

U.S. Open Championship 2021

Tuesday, June 15, 2021

San Diego, California, USA

Torrey Pines Golf Course

Collin Morikawa

Flash Interview



THE MODERATOR: We are pleased to welcome world No. 4 Collin Morikawa. Talk about your preparation this week and what you're seeing from the course.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, prep has been great. Obviously I had a three-week stretch of PGA, Colonial and Muirfield, and the game feels good. I love coming into weeks, especially a major, where you're just kind of ready to play golf and try and figure out the course and how you're going to beat it.

But this course is tough. I've only played here once. I played the 2020 Farmers. I didn't play this year, and it's going to test every part of your game. I think everyone has said that, but it's just a course where it's demanding off the tee, it's demanding with your approach shots, and you've got to hit really good putts, especially with poa greens and a lot of slope to them.

Q. I know we're not that close to LA, but a U.S. Open in Southern California, who's here with you this week, and how does it feel to play one close to home?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, girlfriend is here. Family is going to come Friday and the weekend. But it feels so good. When we flew in and I kind of stepped off the plane, like it felt good to just breathe California air, like it's something about it. Like I don't care where you are in California, just something about it, it feels right.

It's good to be back, to just have good vibes even though you're a couple hours from LA. I love being in California.

Q. Can you describe the rough and maybe any situation you've been in thus far this week?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, I'd say the rough is very thick, but it's pretty spotty. Some spots you get really lucky and the ball sits up, especially with some thick kikuyu blades of grass, and you can get really lucky and hit some good shots out of there, and other parts the ball sits down and you're trying to hack out a 9-iron and just see how far it can run up.

I think a lot of it has to do with the prep you're going to do throughout the week knowing where some spots you might have to be more aggressive or play a little safe off the tee, just knowing where some of the rough is going to be.

Q. Can you talk a little bit about U.S. Open week, it's meant to kind of be a bit more of a grind. How do you mentally prepare for that?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, I think the way I've looked at the U.S. Opens, I've played two U.S. Opens, and to be honest, I think I kind of psyched myself out before I even started. That's never something you want to do. You kind of show up, obviously you're going to have thick rough. USGA is going to set up the course really tough. But that doesn't mean you can't go out and play really well and play some great golf. The two U.S. Opens I've played, I think I've done that, of just not setting myself up for success.

Yeah, I know they're going to play really tough. It's going to be tough. But I look forward to that. I want to embrace that this week.

Q. I want to ask you about Memorial. Did you have to go through any special kind of contact tracing because you had played with Jon?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: No, the TOUR contacted me that night, Saturday night, and I knew kind of the details of what was going on when I played with him Thursday and Friday, so I kept my distance. I respected what we needed to do as playing partners.

We were in very fortunate circumstances of being outside, really hot, really humid, and I kept my distance. They said I didn't need to test, and obviously I wanted to make sure I didn't feel sick or anything, but I felt fine, and then going into Sunday, all I was trying to do was win.

Q. Talk a little bit about how well he was playing from a player's perspective, to see what he did on Saturday. What level was he at and what might he do on a course that he really likes like this one?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, he was at a level that I



couldn't keep up for at least three days. Who knows what could happen Sunday, but building a six-shot lead through three rounds on that golf course, he was playing some amazing golf. I gave him a call Sunday night and just said, I felt gutted for him. It wasn't a good feeling for the next 30 minutes when you see what happened on TV, because you knew how well he was playing.

Obviously he got the news that he could come out and practice, I think it was Friday and Saturday, so he's obviously a guy to look out for.

Q. I know you're young in your career and your career here at Torrey Pines, but are there a couple holes that you can point to as pivotal to your success here?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: You know, I think if we talk about the front nine, I think the stretch of like 6 and 7 are going to be huge. Not having 6 as a par-5 -- normally it is a par-5 and you're able to hopefully get a birdie out of that, now you're hitting a long iron into a good par-4. If you're able to get out of those couple holes with just even par for the week and just kind of make your way into 9 and make your way into 10, but then you have the stretch of like 12 and 13. We can keep going on.

There's just certain holes out here where if you make four pars, you're going to be really happy for the week.

Q. You're young in your career, but how do you feel about a regular TOUR stop being a major championship venue?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I love it. There comes a sense of familiarity. I'll bring up Harding Park, for example. It's not a TOUR stop but it's a course I was able to play a handful of times so I felt comfortable going in. This is a course I've only played once, but I can come out and prep and not have to figure out every single hole and figure out where our locker rooms are going to be. So it just helps in a sense of like, for me, just getting into the week and making things a little easier.

But it's a wonderful golf course. You've seen it in the past. It doesn't play easy.

Q. Obviously growing up in Southern California, you're familiar with kikuyu and poa greens. What's your relationship with those two types of grasses?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, I definitely grew up on it. Feels like I'm a kid just coming back out. Guys that are from the East Coast that just really hate poa greens, it's just something we get used to. I'm not used to Bermuda, and I've had to learn how to putt on that, but we're all

professional golfers out here, or for the most part all of us are professional golfers. We know how to adjust, we know how to get ready for events, but it's just something you're comfortable with and you don't have to really figure out, oh, this lie is different in the fairway, this is different in the rough. Obviously I didn't grow up playing with this kind of rough, though.

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