

The Presidents Cup

Tuesday, September 20, 2022

Charlotte, North Carolina

Quail Hollow Club

Justin Thomas

Press Conference



JUSTIN THOMAS: Hello. Good. How are you?

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: For sure. I think the thing I like about it is it's Bermuda, you know, just like the PGA was. So, you know, being back in obviously a familiar place and just a lot of great feelings, a lot of great memories, and I mean it's just an unbelievable golf course.

It's such a great test, and I think it's going to be a really good venue this week.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: I don't know. I mean, you got to play the holes for what they are. If you play them well out here, it's not terribly different. It's just a lot of drivers, 7 irons, a lot of drivers, 6 irons. It's a long golf course. It's soft right now so it's playing even longer.

I think you have the potential for more fireworks, you know, eagles on the short -- it's so hard to remember the numbers. All of 14 and 15. And then, obviously, yeah, you have 16, 17 -- or 13, 14, 15. That very well could be won with par so it could provide a lot of drama.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, I mean, I hope to not lean on my partner too much. I want to pull my weight just like he's going to want to pull his. But no, it's good. I mean, it's getting there. It's only Tuesday, and it's just like a normal, you know, stroke play event. I want to feel like I'm getting a little bit better each and every day to where once we tee it up Thursday, I'll be fully ready to go.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah. It's very different. Just especially being here in America, you know, truly feel like everybody is rooting for you, except for the international fans. So it's great. We have a great team, great team

chemistry, and I think it's going to be awesome.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: It's good. It just kind of depends on what you want. I think if it's a place you want a bunch of birdies and you want a bunch of volatility, I don't necessarily know if you'll have a bunch of that here.

Like I said, you have some really difficult holes. With the way the wind's been blowing, having 18 into the wind, you know, I've hit gap wedge, pitching wedge in there multiple times in the Wells Fargo, and we hit 5 irons, 4 irons the last two days.

Like I said, not being as firm, having longer clubs in the green. The greens are softer. With the weather forecast how it is, you would think it's going to firm up and have the opportunity to play faster to where we'd have shorter clubs. It's going to be a take advantage of what you have, but also play to your opponent a little bit more than normal.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: I mean, 100 percent. It's different grass so it's night and day a different golf course.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: I don't know. I mean, I would say a lot of it is I've been fortunate to have some really good partners who are also very, very good at golf. And I have no shame in riding their coattails to victory. That's my number one goal in these team events is just to do whatever we have to do to go get a point.

If it means shoot 10 under or shoot 2 over, I don't care. As long as we get a point for Team USA and put one on the board, then our goal is accomplished. I don't know. It just has a little bit different feel.

I feel like my adrenaline and emotions obviously come out a lot more. You know, things that you probably couldn't get away with in a stroke play event, you can get away with in terms of celebrations and playing with the crowd a little bit.



I just try to feed off that.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: I don't know. I mean, some of it, hey, is just I've played well in team events. But truly, you know, Tiger was playing great in Australia. Rick was playing unbelievable at Liberty Straits. Jordan was playing well at Paris and Whistling Straits. We have a lot of very, very good players on our team, and I've been fortunate to have some good partners and just sprinkle some in when I can.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, it's just an unfortunate situation for him. Yeah, it's not fair. This is two years in the making of thinking about who your team's going to be, about, you know, developing relationships, friendships with players.

It's tough. I mean, we didn't want it. He didn't want it. The tournament didn't. Nobody wanted it. It is a bummer, but, you know, he's put together a very, very strong team. I think camaraderie-wise, one of the best they've had. It's probably not the team he would have drawn up at the beginning of the year or halfway through the year, but it's who he has now, and I'm sure he's more than excited about it.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: Just do us. Just go out and play golf and just try to go win a point against the team we're playing against. That's all you can do and all of us can do. Just hopefully it adds up to having more than them by Sunday.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: I've talked to him a lot about it because that's something that I personally struggle with a lot with myself. Not being a favorite, but just being very confident, like feel like I'm playing very well going into a tournament or whatever it might be and just managing expectations and emotions and, I mean, there's nobody better, you know, on earth than him. And somehow getting a bunch of 18- and 19-year-olds to manage their expectations and just get lost and engaged in the process.

