

The Sentry

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Kapalua, Maui, Hawaii, USA
Plantation Course at Kapalua

Collin Morikawa

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Collin Morikawa to the interview room here at The Sentry.

Collin, you're making your fifth appearance here, four top-10 finishes, pretty good stuff. What's it like to be back?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I love it. I love this golf course. It's obviously a good thing that you're starting here this year and you obviously want to start off with a win. You know there's going to be a lot of birdies, a lot of eagles. Low scores are going to be out there. I know from past experience that you can never let your foot off the pedal and you just got to keep grinding out here and make those birdies.

THE MODERATOR: Pivoting to something you did earlier this week at Hua Momona Farms up here at the top of the hill here, your recovery efforts, relief efforts, for the fires in Lahaina. Just touch upon what happened up at Hua Momona Farms and what you and Adidas are doing this week.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, this week obviously means a lot more to me than just playing golf and trying to win. Look, that is the ultimate goal and if I do that, we're going to succeed in every way. But it's about raising awareness, obviously, still about the fires that had happened. Look, just because we talked about it three months ago or four months ago, whatever, in August, doesn't mean everything's built up. I think we all saw it firsthand, all the players driving in this week. You could see all the devastation, what had happened to everyone's houses and the businesses, and I just want to give back to a community that -- going back in my history, my family history, and that lineage where they kind of grew up and then where we kind of settled for a little bit and where my grandparents were born, where my dad hung out, where we came for summers.

So like you said, we went to Hua Momona Farms earlier this week, got to hang out with Chef Zach at the top making some boxes for families, donating food, seeing their greenhouse and everything that they're doing to give

to families that are in need and just put a smile on everyone's face, seeing everyone out here, and what we get to do is put on a show hopefully and make some entertainment, but seeing people and just seeing them smile and getting their heads away from everything.

So we've been able to put out -- I'm going to be able to do \$2,000 for every birdie, \$4,000 dollars for every eagle, and a great partner of mine, Adidas, has been able to say that they're going to be able to match that for everything I make. So I've got a lot of birdies and eagles hopefully in my future.

THE MODERATOR: I'm sure you'll make it happen.

With that we'll open it up to questions.

Q. What was the message or what is the message that you think the locals want you guys to know and want the world to know from spending time around Maui?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Look, every time I've been able to come to Hawaii you have this culture of family, right? Everyone always gives back, everyone's always a helping hand. That is in a lot of places around the world, but I think you really see that in Hawaii, especially out here on Maui. Every year that we come the volunteers are some of the kindest volunteers in the world. The people around us are very helpful.

I think when you're able to see that kind of lending hand, that's what I want to do for this community. They have been through a lot of hardship over the past handful of months and to know that you're able to help out just building some boxes of food for them, giving back to some -- giving back some money to help the foundation here, right? So I'm going to be helping out the Hawaii Community Foundation. They have been directly focused on immediate impact and long-term impact of Lahaina and that's really important for me.

So I think the biggest message that -- I can't speak on behalf of the people that lost what they had lost, their houses or their families, but just a sense of gratitude and a sense of family, that's the biggest thing out here that I've

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gotten to learn because everyone is so kind out here.

Q. No good transition, but how is your golf game?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Golf game's good. It was nice to kind of have this little off-season to figure out what to work on, what I need to work on, how do you get focused again. So it's good to kind of start this year off where everyone starts at zero here at Maui and off to the races we go.

But the golf game feels really good, putting, chipping, swing, it's all in a good spot. You've just got to -- even if it feels in a good spot, you've just got to find a way to play golf, and that's the biggest thing because once tomorrow starts and we hit that first tee shot everything goes out the window. It's just everything that you know what you need to do in a tournament, that's what you need to focus on.

