

The Northern Trust

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Liberty National Golf Club

Justin Thomas

Press Conference

Q. How long has baby been in the corner?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I think the Scottish Open was the first competitive round tournament that I played without using it. I was using a putter that was extremely similar and actually probably better for my stroke in terms of the tendencies that I have, but yeah, just wanted to put it back in.

Q. Did you even take her over to Britain?

JUSTIN THOMAS: That's actually not true. I used -- the U.S. Open, I changed. It's the same putter, just has different milling. It's a smooth face versus a deep mill. So it has a little different feel, little different sound. But, no, ever since the U.S. Open, it's been sitting in my office.

Q. What made you pull it back into the bag this week?

JUSTIN THOMAS: You're going to laugh at me. I had my AJG event last week in Louisville, went right from Memphis, went there Sunday night, spent Monday, went out and kind of saw some of the kids playing their practice rounds, and Tuesday was the Junior Am. But my dad had a couple students, and I went out to go -- there's a girl Abigail that he teaches that I went out to go see because I played a couple rounds with her. She's a really good player, and she was playing with, I think, another two girls, a girl that my dad teaches and then a boy.

He was using the putter, pretty much my putter that Scotty Cameron, the line that we kind of came out with, and he was like, you know, when are you going to start using -- when are you going to use it again? Are you still using the long neck? I was like, yeah, I am, and I was kind of explaining it, and he's just like, well, when are you going to start using it again? And I found myself defending myself to this 15-year-old.

(Laughter).

I was like why am I not using this thing? I've had a lot of success. It's not like I'm making a lot of putts with what I



have. If you're putting well, any of us can go out and putt with anything. I don't know, it kind of hit me. I'm like the kid's got a point. They designed a putter after it, maybe I should bring it out. When I brought it out, it looked good, it felt good. Again, a lot of familiar feelings with it.

Q. What's the exact model of that?

JUSTIN THOMAS: It's just a 5.5 maybe. I don't know. X5 maybe. I don't really know my equipment very well.

Q. You sound like Dustin now.

Q. You mentioned the wind over there. What was the most challenge you got from that today?

JUSTIN THOMAS: For me, the tee shot on 14. I don't -- it's a tee shot that doesn't fit my eye very well. When I don't have -- when I have hurt, I can't cover that left bunker, and I don't like to draw it with a left-to-right wind. I can't hit 3-wood unless I want to hit 5-wood in or something like that.

That's not a comfortable tee shot. The fairway doesn't really fit a big cut. It makes it a lot smaller. It needs to be pretty straight. There was definitely some iron shots here and there. I felt like wedges were really tough because it just kind of mattered on the gust that you got. For me personally, that tee shot on 14 was very difficult.

Q. 15 or 14?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I'm sorry, 15.

Q. I was curious, when you had your wrist injury and you were out for a couple months, I think I remember you saying that you worked so much on your putting that it actually hurt you a little bit.

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah.

Q. Is there a possibility, as you've been spending so much time, that you can over practice something trying to perfect it, especially a stroke that hardly anyone ever perfects anyway?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, definitely trying to over perfect a stroke and just be perfect in putting. I think John and I,



we've had a couple great talks the last couple weeks. I think really in Memphis, it's the first time we kind of spent some time together just with the rules over at the Scottish and the British, and in Tokyo he wasn't able to actually come, and I think we do probably a lot more talking than we do putting sometimes, just to kind of talk through things because, as kind of nerdy he is, sometimes I'll say something that he picks up on.

Just in Memphis, we were like, you know, why am I changing so much? We want it to perform so well, and he might be even harder on himself than I am on my myself. So we just tried to simplify things like, look, when we first started in the fall, we had a couple main goals to figure out why I was missing putts, and we figured out it was speeding, green reading. And then the fall, I was probably top 20 in putting at the end of the West Coast swing.

From there, it was almost like, okay, everything's going good, let's try to do this a little better, this a little better, and we kind of got off our path. In Memphis, we were like let's just go back to what we were doing. It clearly was working.

There's no reason to try to pretty much make it perfect. You can spend a lot of time working on the right things, but if you're working on a lot of things and trying to perfect the stroke and everything like that, at least for me, it's not going to go well.

Q. Do you find your expectations dropping in terms of strictly putting? I would think you like to make everything. Nobody makes everything. Do you lower them a little bit?

JUSTIN THOMAS: It's very dependent -- especially on a day like this, it's hard to make putts. That three-footer I had on the last hole, again, if the wind picks up, you're just not going to make it. That's the fact of the matter. I just am being more athletic. I'm such a feel player, and I'm so -- you know, I like hitting shots. I like hitting big draws, big cuts, and same with my chipping. I don't think -- with putting, I don't need to be a robot.

I'm not a Bryson. I'm not a Justin Rose, where they use kind of the AimPoint and get it in the exact spot. It clearly works for them because they're really good putters, but sometimes for me that's not what I need. I need to look up there, feel it, see it, figure out the speed I want, and go from there.

Q. What was the putt you felt like this is good? I'm feeling it. It's good to have baby back.

JUSTIN THOMAS: Really the first couple holes. When I'm able to change my speed based off of what I want to do, I mean, as John calls it, kind of hit shots with it, the first two

holes were putts that don't really break very much and they're uphill, which is sometimes the hardest to make because, if you start them offline, they're going to miss.

Especially with the wind, I'm like these are putts that are inside the hole if I can hit them with some pace. The harder you hit it, sometimes the harder it is to keep online, and I just kind of gutted both of those putts, and just any time I'm changing my speed out there like that with putting and making putts, I'm usually feeling pretty good.

Q. Do you always call that putter baby?

JUSTIN THOMAS: No, I'm sure everyone has their putters that they've used for a while and have a lot of great memories with.

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