I think that's what it is. We're out here, these practice rounds. We're not talking about we're going to win this match, we're going to get this many points or anything. All everyone's trying to do is get ready for a golf tournament and just get ready to execute come Thursday morning.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: To be honest, I'm not worried about the other team. I'm just worried about what I'm doing, what we're doing. As soon as you start looking about what other guys can do, then it gets -- personally gets me in trouble. There's no need to waste any time or energy on it.

I mean, obviously, they have a lot of good players that can beat any of us any given day, any given time. There's no need to think about it, as opposed to me just going out and doing what I need to do, performing the best that I can with my partner or by myself in singles and just hope it gets a point.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: It's very high up there. I mean, he was playing so good, and I know that's one of his favorite places in the world. So honestly, just the practice rounds kind of sitting back and watching how he makes his way around or made his way around. It was cool. I mean, I had a lot of great memories, a lot of great little moments. Winning points with him was cooler than anything.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: No. I didn't know.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: I don't.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: I don't. I mean, I don't understand. It's very obvious and written right there in front of them. They just naturally want what's best for them, just like the decision they made to go there.

I totally understand. Hey, if I was doing the same situation, I would want it, but that doesn't necessarily make it right. The governing bodies have created a system for a reason, and that's to try to create the best system possible to determine the best players in the world.

Now, yeah, is it going to be skewed because some of the top players aren't going to be in there? Yes. But that's their own fault for making the decision they made, and they knew very, very well going into it there's a good chance they won't have World Ranking points, and they took that risk.

In my opinion, that's their own fault.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: It's great. The fans are great. It's just a great atmosphere. I was telling some of the guys, I think it's going to be just a great atmosphere because of the difference that, like, trees make for echos. Like Whistling Straits was unbelievable and the Ryder Cup, the fans. But just with the wind and how kind of spread out it is and no real opportunity for that, like it was loud, but it wasn't potentially how loud it can get here.

I think with some of the routing and kind of back and forth and just some of the pockets there that you can get has a potential to get really, really loud out there. I think Charlotte's going to show out like they usually do.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah. Probably maybe I had thought about it at some point. I'm sure we played a time or two in the neighborhood growing up. But, no, it was cool. It was funny, you know, naturally seeing Tiger on the cover. I was just, like, I wonder why I never heard about that. It makes sense now that I see his face on the cover and not mine.

It was cool. It was a moment. One of those things growing up it would be awesome to have. You just don't know if it's going to happen. Once you see it in real life, it's pretty sweet.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: 100 percent. I mean, it's a very selfish sport, and it's a very -- I mean, really, anything is. It's just the sense of, in life, you have to do a lot of things over the course of your entire life that it's like, okay, I maybe don't want to do this, but it's just like I have to, whatever it is.

But, depending on, I guess, how you feel about your career or how serious you are about it, you have to make some selfish decisions. You could argue a caddie, a coach. I don't want to maybe hurt this coach's feelings. We have a great friendship, whatever. But if it's what I need to do to become better, then that's a selfish decision.

If it's like, hey, I want to have five times as much worth than I have right now, maybe I'll go do this, that's a selfish decision. But it's not -- like you can make those decisions, and they're -- all selfish decisions are different. But you definitely have to have some of that mindset in this sport.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: Personally? I mean, there's definitely some things like external, like outside of golf that I'm sure I've felt guilt over. But I can't think of anything golf related.

I'm trying to play the absolute best I can all the time, and I'm trying to make decisions off of that.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: It's weird, yeah.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: Well, Jordan's played in quite a few more than I have, but, I mean, I always just tell the captains, I'm like, look, I'm here to do whatever you need me to do. If you need me to be a leader, like I kind of felt like that with Strick, and Strick said to me a couple times, we want you to, you know, kind of be a part of this team and lead this team. I'm like, Strick, I'll do whatever you need me to do. If you need me to talk to someone, if you need me to stay away, if you need me to give some kind of rah-rah speech, which wasn't the case.

But it's just I always want to relay that message to the captains that, like, I'm -- although I'm here to play well, I'm here for our team, and I'm here to do whatever I can to make sure that we are in the best place possible to succeed.