Q. With all the stats that are available through the Shot Link technology, is there a value beyond knowing what to work on, knowing where your weaknesses and strengths are?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, a hundred percent. Statistically I think I had one of the best statistical years I have had in my career. Irons didn't look like they had dropped off that drastic, but irons were a big factor in me not being able to put together four rounds or me not being able to contend. So you would never see that in certain statistics. If you just look at the basics of strokes gained approach, you definitely wouldn't see that, but I know there's things where I can get better and -- shoot, I wish ZoZo had my stats, a little more stats, because I ended up playing well. I think they only had the fairways hit and greens hit, but that's all right.

Q. With how you as a player measure your year and everyone else's, when it comes to scoring, winning, rankings or positions, ball striking, all that stuff, how do you prioritize what makes a stellar year?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Wins.

Q. You start with wins?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah. Statistical data, I don't care. If I was No. 1 in putting, it doesn't mean anything if I'm not winning. If that's all I cared about and that's what I wanted to accomplish for the year, then yeah, but my goals aren't set like that. For me, it's wins and consistency.

I've said it since day one. I want to be a consistent player. What Scottie's been doing is incredible, right? That's what I want to get back to. I was close to doing that. That's what I want to get to again.

But wins, I mean, at the end of the year, you could miss 20 cuts and have one win or win a major and you're like, man, yeah, my year might have been pretty shitty for 99 percent of it, but that 1 percent makes up for it. When you're able to accomplish the wins -- you know, wins can come in many fashions, right? You could win playing well, you can win playing poorly, you can win having lucky breaks, but when those things come together, there's no better feeling.

Q. So many questions, but if I can wrap this into one. The Morikawa family restaurant, where it was -- I know it wasn't there anymore, but where it was, I believe was in the fire zone. You talked about it a little bit, but driving up here and feeling all that, is there a little bit different feeling? I know this is a special place for you anyway, but is there a little bit different feeling for you personally this week?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: 100 percent. When I started thinking about it and you drive by on the highway and if I were to talk about it for 15 minutes, like, I would start getting emotional just because it does mean that much to me. I never lived here, but my family lived here, my grandparents lived here, my aunts and my uncles, my cousins all grew up here, and to know that you have that tie to that family it's heartbreaking.

You hear about these families -- like, I met Chef Zach at Hua Momona Farms, and he had lost everything and to hear him talk about how he's living out of a suitcase and that's all he's got left, it's something that I can't even relate to, right? But I'm just trying to help out as much as I can. To know what he's doing even though he was put in that circumstance of what he's doing for the hundreds and hundreds of families out there that could use his help, it's amazing.

So this week always meant more to me. There's only a few weeks out on TOUR that have that meaning that no one else would know about other than myself, but this week, no matter what, 2024, when I look back at my career, 2024 Sentry will always mean that much more.

Q. You were, I think, the first guy to at least publicly pledge fundraising efforts to help the survivors. Other guys have followed, but I'm just wondering, what is the knowledge -- do all the guys know what's going on? It's easy enough to say that, but if you could put in your own words how many guys, you know, are touched by this event this week, you know, of your peers.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: No, it's hard to speak on their behalf. Look, where I grew up in La Cañada there were

fires when I was growing up in high school and I knew friends that got affected, and then, like, the Napa fires that had had happened a handful of years ago, that was devastating as well, right? But it's hard to bring my love and my passion and push it on them, right? All I can ask for is them just treating everyone great. And, look, I think it's great for the island that we're all here giving back, giving business to people that need it. Look, I went out to dinner last night at Joey's Kitchen and the line was around the corner farther than I've ever seen.

So that's good, right? That's good for the people of Maui, that's good for the people of Lahaina. All I'm trying to do is just bring awareness, right? And that's what I tried to do during playoffs. It was great to see a handful of players give back and see companies, see my sponsors, give back as well. Every little bit helps. So whether it's matching or whether it's a small part of it, we've had a great team. The TOUR's been great about it, the people behind me have been great, and I've been very lucky to have a team around me.

I'm sure everyone knows what has happened. When you drive in, it's very, very eery to drive by on the highway. So unless you've got the most tinted windows possible, you're seeing what's going on, you're seeing how many people have lost their homes.

