

2023 Astronaut Jones Cup – Preview

In the immortal words of the battered and broken champion, Apollo Creed: “Ain’t gonna be no rematch. Don’t want one”. But who listens to Chubbs? Nobody.



What we have here is a good old fashion run it back. What happened to all the expansionistic blowhards’ talk of expansion? Let’s go 6x6! We’ll have guys sitting!! It will be real captaining [TSA #1: *as if these two Oli wannabees have the makings of real captains*]!!! Oh the lost chance...for a real AJ Cup graduation...for some hurt feelings...for lots of oozing bile...for primo second guessing (from The Serb and lesser pundits)...for ever growing regional pride and cometogetherness...or for the more likely skyrocketed venom and vitriol between the sides!!! Wow what a chance...Lost! In the end: NAH! The Serb and the Majors world just gets chalk.

The Serb wonders where this all went wrong? What The Everlovin’ Serb is wrong with Team PIA? Is there even a Team PIA? Any sense of “look at me, I’m from PIA” pride? What is The Serb to make of the mental dysentery that is Team Piarrhea? TWO and FIVE in 7 AJ Cups to date? Three in a row to the souff. Where is the “was it over when the Germans bombed Pearl Harbor” rallying cry? These are grown frickin’ men – almost all are 40!! And what? Four available players from PIA county. Four beating hearts. [TSA #2: *too soon?*] [TSSA #1: *Special fairness leanings towards JRY, WAR, and MEL given their collectively unforeseen circumstances resulting in their outlasting this time. Nothing but good thoughts from The Serb for speedy and complete recoveries one and all.*] But for BDD, MGY, JUD, and countless pathetic others – how about you pull up your PIA pants and get to work a little bit?!? Yes, 1-2-5-8 in the PIA order of merit (clearing throat sound) are here. That’s great. The Serb’s has seen that crew before. Reminder: the AJC is 36 holes. Team USA has players up the ying yang just waiting in the wings – and that even with less than 50% of the ninnies from Tucson in the UFC field – in Tucson!

So what. 4x4 gain. The Serb is ready to exercise the bearings:

From 100% chance of rain in dankety dank Minny to 0% chance in the sundrenched sun of AZ! Now that is nice. The winds of April will give way in May. [TSA #3: *The locals call it The Great Give Way every year, or at least they should.*] A high in the 80’s is delicious. No issues with that weather except, maybe, if this is considered weather (only answer not available on the Google), is the prevailing allergy Code Red index at 1.6 billion – The Serb thinks that might be a little too high for comfort.

So this 8th AJ Cup is happening at Tucson National Golf Club on the Catalina Course that is/was the official pooppy home of the PGA Champions. This AJ Cup is ripe for D-R-A-M-A sporting what could be the most challenging finishing holes in each round in AJ Cup history - #9 water and #18 water water. Consider round 2, foursomes (alternate shot for the mixed up), match square. The Serb wouldn’t want to have to sand down his wooden leg and hit that tee shot! Drama.



The Serb knows the matchup. The Serb is the Pepperidge Farm of The Serbs [TSA #4: *there is only one The Serb*]. No rookies anymore. Just four wasps going at it for 10 hours with a couple off in the middle and a potential stupid ending past dusk.

Same AJ Cup story: 10 Points are at issue – 2 in each of the first 3 events and 4 in the singles. Team USA only needs to tie to retain the Cup yet again. Team PIA must get 5.5 to garner that bee-yootie. AJC uber-vet BT3 and one-timer STL are the captains. The Serb is out of editorial comment for a moment – too into this NBA playoff game.

The Serb’s mind is one-tracked...

Team Peoria (needs 5.5 points to win back the Cup) – they’re THE LAKERS

Stan Collins STL (1-2-1) CAPTAIN – he’s A.D. The big man that makes it all happen. Does it all...sometimes. Enigmatic, frustrating, but glorious...oh so glorious. Second AJC. OWGR #1 on purpose but only 1-2-1 in 2021 including that 3up with 3 to play halve in the singles. Even The Serb hates to see that [TSA #5: *hates=loves*]. Physicality off the charts – tee ball, long game, mid game...intimidating. Mentality also off the charts...chipping, the crawl? Woof. In this increasing pressure cooker. The Serb knows the chart that matters.

