

# The Memorial Tournament Presented By Nationwide

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Dublin, Ohio, USA

Muirfield Village

## Collin Morikawa

### Press Conference

DOUG MILNE: We would like to welcome Collin Morikawa to the interview room here at the Memorial Tournament presented by Nationwide thanks for joining us for a few minutes. Obviously a place that's special to you to come back to, having won the workday last year here prior to the Memorial Tournament. Just some thoughts on general thoughts on being back here at Muirfield this week.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, I love it. It doesn't feel like I'm the defending champ and I've definitely not the defending champ, but I've had success here and I really love the course. The first time I showed up last year, those two weeks, it didn't really matter that I won or didn't win, I just fell in love with the place. I knew this was a place I was going to love for the rest of my life. To see these changes, to see these updates, I haven't been out on the course yet, but knowing that they're making these updates to make it a little more challenging, to make you really think through this golf course, I know Jack's only going to make this place even better.

So I look forward to it, it's a course that really has suited my eye, obviously last year and hopefully even with some moved bunkers and whatnot it's still kind of works to my favor.

DOUG MILNE: Just coming into the week, obviously a great season highlighted by a win at the World Golf Championships, Workday, just kind of assess the state of your game as you're heading into the week.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: It's been actually a little better. I would say over the past month and a half it's been a little more consistent. I've been seeing some decent results. But I just haven't put together four complete rounds. I've been hitting the ball pretty good from the fairway, driver's been a little iffy here and there, but for me obviously it just comes down to putting and I think I say this every week, but it's true.

I'm trying new things, I'm trying to work on things, I see glimpses of light of good putting streaks or good putting

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holes that really just kind of propel me to the next day. But I want to be more consistent, how I am with my irons, I want to be as consistent with that as chipping and putting and it's just about trying to find that just recipe for success and just watching other guys putt and kind of taking as much as I can from them.

DOUG MILNE: We'll open it up to questions.

**Q. What is the approach when you have in your memory bank Muirfield from the two times you played it, but now it's basically a completely new, maybe not a completely new golf course but a new course. When you go off your first practice rounds, what's the difference this year as opposed to any other golf course that you would go to?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, I think I almost have to kind of forget about some of the shots that I hit and remember -- because sometimes when you show up to a golf course that you played all the time you kind of know slopes, you know where you can kind of bail out. But having a lot of these greens redone and having new slopes and having new runoff areas, you have to approach the holes differently. It doesn't mean that it's a completely new hole, but some shots that you're going to be hitting are going to be, you're going to be aiming at spots you never have. Or if a green has a new part where a pin might be, you have to rethink that.

So I'm coming in with a fresh mind. I still have really good vibes and I have good memories from this place, but you have to remember that what you did a year ago is not going to necessarily translate into, I can hit this exact same shot off this tee or into this green, because realistically a lot of these greens are changed, slopes are going to be different, you just got to be prepared in a sense of let's go and prepare for this golf course like something I've never seen.

**Q. One hole I hope you could talk to in particular would be the 16th hole. I mean there's been a lot of -- that's been a grueling hole in past years, a lot of goofy stuff has happened on that hole. Can you just talk about what's the challenge of that hole?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, I mean I haven't seen 16 yet this week. But obviously just the green, before, if it was

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down wind, these greens out here can get super firm, some of the firmest on TOUR. If you're hitting a 7-iron in or even an 8-iron in, downwind from 200 yards, stopping that ball on a flat green that's almost going to run away, water short, there's really nowhere to bail. For us you want to have somewhere to bail at least and those bunkers are okay on the right, but even then sometimes you're just handcuffed and you can't go anywhere.

So I think just adding slightly more slope, I really don't know how much he added, but just knowing that he's at least making it somewhat playable -- you have to hit a good shot, don't get me wrong, this is the 16th hole of a great golf course, par-3, you still have to step up and hit a good shot. But to know that it might be a little more receptive, hopefully, but with new greens, new greens normally get really firm really fast, so we'll see what happens.

**Q. I always find it interesting to talk to professional athletes who have interests in other sports as well and I read that you were a pretty good baseball and basketball player as a kid. I saw you threw out the first pitch at a Dodgers game and I just wondered which sport you might have been better at and how far did you go in either of those sports?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I hope you don't base my baseball skills off that first pitch, because I've never been that nervous in my life. I don't know, I would say I was better at baseball. But like I'm not going to go play baseball with my friends at home. You can't go put up a game of 20 guys.

