

Valspar Championship

Thursday, March 21, 2024

Palm Harbor, Florida, USA

Innisbrook Resort (Copperhead)

Justin Thomas

Quick Quotes

Q. Pretty solid, do you feel good?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, I didn't feel like I drove it very well -- actually, I know I didn't drive it very well. I salvaged and scrambled really well, I felt like. Yeah, I just kind of just tried to make it as easy on myself as possible, especially around here. But just until you get into a little bit of a rhythm, I feel like once you start trying to push it a little out here you can start kind of making a lot of bogeys and big numbers. So I just tried to stay really patient all day. Hit a lot of really good putts that just burned the edge and didn't go in, so it was nice to get the last two and see the patience pay off.

Q. What did you hit in on 8 and what's it like to finish like that?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, it's great. It was 192 today. I hit 6-iron. I tried to land it just a couple short. It was about a 195-yard shot. Yeah, Bones said after we made that par on 5, Let's try to get two of these last four kind of thing. That's the thing about this course is if you do drive it well, you do have some pretty scorable clubs with how receptive the greens are right now. But they're very difficult greens to read. They're very grainy and it's just kind of a lot of subtle slope or it's a very big slope. I think it's a very important -- at least to me, it's an important week to hit greens so you're not trying to scramble all week.

Q. Do you take a little bit more off the tee here, not as many drivers?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yes and no. I've played well when I've been driving it well here where I just had to chip driver around a lot here. I've hit it on 2, I've hit it down 7, 9, I've hit it on 11 a bunch, like, holes that I didn't hit driver on today, but I, honestly, just didn't feel comfortable with my driver. I just wasn't hitting it solid. I just was in a very fairway-first type of mindset today, and then from there, just really trying to hit the green or put it in a good spot and just kind of pick my spots when I could type thing.

Q. Masters question. Obviously last year they made



that big change at 13, moving the tee back. A lot of discussion about it. Did it turn out to be a big deal, do you think? Did it impact the way you played the hole?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I only played it once in competition. The other day was raining so hard and so windy that I wouldn't even factor that one in. Personally, I like it because I didn't play the hole very well before, it's kind of an uncomfortable yardage number for me off the tee. So it's better, for my selfish reasons, in terms of yardage. I think it's a hole that you'll maybe see less big numbers and less 3s, but now you really, really have to hit a really quality long iron or even wood second shot into that green, as opposed to sometimes flipping 7, 8-iron in there.

Q. So is it still tempting though on the second shot?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Oh, yeah. Yeah. It definitely is. You hit a good drive and you have an iron in your hand, it's always going to be hard to want to lay up. Try to -- it's a lot harder to make 3 from 70 yards than it is from going for it in two.

Q. Even for the longest hitters, is it still a driver? Do you have to hit driver?

JUSTIN THOMAS: It depends on how you shape it. I like to work it left-to-right off the tee, so it's probably why it hasn't necessarily been my favorite tee shot. It's a perfect tee shot for Rory, perfect tee shot for Bubba with his cut. It just really depends on your shot shape and how far you hit it. But the new tee now definitely brings more drivers into play.

Q. That's not one where you would stand up there and say, okay, I have to hit a draw. You wouldn't change and do that?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I mean, yeah, I don't have to now. It definitely helps. Before -- well before I could go kind of over the trees, I felt like I could even hit a high straight one or maybe a little bit of a fade, but you don't, you mostly have to draw it. But you just hit a good one, if it goes if the pine straw, you deal with it and go from there.



Q. You're going to hit a few drivers and get the driver going. Do you know in your head what you're trying to do?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I just wasn't kind of trusting it and kind of getting through it. I just was kind of getting stuck and kind of flipping at it. It was nice to hit a good drive on the last hole, I just felt like I actually committed to hitting a cut and kind of covering it a little bit more. I hit some beautiful irons today, so I know that those swings, the good swings are in there it was just something about when it was getting a little longer it was getting a little loose.

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