

# The Sentry

Thursday, January 4, 2024

Kapalua, Maui, Hawaii, USA

Plantation Course at Kapalua

## Collin Morikawa

### Quick Quotes



**Q. First tee shot. What were the feelings around that?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I wasn't on the first tee for the opening ceremony, but I heard it as I was walking up to go to the range. It got a little bit emotional. I think just because I know what everyone has gone through, you hear it from these families, and you meet everyone out here on the island that knows someone or has been affected firsthand. Maui's small. Hawaii's very, very small. People know everyone. Just got emotional. Being able to hit that first tee shot, it was an honor just to be able to do that and, yeah, it's a great way to kick off the new year.

**Q. Assess out here on the hills, is this like a northern California thing or where does success on just playing well on hilly golf courses come from?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I don't know, do I play well on hilly golf courses?

**Q. You play well here.**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Barracuda was pretty hilly, too. I don't know. I think out here we prep so much in the off-season, you prep on flat lies, that the creativity comes out and you just got to be able to hit shots. Today we got really lucky with the wind. I hope it gusts, I don't think it will, but we got really, really lucky. Out here you just got to be able to hit shots and I think the next three days with the wind probably picking up to normal or higher winds you just got to be able to see the shot and really feel it and have control of the spin on the golf ball, that's the ultimate thing.

**Q. What have you and Mark worked on that's paying off?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Just a lot of rotation stuff. Not sliding too much on the back swing, not sliding too much on the way through. It's been good. It's key for me to not be able to miss left and know that I'm not going to miss left. You're going to hit bad shots, but if I can have that freedom in my head that I can swing as hard as I want and as cleanly as I want and not worry where the ball's going to

go that's all I can ask for.

**Q. When you get in a 50 yard and in range, how many options do you have on flying shots?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I mean, a lot. Out here, if it's windy? Yeah, you're going to be hitting 56 degree, 50 degree -- like 9's a good example. 9's normally pumping into the wind and you have 50 yards, uphill lie, and I've seen guys hit gap wedge from 50 yards because that's what you have to do. It's all about spin control, it really is. Especially as soft the greens are, especially when you're hitting up into the grain. You just got to have to control the height and spin and just kind of feel it from there.

**Q. What did you hit in there on 9?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: 3-wood.

**Q. Did you hit a driver?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Driver off the tee, yeah.

**Q. Tees were up a little bit?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Tees were up and hit a great drive. Probably the best drive of the day. It was only like 250 to the hole and hit this like low little 3-wood, bounced up perfect and it's exactly how we could have visualized the shot. It was nice to see that.

**Q. One of the more pleasing ones?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Very. Definitely one of the more pleasing.

**Q. (No Microphone.)**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Shot wise, not really.

**Q. (No Microphone.)**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: 1 was very special. We brought it up. 1 was, yeah, 1 was as special as it's ever going to get. I can talk about final rounds, last shots, first tee, final group



and those in the majors, but that was as big of an honor as I could have had. Not because it was the first tournament of the year, but because it was out here in Maui, everything that this week represents for me. It just means that much more.

**Q. You talked after ZoZo about kind of getting back to the old self. Not to give away all your secrets, but what did maybe getting back to the old self a little bit look like?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Just trust. I've had the belief that I can do it and I've had the belief that I can play well, but you got to be able to put together four solid rounds. Part of it is just knowing where the golf ball's going to go. Stats-wise it said my ball striking was fine, it's not like I dropped off the roof, but the misses were worse. If you know where you're going to miss it, that's the biggest thing. Best players out here in the world that are winning and contending every week, they know where they're going to miss it. They hit maybe a little bit more quality of golf shots, but slowly I'm learning where the ball's going to go, that's the biggest thing.

**Q. When you finished playing 6, do you look back and figure out a different way to play it?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: 6? So Xander took -- 6 or 7?

**Q. 6.**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: 6? Yeah, I mean they're just playing -- it's just so firm. Xander hit 3-wood and he kept it up top. I think you just keep it up top. I think he must have missed the wedge shot. Because the wedge shot, 80 yards, you can land that pin high and it's going to stop up there.

**Q. From where you were was there a different way to play it after you finished it?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: No, the best possible scenario would be me not hitting as far left, which I actually was trying to do, and play it almost to the back left part of the green. It's not a great spot if the pin's up front. You just have -- Tom, I thought, could have went up with it, he was a lot farther. I was playing that was my ball, but it wasn't, mine was sitting down. At that point you're just trying to get out with 4, especially where our balls were, it was a tough putt.

**Q. How much does local course knowledge matter here?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Enough. I mean, I think knowing

that it's never going to play like this. Today was very, very lucky and tomorrow's going to play completely different. It's nice that it hasn't rained yet. Who knows what it will do the next three days. Fairways are firmer than I've ever seen. So, look, course knowledge, there's plenty of guys out here that have played this more than me, but everyone's good enough with their team to figure this out and in a couple tries around it.

**Q. You talked about it a little bit, but starting early today, later tomorrow, is that going to maybe matter do you think?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Today it seems like the wind's never going to pick up, so it's going to be great for those guys that went out late and then super early tomorrow. But, look, it's always going to be windy out here. Once it picks up over 10 you're going to start feeling it. You feel it a lot more because the trees, even though you are a little protected, there's wide fairways, so you feel those gusts, the ball gets taken away. You're going to feel it. You're going to feel the wind.

**Q. Is there anything you prefer about the wrap around schedule to starting here?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Oh, yeah, I much rather prefer this. It felt like this off-season, even though you could go play, it felt like you weren't falling behind. There's something to that of just where everyone's starting and zero here and mentally can you kind of take your self out. I think in the off-season the past few years for me I've played maybe two to three times, but even when you're not playing your mind's feeling like, Okay, like I want to get back out there. This year I was able to take a few weeks and just be, like, I'm checking out. That's been nice. Not a bad place to start.

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