Dan Maloof LUF (3-4-1) – he’s D-Lo. Not the headliner, but when he is on, everything feels different. He can bring the team and the crowd [TSA #6: *what crowd?*] together with a kind of plausibly deniable cosmic chemistry. Third AJC. OWGR #3. Did his job in 2021 (3-1-0) but it actually wasn’t enough. Perplexing game – day to day greatness but 81’s and 91’s without wonder. Much is said of the tee ball, but The Serb suggest maybe stay out of the Catalina bunkers.

Tucker Kennedy TBK (2-2-0) – he’s Austin Reaves. Does look like much. What does he add to the mix? Then boom. Him the man! Overlooked. Out of nowhere. Unexpected. Second UFC. 2-2-0 in 2021 wading through nerves and loud swing thoughts. Bad taste maybe. Fewest swings per year of all in the matches but nice swing, solid irons, and coachable shorty game. Every team needs AR. Team PIA has theirs. The Serb is overlooking.

Brett Tilly W (11-14-3) – he’s LeBron. He hires the driver to drive the bus. He’s the straw. Years and years of success. But sometimes in the biggest moments? Eighth AJC. Never missed on. Still looking for that first singles win. No question the game is unquestioned. No question the work is in - nobody pounds more balls in public. Short game like a happy GOAT [TSA#7: Catalina fug fields a fit.] But...0-5-2? The Serb is a sucker for the analytics.

T-Peoria Overall – Like the Lakers, Team PIA is the sexy pick. STL’s calves, W flowing locks, LUF’s bowed bottom half (huh-low), TBK’s six-pack. Heck yea sexy. The Serb sees it! But what of this extra year of experience. Good or Bad? They all know what to expect, but will they expect what they know? A solid lead down the stretch? With D-Lo dispatching of Klay already. Steph shocks AD. Jordan topples Lebron. And then Draymond just being Draymond. Who doesn’t remember? Who is fueled? Who would crumble? The Serb can see it all in Team PIA.

Team USA (needs 5.0 points to retain the Cup) – they’re THE WARRIORS

Brad Tilly BT3 (13-12-3) - CAPTAIN – he’s Klay. Brings the big game on many occasions and can carry the team at times, but is never really the guy. Eighth AJC. Home game at the AJC this time. Should mean something. Fairways and fringe good. Fugness oh so bad. 6-8-0 in rds 1 / 2 – is more of a 3rd and 4th round guy 7-4-3. Why? The Serbs know? Come on!

Todd Tilly TST (13-10-5) – he’s Steph. Always the man. Takes and hits the shots. If the rest are off, he is on. OWGR #2. His 2-1-1 was the difference in 2023. Eighth AJC – all on Team USA. Plus records in all formats. Long ball and putter are undeniable. Med Irons and Chipping can get a bit pre-planned and mechanical. The Serb’s Guy.

Jeff Doeden DOED (9-8-3) – he’s Draymond. Does all the dirty work. Lost in the shuffle at times but comes up biggest at the biggest times – The Serb remembers the stories of #9 in the singles in 2021 to seal the deal! OWGR #4. Sixth AJC. Friggin’ heartbeat of Team USA. The expectations are sometimes low because the flash is usually low, but The Serb is wise to these head games.

Steve Pangburn (2-2-0) – he’s Jordan Poole. Often forgotten but a new and effective go-to guy when it matters [TSA #8: *yes the SERB watched the whole game*]. Second AJC. Emerged as a solid cog if not a star in 2021 as he Captained and went 2-0 on Day 2 to power the USA comeback. Took down Lebron in Singles – who doesn’t!?! Best 7-iron in the Matches from 130 to 230. Still young and all hopped up. Sometime crazy. The Serb knows there’s a toned down mofo in there.

T-USA Overall – Like the Warriors, Team USA is always doubted but never dismissed. 5-2 is 5-2. One for the second thumb! It was a stunning comeback in 2017, solid dominance in 2019, and even more stunning final three hole comeback in 2021. Three-time defending Cup holder is here with the band back together – with the solid core (like a quality interior door). Does The Serb doubt them? Does The Serb PIA see more in a more seasoned and hangry Team PI? The Serb asks The Serb the same questions?

The Serb’s answer...

The Serb’s Prediction:

Experience one more time = You got it Pat: HMM HMM PEAT!!

2023 AJ Cup Winner: Team USA (5.5 to 4.5)

Come on!!!

TSA = The Serb’s Aside

TSSA = The Serb’s Special Aside