But also, a lot of leadership is on our captain side. Look at all the assistant captains and the amount of teams they've been in, both good and bad experiences. So they know better than anybody, more than Jordan and I.

But I'm here as much as they need me.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: I haven't been told anything. So maybe my leadership role has been passed on. Just go win points, I guess.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: No, not really. It's just pretty much whoever you play, you want to beat, and you want to beat them bad. That's kind of the mindset I've always had. There's maybe been lineups or situations in the past where I've wanted one particular individual, but I haven't felt that this week.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: Not that I know of, no. Someone might feel differently about me on their team, but I don't have any of that toward any of them.

Q. (No microphone).



JUSTIN THOMAS: Well, I know it gives me a lot of bragging rights over my teammates. That is for sure. Yeah, there's -- I haven't probably broken it out as much as I would have liked to over their heads. But no, it's great. I mean, more for me, it's just a lot of good memories and a lot of positive vibes. Yesterday, walking up 18, now 15. Kind of looking around, remember walking up there with a three-shot lead and hearing the chanting and looking at the scoreboard. It kind of gave me chills trying to remember that.

Feels like forever ago, being five years ago. But it's just, yeah, I mean, these guys know this golf course and it's very, very right in front of you. So they don't need my help too much.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: I mean, I like playing with Jordan about as much as I can -- I often can. But that's the good thing about our team is I would be more than happy to play with anybody on our team. I think we have a very, very stacked, deep team that's good in a lot of different areas. So whoever captain wants to send me out with, I'm going to go try to get a point with.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: In each individual thing? I mean, Cam Young off the tee is really impressive. I mean, I'd take my iron game. I would take Jordan's short game. Putting. Kis, probably.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: I mean, it's amazing. They've done an unbelievable job. And the PGA TOUR set the course up this week. That's one thing I learned this year about the Presidents Cup. It's not the Ryder Cup, where whoever is hosting is very heavily influencing what is going on.

The TOUR and Quail Hollow did an unbelievable job of just getting this place in unbelievable condition. I really hope we can continue to get this sunshine and maybe a little bit of wind and dry it out a little bit just to get it firm and fast and really get, you know, challenging.

We don't want it to be stupid and make us look bad. But at the same time, it's match play, and you're just worrying about the other team you're playing against. If I win a hole with a double, that's good enough for me.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: No, no. I mean, we had a pretty late afternoon and kind of went back, got ready, went to dinner, got back from dinner and pretty much went to bed. Come on, we're high quality athletes. We are. We have to fine tune these machines.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, I personally vote Fred on every team possible until he dies. I mean, he's the greatest. He's the best. He just is so funny to be around, so fun to be around. He'll shoot you straight. He can get serious with you if he's -- if I just want him and only him and everyone get away, he can do that. He can also kind of poke fun and joke with me.

But he just brings a great dynamic, and Davis knows that and knew that and, you know, it's not a coincidence that he's an assistant captain on this team because he brings a great element in the team room for sure.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: No, it's a tough place to do matches because it's a lot of pars, you know. It's a lot of -- you know, you got to make a couple 15- to 25-, 30-footers and maybe birdie the par 5 or something. Xander chipped in for an eagle today. Not really much excitement, no.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: We won today. Just Jordan and I played yesterday.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: Not necessarily. I mean, it's so right in front of you, and the greens are relatively soft so it's just pretty much see fairway, hit fairway. See pin, hit pin. You can definitely use some shot shaping to fit it in the fairways more or use some contours on the green or leave it in the right places.

But I think of a shotmaker's course like a Royal Melbourne or a St. Andrews where you can truly, you know, use different slopes and kind of get balls close to the hole like that.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: I don't think it does. I mean, it just depends on the player, who you're playing against. Thing is me and my partner are playing the same exact course that our two opponents are playing, and you're just trying to beat them. And you know what you got to do to do it kind

of thing.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: No, don't see the need to. Just don't know why. I mean, they're more than happy doing what we're doing, and we're doing great what we're doing. So just don't see the need for it.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: On 10, yeah.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: The rough was very, very long for the PGA. It's an awkward length right now. But, I mean, it's Bermuda. The fairways are narrow. It was pretty soft that week too like it is right now. I mean, the greens are pure. So it's all very similar. Just the rough is quite a bit different.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah. He did yesterday. Then we won as a team today. I prefer to look at the team aspect. I'm glad to know that my partner's a little selfish and pointed out the fact that he won yesterday. But, you know, you notice I didn't say that. I was talking about how we won as a team today. Maybe I'll talk to Davis about that.

