

TOUR Championship

Thursday, August 24, 2023

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

East Lake Golf Club

Collin Morikawa

Quick Quotes

Q. It looks like you've been waiting for a round like this for a little while now. It came today. How do you feel about everything and what are your expectations tomorrow?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: It feels great. Shoot, no better time, I guess, in our TOUR Championship to show up and start playing some golf.

But just really I think for the next three days is just have that control of the golf ball, keep hitting it pin high, giving myself chances. I looked at J.J. I think we were through 12 or 13 holes and we joked thinking that we haven't hit this many shots pin high in four rounds in a full tournament for awhile. So it's been nice to just kind of see that, kind of see the irons do what I want, and just keep it up, really.

Q. Any other week you're leading right now. Obviously given the formats, you're not. What do you make of the format either way? I mean, obviously you know what you're getting into when you start here, but it is different.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah. Look, you can look at it both ways. I've heard both sides of we like it, we don't like it. But at the end of the day, if you play really good golf for four rounds and you win the tournament without the strokes, I mean, you can't be too mad about yourself, right? You played some good golf and you beat 29 other guys and that's kind of the goal this week. That was the goal at the beginning of the week, but obviously where I sit now, it's to keep pushing and not let my foot off the gas.

I mean, the way today felt I wish I could go play another 18 and just continue that. But I know what I did today and I'm going to keep those kind of baselines and checkpoints to make sure that when we start out there tomorrow that we continue that same trend.

Q. So your original goal was just thinking shoot the lowest 72-hole score?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I mean, really just make as many



birdies and enjoy it. J.J. looked at me -- it's been another frustrating and up-and-down year, but he looked at me on Sunday last week and just said, Look, let's just go and have fun.

It's not easy it to make it here. I can't take it for granted that I just -- oh, I'm here again. I had to grind my butt off to get here again, play well in playoffs, have a couple finishes. Like, it's not easy. There's a reason why only 30 guys make it.

So you have an opportunity. I think, what, Rory was 11 back last year, whatever, 8 back after so many holes. Like, it's doable. So you got to play some good golf and that's what he did last year. But the way the game felt today, it's just like how do we just continue that and how do we keep that for three more days.

Q. So you the have the strength in all this heat, you want to go play 18 more?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: The way I played today, sure, why not. It won't count probably, so I won't. It wasn't too bad today.

Q. You got off to a great start, a few birdies first couple holes, but walk me through that kind of start and especially your second shot on 6.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah. I got a lucky break on 5. I pulled a drive left, hit a tree, ended up in a fairway and made birdie. That's kind of the momentum stuff that I just haven't seen all year. Just figuring out a way to keep that.

6 felt great. The fans for some reason didn't really want to clap in our group today. They didn't think 10 feet or 5 feet was that good. We really didn't know how close it was. Walked up, obviously it was nice to make the 3.

Look, I hit some great shots. Even the shot on 15 by no means is an easy par-3. I think we can all agree on that. Immediately when I hit the tee shot, I didn't even watch it because I knew where it was going to go, and that's the kind of control you want. Some days are going to be better than others, but it's nice to know that that golf swing is just exactly where I want it.

Q. This is the best statistical season you've had in

ASAP . . . when all is said, we're done.®
sports

your career. What's it say about the depth of the TOUR that you're able to accomplish that, you're 11th best in strokes gained and don't have a win?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, it's kind of surprising that my strokes gained is that good, but I think it shows that I've been working on the right things. But it takes -- there's a skill that you just can't measure for winning. I think you ask the best winners in the history, there's a skill that you just can't -- you can't tell someone how to win, you can't teach someone how to win, you got to learn how to win. It's still in there. I know it is. It's just having things go your way and being consistent like today, not giving away shots, not hitting the poor shot that might deter a round, not making a bogey or two here today.

If I made a bogey or two, it would just kind of feel -- it would feel great, a great start, but I know what could have been, and today was one of those rounds that just everything kind of kept pace and just kept going. Yeah, I missed some putts, but I'm not going to complain about a 9-under at all.

Q. Is there something specific you found in your swing the last couple weeks that has allowed you to feel like you have so much control?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, we found it on Tuesday, and I'm not going to tell you.

Q. You did that last time.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah. It's all a lot in the setup stuff, so you can go and look at photos and pictures. But a lot of it has to do with just basic setup and it always is for 99 percent of us. We've all played great golf. It's in there. It's just about remembering kind of what was a little bit better in the past.

Q. So the crowd was sedate out there today. Was it the heat?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I don't know. I thought we were hitting good shots and 10 feet's not good enough, I guess.

Q. Have you spoken to Zach? Any sense of how it stands? I mean, do you feel confident you're going to be picked no matter what happens?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: No, I haven't talked to him. The last time I really spent a lot of time with him was at Detroit. Look, I had two years to get myself in that top 6 and we didn't do it. So it is what it is. I was still grinding out there. We still ended up roughly in that zone of hopefully a captain's pick. But, look, I think, hopefully, my record

speaks for itself. Hopefully the golf speaks for itself today. I feel good and -- but, look, at the end of the day, I want to win this tournament. I really do. It's been too long. I want to find a way to win. Today definitely helped that.

Q. What's the difference in what you found on Tuesday that made you feel like, okay, this is what I'm going to go with?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: There's a freedom at Detroit that I knew I can cut the ball and knowing where I'm going to miss. There's just something small that I was missing to continue that. What worked in Detroit worked a little bit, but not as long as what I wanted. And sometimes you find a small fix, but it's not really the true fix.

I'm going to say now hopefully we found what is the true fix and will bring me back to what I was in 2019, 2020, 2021. But a fix like that, if it lasts three more days I'll be very, very happy.

Q. Was it you and J.J. or is your coach here?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Rick's not here, no. I've been talking to Rick a lot. And actually it was part putting as well. So it's partly started with putting. Talked with my trainer. J.J. has seen it. He just didn't know how to articulate it to me. Which is frustrating on his part because he knows, like, something's different. And I kept watching videos on repeat and repeat. Something's different, it's just hard to pinpoint what it was.

Q. How much were you and Adam kind of feeding off each other? I don't know the last time you played with somebody who went almost as low as you?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: By the time we finished 15 I think he had two or three birdies in a row. At that point I was just telling myself I wanted two to finish on the last three holes. It's very doable out here. 18 is a very gettable par-5. Especially with the wind down today. 17 is short. So it's nice to get 3 out of that.

But when you're able to feed off a partner, you're seeing putts go in, you're seeing great shots, there's a rhythm to it. We played nice and quick today, we just kept going. I don't know if he made a bogey, but it was just really, really easy I think for both of us.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports