

Workday Charity Open

Saturday, July 11, 2020

Dublin, Ohio, USA

Muirfield Village

Justin Thomas

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome Justin Thomas into the interview room here at the Workday Charity Open, following a 6-under par 66, currently has a two-shot lead heading into the final round. Justin, if we can get some comments on your third bogey-free round of the week.

JUSTIN THOMAS: I played well. Just kind of executed what we were trying to do. Got the ball in the fairway very well and hit my irons well. It just was a difficult day and some serious wind for the last two days, and just felt like we've really been solid, Jimmy and I, and made some of those key putts when I needed to.

THE MODERATOR: Comment a little bit about your thoughts going into tomorrow's round with a two-shot lead.

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, just trying to play as well as I can. I'm trying to -- you don't know what the conditions are going to give you weather-wise or give us weather-wise, so if we get a day like the first day, it's going to probably take a little bit more, but if it's a day like the last two days, then par is going to be a good score.

Just going to keep trying to hit the fairways and hit the greens and make as many birdies as I can.

Q. Justin, you're playing with Viktor Hovland and Collin Morikawa tomorrow, which makes you the veteran of the group. Do you feel like a veteran out here?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I don't think I'm quite a veteran yet. I think I've got a little ways to go. But yeah, today I played with Collin. I've been around Collin a good bit. I haven't spent much time around Viktor. I've obviously seen him and know he's an unbelievable player, so it'll be fun to play with those two guys tomorrow because I'm sure it's the first of many pairings I'll have with them. But a guy like Collin, I could be playing and having him as a teammate in Ryder Cups, Presidents Cups, whatever it is. It'll be fun to hang with those guys tomorrow, but at the end of the day I'm worried about myself and trying to win a golf tournament and have a good round.

Q. A couple times you were out of position around the greens. Which of the saves were you most pleased with?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I mean, the two-putt on 4 was really, really good. That was a very, very difficult two-putt. I felt like it was on a pretty severe slope to where with the wind coming -- wind going that way, I felt like if I got it past the hole even with the greens being quite a bit slower, I could just go right off the front of the green, hence the reason I left it about eight or ten feet short, and that was a difficult putt, one that I struggle on when I'm not putting well, a downhill kind of a slippery left-edge putt. I really, really rolled that putt well, so that was a big save there.

I mean, other than that, I felt like the rest of the day -- I mean, the up-and-down on 16, it was nice, but it wasn't very difficult. I mean, I had a lot of green to work with, I was back into the wind. But that two-putt on 4 was nice.

Q. Did you find yourself on that front nine, it almost felt like you were having to make birdies just to keep pace with Collin and then it just felt like the back nine, the whole dynamics changed.

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, I didn't think that too much. I understood that it wasn't Sunday, I didn't need to press, I didn't need to try to catch him immediately. I know that I'm playing well, and I knew that I was playing well, so I just needed to keep doing what I was doing to try to move up one by one. I couldn't get to 14 unless I got to 12 first and I couldn't get to 15 unless I got to 13. Just kind of keep making my way up one step at a time, or one birdie at a time.

Q. How much tougher is the golf course playing now as opposed to Thursday?

JUSTIN THOMAS: You know, it's quite a bit tougher, just because of the wind. The greens are still relatively slow compared to normal, but they have to do that, protecting the course. I think the TOUR has done an unbelievable job of setting the course up but also protecting it with the tournament here the next week and giving us some different pins and such like that.

But I would say it was a little bit firmer on Thursday, and



then with the little bit of rain we've had the last couple days, it's a little bit softer. It's not -- it's pretty similar, just the only difference is we have so much wind now that when you're downwind, the ball is bouncing a mile. Then when you're into the wind, you have to really control your distance and your spin. But the rough is definitely getting longer. I don't think they've cut it, and I don't think they plan on doing it anytime soon.

Q. And could you just tell me your reasoning for laying up on 14 today?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I don't play that hole very well, or I haven't in the past, but I haven't from the back tee. It's a fairway that I've really struggled with, and our thinking is just being that close, I feel pretty confident hitting that fairway with an 8-iron. Yesterday I wish I would have laid up because it's straight downwind. That was a really, really easy pin to wedge it to. Yeah, I probably wasn't going to make 2 and I couldn't make 2 hitting 3-wood, but I'm never going to have more than 12 feet if I just lay it up and hit a wedge in there to that pin yesterday. I was a little bit mad at myself kind of getting wrapped up in how good I was hitting my 3-wood and kind of went away from our game plan.

