

The Northern Trust

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TPC Boston

Collin Morikawa

Press Conference

CHRIS REIMER: Want to welcome Collin Morikawa to the virtual press conference here at THE NORTHERN TRUST.

Collin, No. 2 in the FedExCup. So you enter the Playoffs obviously coming off of an incredible victory at the PGA Championship. How has the last week been and how do you balance looking back at what happened and now looking forward to the Playoffs?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: It's been very busy with a lot of media obligations, but it's been a lot of fun, not just doing specifically golf interviews from you guys, but from all different types of media. It's been fun to hear them and ask me, yes, to kind of share what I've been doing.

But I didn't really take a deep breath and get a good night's sleep until Thursday night when things slowly started to calm down and finally by Thursday, Friday, I was able to touch a club and realized I actually do love golf because I missed it.

You know, I was very tired throughout the week last week but to be here, second place in the Wyndham Rewards and heading into the Playoffs, it's a good spot to be. I'm pretty much locked up for THE TOUR Championship but it doesn't end there, and everyone is going to -- there's a target on our back, I think, because everyone is coming into the Playoffs ready to play, and if they don't play well, their season is going to end, and you know, no one wants that.

So for me to come out here and be ready, be fresh, it's really important. I was able to look back, talk to my coach, what was it, yesterday, about the PGA Championship and what can we take from that, what can we learn.

I just did a small little media thing where I looked back at my missed putt at Colonial and every single thing, whether it's good or bad, I'm able to learn and it always teaches me something, so what can I learn from last week that's really going to stick for the next few weeks and what's going to stick for the next month and the rest of the year that I can keep using for momentum, consistency, whatever it is.



Yeah, I've had a blast. Hopefully it's not the last one. We want to keep it going.

Q. There's four guys who have multiple victories on TOUR this season, and three of them are outside the Top-100 in driving distance, J.T. being the exception, and a lot of the guys that you were playing with at Harding Park obviously did have to dial it back a little bit on 16, whereas you hit driver and you clearly hit the best shot. How would you describe yourself -- sort of long enough, and have you chased distance?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, apparently I didn't hit the best shot. Denny McCarthy told me today that he hit it to a foot. So I've got the second-best shot under the circumstances.

Q. Where did he hit it --

COLLIN MORIKAWA: It doesn't matter. He hit the best shot.

But I don't think distance has hurt me. It doesn't help me as much as with a Bryson is doing and the guys that hit it out there Top-10 in distance, but it hasn't hurt me. Obviously I feel the strength of my game are my irons and approach shots, so if I can take advantage of that, yeah, I'd want to have an 8-iron other than a 6-iron, but I still very, very comfortable with a 6-iron in my head.

So am I trying to get longer? Of course, I'm trying to do that. I want to get longer. But am I going to do it in a short amount of time? No. I want to do it very steady, and I want to make sure no other part of my game is going to change and take a hit from that, negative impact.

So do I work that into my workouts; do I work that into my stretching? Of course. In the long term, things -- when I talk to my trainers, yes, that's a goal. Can we gain a couple-miles-per-hour swing speed, ball speed, whatever it is.

But am I on the bad side of where it's hurting me, where I'm having hybrid instead of 8-iron? Not necessarily. So that's where I like to think, yeah, I'm not a long hitter but it's not like him short. I'm right in the middle.

I think the driving distance stats are skewed sometimes



based on how you might hit it or where you are. I think I just hit it really bad on those driving distance holes, I don't know. But I'm right in the middle. It hasn't hurt me. I haven't looked at it like I need to chase more distance, but it helps and it hurts, and that hole on 16 definitely helped me with how far I hit it and the way the wind and everything played out.

Q. Wondering if you walked the golf course and your first impressions of it?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I played the front nine yesterday and played the back nine today and I love it. I think it's a great course. There's some holes, a lot of ball-striker approach shot holes with should greens that have a lot of undulation, a lot of run-offs in certain areas and thick rough, thick fescue.

So for me, I think it's going to be great. I've got to map it out. I think it looks really good. I've heard -- I've already seen it but I've heard it's a lot softer compared to other years, so we'll see how that kind of plays out to certain people's advantage and missed shots and good shots. But you know, there's some really good holes out there and I really look forward to this week.

Q. After talking to your coach, what can you learn from the PGA Championship and take away from that?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, so I think what led for me to play well at Workday and for me to play well at the PGA all started at Charles Schwab and how do I not get ahead of myself.

The focus I had for all 18 holes, really, throughout the PGA Championship, that final round, was something that I've had before but it was almost a little different. I was so focused in on what I was doing every single shot, that you know, it's how do I learn and how do I get to that state again. Can I tell you the exact secret? No, because I'm still trying to figure out, and what are keys that brought me there is what I talked about with my coach.

But how do we get in that state every single time? Because when you are in that state you are so focused in, and you are prepared every single shot. You never skip steps. That's why down the stretch I felt very comfortable because I brought J.J. in for my putts. We did everything the same, but I was so focused that I knew where Paul Casey was at. I just saw 10-under. I didn't know where Dustin Johnson or Scotty was at, especially the last two holes, because I just cared about my shots, hitting quality shots, giving myself birdie opportunities and really just trying to close it out.

Q. Seems difficult to get into that state every single shot of a tournament.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: It is. It's a lot different on a Thursday morning when you're teeing off but how do you not get lazy? There's going to be obviously a spectrum and range of focus, whether it's your last hole on 18 for the win or your first five shots in the first round. But how do you keep it in a range to where you can still stay in that moment and get ahead of yourself or worry about other shots. I think I do a really good job of not worrying about my previous shots. I get a rhythm fairly quickly, but it's how do you not get ahead of yourself. I still have to remind myself, okay, let's not skip steps.