But when I go home and I a lot of my friends still live in L.A., we go play pick-up games, we'll shoot hoops all the time. So I love playing basketball. But I love following other athletes too. It's really cool tapping into their minds on what they do to get into kind of their zone. Because it's just that's what they're really good at. So I love following other sports. During COVID I was playing with a few other hockey guys in the NHL, in Vegas, so that was really cool. But, yeah, I don't know, I would say I was better at baseball, but don't watch that pitch again. That should have never leaked on ESPN.

**Q. That sort of, that camaraderie, you talk about different athletes and different sports and things, how is that maybe love of competition the same regardless of whether you're trying to shoot a basket or hit a home run or have a good drive, like how is that the same no matter what sport you're playing?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, I mean we're all trying to win and we're all trying to be the best and I think you can see that in everyone's eyes is that they're trying to do what they

have to do whether it's on the ice rink or baseball field or whatever it is, basketball court, like wherever you are, you're trying to do everything 24/7 to make yourself better. And the time and effort people put into trying to become the best in the world, it's amazing. I know a few other Olympic athletes, like on water polo, right, I've gotten really close with them, and to see what they do and for what almost five years now, to put in that work, for something that happens every four years is amazing and that's the coolest thing, because you can see the love that they have for their sport and what they do and that's the same that we have for golf and it just really, you don't have to ask them about it, you can just see them when they talk about it or when you just see them in their own element, it just really kind of breathes out of them.

**Q. You actually talked about Olympic athletes right when I was going to ask you about you are, as of right now, you're qualified to make the Olympics, actually three weeks to go until that happens. Have you decided if you're going to go and if you have how proud are you to be able to represent the United States but also your dad's ancestry as well?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, definitely we're on that cusp of making the team right now and there's a few weeks with some really big events. But I would go, I absolutely would go. I would never take a second thought on that. It's the Olympics. It's something that I never thought I would even have a chance to play in. But to have that opportunity to represent your country, there's really nothing like it. I've had that honor to do it a couple times as an amateur and it's the best feeling in the world because you're not just playing four yourself but you're playing for your country, you're playing for everyone around you.

So I would definitely make that trip over, let's make that team first and like you said, I've got three weeks to play some really good golf. But it would be really cool to go to Japan. I mean, the fans out there -- we were able to play the Zozo in 2019, the fans out there love the game so much, it's unbelievable to see the support you can get, especially someone that's of Japanese descent. And, yeah, no, it gets me excited and I would love to be there. So let's make that happen.

**Q. I know in golf obviously the majors are the big things, but where did the Olympics rank into terms of trying to win a gold medal rank for a golfer? I know it's fairly new to the Olympics in golf, but this will only be the second time it's contested in your lifetime?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I think it would be pretty high up on the list. To be honest, you're not going to be going around and saying other guys, Oh, where's your gold medal? This

guy has a gold medal. There's one guy as of late that has a gold medal, right? And that's Justin Rose, right? Justin Rose I think won. (Laughing.) So to have that would be amazing, but I'm more focused on this week trying to get there and I'll kind of worry about that when the time comes.

DOUG MILNE: Four wins, among 15 Top-10s so far in your career, less than 50 starts. How would you gauge your success level to this point? You kind of on par with what you had expected or is this kind of exceeded where you thought you would be this early in your career.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: It's been solid. I'm not going to want to take away any of those four wins. But to be honest I came out to the PGA TOUR knowing that I was ready to play golf and ready to compete and I needed these starts to come out, but I wish I was a little more consistent. I wish I could have a few more Top-10s. I wish I could kind of contend a little more on continuous weeks.

I've seen my performances after wins and they haven't been great and I got to find the reason why. The best players in the world aren't just kind of competing one week out of the year, four weeks out of the year, they're competing every week they tee it up. To be honest, like 15 top 10s or whatever you said, they're solid, but I want more. I want to keep playing well, I want to put myself in contention and I really think it's going to come down to me just being an overall better player from tee to green and on the green. So there's things I know I need to keep working on and things I want to keep working on and it's fun because that's, it's the game we play and it's the sport we play is that there's really no way to perfect it, but we're trying.

DOUG MILNE: Okay, well said and with that we will let you go and get busy. Thanks for your time we appreciate it as always.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Thanks, everyone.

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