year brings a new twist. Two rounds, two days, 36 holes, one champion. How will this grind affect the overall preparation for you and the rest of the field?

JD: Usually the ECI is a sprint where guys try to avoid a big number and shooting themselves out of the tournament with one swing. This year the approach is a little different. 36 holes of golf gives you time to fight back if you have a bad hole. The key is to be in the lead or around the lead to give yourself a chance come Sunday. It's going to be interesting to see who sleeps on the lead Saturday night. No one has ever had that feeling in the ECI before.



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MZ: Two-fold here...who are, in your opinion, the favorites to contend this week based on discussions the field endured this Spring via email? And, in your opinion, who has the biggest monkey on their back?

JD: Names like Gill, Turczak, Tessier and Miceli come to mind for guys who would be considered “favorites” I suppose. But players like Matt Davis, Matt Barnes, Matt Gajda, Justin McLear and Pete Woodward are very capable of competing this weekend. Keep an eye on Craig Roderick who has made considerable improvements on his game over the past 12 months, and Marc Zirolli is playing solid as of late too from what I’ve been seeing on TV.

MZ: Pretty amazing that for 10 years now, all the guys are still coming together once a year for great golf and great laughs. I’m sure you’re hoping this continues for a long, long time. What is your favorite part of the weekend, aside from golf?

JD: Just seeing everyone is very cool. I always love that drive up North in anticipation of bringing the old crew back together. Seeing the progress people are making in their lives and careers is awesome. People living in different parts of the country now, getting married, having kids...it’s really exciting to see how guys are doing and how we continue to make some memories in the process.

MZ: What else is going on, John? Work, personal?

JD: Ha, same old stuff Marc, working hard. Still a school teacher, now in my 5th year. I’m pursuing a Masters degree as we speak, coached my JV basketball team to a 12-8 record this past season and coaching golf after school now in the Spring season as well. Was just out in LA for a week, and was down in New Orleans participating in a service project last summer which was a great experience. Looking forward to some downtime this summer.

MZ: You recently took a west coast trip to Los Angeles with Marc Zirolli for Lakers games and three rounds of golf. Do you feel refreshed heading into a grueling tournament weekend?

JD: **Yeah, I tried to get some rest this past week. Took three days away from golf and the gym. Practiced a little bit yesterday, and played 18 holes today. Will get back into the gym this week and make sure my game feels sharp for a big weekend ahead.**

MZ: Thanks, John. Best of luck this year at defending your title at the ECI – looking forward to seeing you this weekend!!

JD: **Thanks Marc, always a pleasure.**