Q. (No microphone).

SEBASTIAN MUNOZ: I don't know if it needs to be made any more important than it is. I mean, it's just such a -- I don't know. I guess everybody feels differently, but this is, I mean, the pinnacle other than, obviously, Majors. Being able to represent your country. I grew up watching these team events, and I loved high school golf. I loved college golf. Just being in the team rooms and us all sitting together, BS'ing, we don't get to do that.

To be perfectly honest, we don't get to root for each other. No offense to the other 11 guys on my team, but I'm not necessarily pulling for them to shoot 64 every time they play. I'm hoping we have good, competitive golf, and I just outplay them, you know what I mean?

So I just think that it's just such an honor and a -- just a cool experience and big deal to be here, and it's a big enough deal in itself, and I don't think it needs to be added any more than it is. I'm sure there will be plenty of talk of how it's a huge week because it needs to be compared to LIV or whatever it is. You look at story lines, that's going on all over golf.

In my opinion, you look at stories that are going on in the Korn Ferry finals or look at Robert McIntyre winning last week. That's way better than a story line you'll see that they're creating.

And that's just what it's about. These kind of weeks is what it's about. Rookies being here for the first time and us trying to just go be, you know, one of the best teams that we can be and the internationals trying to be one of the best teams they can be.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: I don't know. I honestly don't. I think the once a year makes them as special as they are, you know what I mean? I think if there was a couple a year, they'd maybe get diluted a little bit. It would still be exciting, but we also play enough golf. I'm not necessarily looking to add any more to the schedule.

But no, I think it's great how it is.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, it could be cool. I think there's been talks of that. It's just, again, it's very difficult. I think a lot more goes into it schedule-wise and networking-wise. Just basically a lot of stuff that's way past any player's pay grade that knows what's going on.

It's easy for us. We show up when we're told to show up, and we go out and hit shots and try to play as well as we can. Whereas there are people behind the scenes making the contracts, signing the deals, trying to do this and get all this organized and getting hotels and fitting in schedules and whatever it may be.

Until then, I'm just going to keep doing what I'm doing.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, it's been great. I always wish him nothing but the best. He's one of my best friends. And we grew up thinking and talking about being partners in these team events. Now to actually be out here and sharing these moments with Greller, who caddied for me when I was in high school and college, and Bones on my bag, who Greller looked up to for so long. It's surreal, to be honest, when you sit back and think about it.

It's fun. Pat, Xander and Jordan and I were sitting together last night talking about Australia. He was sitting there, like cool, guys, I know. It wasn't by coincidence. I'll say that.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: It's very similar. The rough is very, very minimal compared to how it was for the PGA. Being Bermuda and soft, it's a very similar setup.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: I don't really care. I mean, we're playing 18 holes, and whatever hole you're playing, you're just trying to play best you can. It's going to create for maybe more excitement and probably better for TV. But for us, I don't know if there's much of a difference.

Q. (No microphone).

JUSTIN THOMAS: You could say that. Yeah, I mean, I think Kis has the bragging rights on everybody in the team room right now. I'm just glad Texas didn't beat Alabama so didn't make my week miserable this week.

Q. In terms of the overall chemistry, can you tell that pretty quickly?

JUSTIN THOMAS: For sure. Everybody gets along really well. It's a young team. We've played a lot against and with each other for a very long time. So it's just, you know -- I mean, you think of a guy like Max, and you're like, how has he not played on a team. He's a five-time winner on the PGA TOUR. Billy Horschel, won a FedEx Cup, won seven, eight, nine times. He's an understanding believable player. That's how deep the Americans are in golf. To have a team like this with great camaraderie and a lot of deep talent, I think it's, you know, it's a lot of fun.

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