That back pin I think is the best pin to go for it to because you can kind of chip up the green and you're never really short-sided, but today I just felt like if I missed it kind of where Collin did, you can hit a good tee shot, you just pull it, it goes with the wind, goes up in that left bunker, in the left rough and you're screwed, you have nothing. I felt like hit a 8-iron up the right side of the fairway, have a great angle, and I'm never going to have more than 15 feet and probably have inside of eight feet, and I was glad it worked out.

Q. Justin, can you tell us which club you hit on hole 11?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I hit a driver and a 3-wood.

Q. You had some vocal comments about the lack of seriousness down in Hilton Head. I'm just curious what has been your experience in Dublin this week and as you sort of look ahead to next week?

JUSTIN THOMAS: It's been good. I haven't -- I mean, in Hilton Head, I don't know what it was, maybe it was just -- I was probably -- I went places more. Like I went to -- my aunt lives there, so I went over to their place for dinner, so like I was -- you know what I'm saying, I was driving more, whereas here I'm in a house and we're having dinner at the house every night, and I literally haven't been anywhere other than my house, the golf course and my grandparents'

house. It's like that's all I've been. I went to the gym in Hilton Head which I thought was for -- the players had access to it, which it was kind of in the middle of a market-type area, and that's where I was like, holy smokes, there's a lot going on here, which was the last time I went to that gym.

But it's been great from what I've seen here, but like I said, I haven't been able to see anything or obviously not venturing out too much. I don't really know, but I'm sure it's been great.

Q. Rahm had said something given that there was a spike in cases in Arizona, it felt kind of maybe safe to get out of Arizona. I'm curious from a player's perspective does it feel good to be in a place for two weeks and not feel like you're in airports or traveling? Does it feel safer?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, I mean, the TOUR has done a great job of making it as safe as possible, and I think the amount of positive -- the few amount of positive tests that we've had through however many weeks this is now speaks for itself. It's no coincidence. Everybody -- anybody and everybody is doing everything they can to make sure that we can continue to play at the highest level for all the fans, for all of us, whatever it might be. But also being safe and going about the correct protocols, and I think everyone is doing a great job.

I'm trying to do my best, as well, and there's times where you just kind of forget or catch yourself just from spending three months at home. You kind of forget what it's like to be in the outside world for a little bit. But it is nice. It's very nice, and I think like all of us, we're happy to be out here playing again.

Q. You struggled with your putting at the Travelers. I'm wondering what you worked on technically, and I thought I saw you take a couple putts with no practice stroke. Is that new this week?

JUSTIN THOMAS: No, I've done that -- yeah, I've probably done that for three or four years. I've just for a long time not taken a practice stroke. I take a practice stroke on long putts like when I'm trying to feel the speed, probably anything over 40-ish, 50, 60 feet where I'm kind of trying to feel it in my hands because that's where I feel my speed. But in terms of what I worked on, just kind of realized that my speed wasn't very good and worked on a couple things in my fundamentals or my mechanics to try to get rid of some errors and some pushing tendencies that I had in my stroke. But most importantly, I really worked on my speed hard because that was the biggest reason -- when I miss putts, that's usually the biggest reason.

Q. When is the last time you played with Tiger, and how did he look?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Whoa, probably that day I talked to you. Yeah, probably, right before the match. I hadn't played with him in a while. Just because I've been busy. I've been playing, and he's been home. I'm glad that he's finally coming back out. I think he was starting to get a little sassy, I was telling him he's scared to come out and play against all of us when he's sitting at home just trying to give him a hard time. But yeah, we're excited to have him out. He looked great. I mean, it was a couple months ago and everybody saw how well he played in the match. That was the last time, I guess, we've actually played a round of golf.

Q. Is it a little bit like when it's this windy and the conditions are this bad, you're 54 holes without a bogey, it forces you to focus? You can't take a hole off? Not that you guys think that way, but if that makes sense.

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah. No, no, it's a good observation or point. It's like Thursday morning it was so still that you're almost like trying -- you're trying to find something or it's like -- sometimes like when you play out in Palm Springs or Phoenix it's so still that you know that the shot is going to do exactly what it's going to do, and when you have a wind off the right, you know you have to hold it up against the wind or you have to ride it, and for me I like it. I'm going to prefer to hit a shot no matter what, but having a little bit of breeze kind of makes a shot maker show a little bit more, and I do like that aspect of it. But yeah, I think it just kind of makes Jimmy and I focus maybe just a little bit more, and probably me focus more on the shot that I'm hitting and the yardage I'm trying to hit because you do have to pay attention.

Q. Last time you were bogey-free, is that like talking about a no-hitter?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Last time I was bogey-free? No, I've done that many times. But I've never won the tournament. I'd rather win the tournament than go bogey-free.

THE MODERATOR: Justin, we appreciate your time. Best of luck tomorrow.

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