

U.S. Open Championship 2020

Friday, September 18, 2020

Mamaroneck, New York, USA

Winged Foot Golf Club

Justin Thomas

Flash Interview

Q. Justin Thomas, 3-over 73 today. Justin, off to a tough start, but you really righted the ship. Can you talk us through that?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, I got off to a good start. I was hitting the ball well. Hit some quality shots there on 13 and really hit two good -- hit my first putt just a little too hard. Hit a good putt on that short one, but it just didn't go in.

It's just one of those days where things -- some of the par putts could have gone in, or I could have chipped it a little bit closer. At the end of the day, I drove it so bad that over the course of 18 holes it's going to catch up to me, and it did on those first ten.

Q. Justin, do you feel like, when you look back at tournaments you've won, do you look at days where you just didn't have it and you were able to limit the damage on a day like today?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Absolutely. I mean, I said that yesterday. Every single person in this tournament is going to go through a stretch where they get a bad run, especially here. Mine just happened to be -- I mean, I played probably a seven-hole stretch maybe 5 over or something like that. So it is what it is.

I wasn't driving it well and then had a couple putts that easily could have gone in that kind of just stayed out, but I just stayed positive and kept fighting because I know that a 3 over is better than a 4 over, and today easily could have been a 6 or 7. I'm proud of myself for how I hung in.

Q. Was there a shot or a moment that helped kind of key your turnaround?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I mean, that birdie on 3 was pretty sick. I mean, a 5 wood in there, 228 into the wind, and then just it was a really, really tough putt. I mean, I'm sure you could see with kind of the sun hitting the greens they weren't exactly rolling true, but that's how poa annua is and everybody has to deal with it in the afternoon. That was a very quick double breaking putt, and that was nice. After



playing No. 2 perfectly and just having it lip out, to birdie that hole almost feels like an eagle.

Q. And a massive gallery roar too.

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, from my Louisville people back there.

Q. When you're struggling like you were with the driver today and you seem to find some sort of correction mid-round, does that give you almost more confidence because you know you can do it on the fly, you don't have to fix it overnight or in the morning?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, in the past I've been good at that. I know I can always go to a big cut if I need to. Unfortunately, this course isn't very good for a cut. That's why holes like 16 for me are tough. 1 -- tee shots like 2, I like. 5 -- or 4 is tough. 5 is tough.

It's just for me, like yesterday was one of the days where I really was driving it nice, and I was actually working it both ways, which is something I don't do too often off the tee. The firmer the fairways get, the harder they're going to be for me to hit. But if I'm hitting it well, I should be able to get the ball to come down where I want to be able to hold the fairway.

The holes where I felt like I had the room to start it and carve it, I was able to hit the fairways. Some of them, it just had a hard time fitting my eye, and I just didn't execute from there.

Q. How do you feel about your position, being only two back?

JUSTIN THOMAS: It's good. It's a better position than I've been in a U.S. Open before. This isn't exactly a place where you go out and try to shoot 6 or 7 under to catch up. Just have to stay patient and play my own game. I'm not going to worry about what everyone else is doing because you could shoot 80 just as easily as you could shoot 68.

I just need to stay focused, and most importantly, go home and get some rest because I'm pretty tired.



Q. When things are going a little sideways like that, does Jimmy say anything to get you back on track, or do you want anybody to say anything? Do you have to find a better head space by yourself?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, he knows what to do. That's what happens over five years or six years, whatever it's been since we've worked together. He knows what to say. He knows when not to say something.

The thing is 5 over at a -- I hate to say regular golf course, but a regular golf course is different than 5 over out here. I wasn't playing well, but I wasn't that far off. I was hitting a lot of putts that just were burning edges. With the wind on greens this severe and when you're playing that much break on putts, you can easily misgauge it or lip it out or just not quite play enough.

He knew and I knew that we were close to getting something and at least making some pars or throwing in a birdie or two. He just kind of says to me, stay patient. Good things will happen. We've just got to keep playing our game, and that's what we did.

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