I skipped a step that first shot, my first approach shot on Sunday at the PGA. I just figured, okay, I see the pin front-right; why not hit a wedge. And I didn't really check a greens book about the slopes and everything, and really realizing that if I miss it right of the hole, it's going in the bunker and that kind of woke me up, so how do I not waste a lot like that and that really could have costed me the entire tournament, or making bogey instead of par or birdie like many other guys.

Q. I'm wondering if during the season stoppage if you were in Vegas and crossed paths much with Danielle Kang? You two are arguably two of the players playing the best anywhere in the world right now. Wondering what you see in her practice habits to explain where she's at.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, who knows what's in that Vegas water out there. I'll keep drinking it.

You know, I saw her a couple times. I actually played with her brother quite a bit but I wouldn't see her too often. She has been doing amazing things. I think I saw -- I looked at the leaderboard because I was curious how she was going to finish, she was one shot off from even getting in a playoff again and that's just unbelievable. That's Tiger-esque type things, trying to almost winning three times in a row.

I don't know, I think there's a lot of young players in Vegas, and I know them pretty well. There's, yes, me and Danielle and you've got Maverick McNealy, Joseph Bramlett, Doug Ghim. But you also have like David Lipsky; so someone that just won on the Korn Ferry a week or a month ago. We actually won the same week at Workday. We were texting Saturday night telling each other, finish this off, let's not screw anything up and do anything stupid, and that was pretty cool.

But I think for us as a professional golfer and what a lot of

amateurs don't realize is where we move and why we move to certain places is to have these games and to compete against other players because that's what keeps us going. That's what allows us to, during times, during off-weeks, during the quarantine, to keep things sharp. I was able to play a lot with them when things started to open, but you know, for me, it's just keeping things together. Obviously I'm able to play with my girlfriend and she keeps me on my toes just making sure I play well. So that time was obviously tough but it was fun, as well.

Q. I have a question about the back nine specifically. It's pretty unique this week that the four-most difficult holes at TPC Boston are all consecutive, 11 through 14. What's your strategy through that stretch?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, I played it about two hours ago and I can't really remember every single one. I just remember a lot of 530-yard par 4s into the wind. I think out there, I definitely hit a couple hybrids into par 4s today, and 11 is the par 3, I believe, which is also a hybrid for me.

So what is my strategy? Still try and make birdie, but knowing that, okay, center of the green, especially a few of those holes where you have long irons in, the greens are small enough to where if you hit the middle of the green, you're going to give yourself a good look. You look at a course like Colonial, at Charles Schwab', hitting the middle of the green is great because the greens are so small you're going to have a great birdie look.

Not every green out here is like that but a few of these greens out here on the long par 4s that are a little smaller than what you are used to, there's nothing wrong with hitting to the middle of the green and giving yourself a 30-foot birdie chance, because greens look good. Obviously they are going to speed up and get firmer or drier if it doesn't rain, but right now, the course looks awesome.

Q. You have a mathematical chance to reach No. 1 in the world this week and curious if it's hard for you to get your head around that, having just been out here for 15 months?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: No, it's not hard to get my head around it. I thought it's doable. Does it take a lot to get there? Absolutely. This didn't just happen by me winning the Barracuda and then not remembering how to play golf from there. It's been a lot of work, a lot of practice and improvements.

Yeah do I think I'm still the same player and person as I was when I turn product? Yeah, but I think I've learned so much and that's just me and how I am and how this game

kind of evolves is you've got to learn and you've got to look at these opportunities that I'm given and learn from them whether they are good or bad. You know, how can we move on to the next day, next week, next shot and get better.

I think that's really cool to be in that position, but the game is still ever-changing. You look at Jon Rahm and Justin Thomas right now, these guys are moving back and forth, 1 and 2, even if they both play pretty decent. Yes, that's a goal. That's a goal I want to check off and stay there, but my focus is winning at the end of the week. If I win, yes, that will hopefully move me up there, but I still have to worry about Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday and like I said, never get ahead of yourself.

Q. And secondly, what do you do with old clubs or clubs that you no longer use, and if you have any idea where I'm headed with this question, and I can ask a follow while you're at --

COLLIN MORIKAWA: You can ask the follow. I'm not really the following -- I have ideas but I really don't know where you're going with that.

Q. When you move on to another driver eventually, what is going to happen to the one you have in the bag that you used on Sunday at Harding Park?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I don't know. I actually don't switch clubs too much, especially my irons. The driver, who knows, who knows when TaylorMade is going to come out with a new one and I've got to switch. I'll probably just mark it with a little PGA Championship. Maybe a Sharpie on the head to remember it.

I did that for the first time, I was putting my shoes away, my two pairs of shoes I wore last week, and I never do this. I never really keep a ball or whatever for certain tournaments. I already gave my Giants TOUR bag to my caddie, J.J. I promised him at the beginning of the week that it's his and it's still going to be his. I do not want that in my house being a Dodgers fan.

But I wrote 2020 PGA Championship on the side of my shoes and just want to have something to remember that, because you know, I was talking to my girlfriend, and you know, this is my first major and I'm always going to remember it, and then I'm going to remember every single win, but just having that first major I'm going to remember a little more.

So what do I do with the driver? Probably just sit in my other bags at home when I start collecting them and they start piling up, but I really don't know.

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Q. Where did you put the shoes?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I threw them -- I have a nice big cabinet of shoes, I love my shoes, made in my garage and I threw them in there with all my other shoes, sitting in 110-degree heat.

CHRIS REIMER: Congratulations again on last week and good luck here as we enter the FedExCup Playoffs.

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