Q. It always comes back to food for us in Hawaii. So I just want to try to get a little more specifics. I read something about how your dad still has a big itch for your grandfather's food from the restaurant, and when you came here during the summers was the restaurant still open, did you go there or did you have something favorite that your grandparents made, and also, I haven't read anything, I don't know what their names are, maybe if you can help me out with that?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: So, the restaurant was sold before I was even born. I think I'm going to guess they sold it in the '70s or '80s. This was before me. This is when my dad was a kid, and they would come over, because my dad grew up in L.A. They would come over, over the summers and hang out with the cousins and the aunts and uncles and he always talked about the chow fun like just different chow fun. Not the normal wide, long noodle, like the short square, like not star noodle, chow fun, but similar to that, but different. He always added shoyu and pepper and it was like as plain as could be and I'm like, man, this sounds amazing. So, yeah, look, I don't know who ran the store, I don't know who, what, all I know is that my last name was on the restaurant, and that's what it was, it was a small little shack or I guess, something, a building, and they would just go in and out, pick on the food, probably steal everyone else's food, and, but that's, there's a simplicity to

that, right, and there's a simplicity to being out here on the island, being away from so much of the rest of the world, is that you're able to step back and just enjoy where we are, and I think everyone's able to do that.

Q. To the business of TOUR business and kind of where we were a year ago. Specifically, do you feel satisfied or dissatisfied about the amount of information you know about where the TOUR is heading with this PGA TOUR Enterprises thing, and do you have a ideal outcome in your own head?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I'm like right in the middle. I'm like, if you had a meal and you're, like, you're full, but you know you want something else, you want dessert, kind of I'm sitting in that like zone. Look, not that I've taken my self out, I still listen to all the meetings, I read up on everything that's going on, but at this point all you can do is just play your best golf and show up and see what happens. I hope everything comes together and we're able to all play together at some point in some time in some way, but there's so much back and forth, the e-mails we get is, it's all fluff. Like, there's no point in reading these e-mails anymore that we get. Players are saying one thing and then they say something else some other time.

At this point, I think just deals need to be made and we all need to get back to playing golf. It is what it is. Guys make their decision to go one way, I've never had an issue with it, I've never had an issue with anything. Everyone makes their own decision. But I do miss playing with everyone at one time. That's why the majors have been fun over the past year, two years. Not that they're not fun, but it's nice to see some of these guys, right, because it's, that was normal when I turned pro. I never thought it was going to be anything different. Not that it takes away from these fields, not that it takes a way from the PGA TOUR, but there's great players in other parts of the world, and I think we miss that.

Q. Do you have any advice for kids who want to start golfing?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, make it fun. Like, I think kids now, you guys are very lucky because golf's a lot more popular, even though it, you know, comparing to when I grew up, I'm only 26, but I grew up playing golf by myself a lot. Make it as fun as possible. Hit it as hard as you want. Go make the weirdest putt possible. Go try and make a trick shot. Make it fun, because that -- see, it put a smile on your face, because it's fun, right. Do that first, because when you're able to do that, then you're able to be creative. When you're able to do that, you can go out and play golf any way you want. There's no one way to play golf. No one should ever tell you that. Go make it fun in any way

possible for how you think golf is fun.

Q. What is the biggest challenge for you while you're golfing?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: The biggest challenge for me, I would say, is to just not be as stressed sometimes when I'm walking. We're out there for such a long time and your head likes to wander and think about, Oh, is it a good shot, is it a bad shot. I like to always know, like I always like to know my answers, and sometimes you don't know where your golf ball is. Sometimes it's five feet, maybe it's 20 feet. But it's being able to relax. This is a great way to start my year, because I'm not able to, or I'm not focusing so much on where the golf ball is at 24/7. I like to look out at the ocean, enjoy the view, enjoy where I'm at, enjoy the ocean breeze and really put that into perspective.

THE MODERATOR: Awesome. Thank you for the time, Collin, we appreciate it. Good luck this week.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Thank you, guys.

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