

THE PLAYERS Championship

Thursday, March 9, 2023

Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, USA

TPC Sawgrass

Collin Morikawa

Quick Quotes

Q. Kind of hard to be upset with that round, but the finish, almost had that one on 8, almost had that one on 9. Any sour taste or are you pretty happy?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Even on 7 I lipped out.

No, there's no sour taste. Sometimes they drop and sometimes they don't, especially when rounds are going like that. You obviously wish to have them, but it is what it is. Overall, the game feels really good, and I'm just going to take that into the next few days and just kind of use that momentum to hopefully play three more really good rounds.

Q. You kind of change drivers like most guys change putters --

COLLIN MORIKAWA: No I don't.

Q. What went into the driver change yesterday?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Last week was a weird one. Just had a two-way miss. It's tough. The swing's feeling good and I put in a lot of work this weekend and Monday through Wednesday to make sure I had that cut.

I have a Stealth 2 driver that's actually -- it probably goes farther and it actually does what I want, I just haven't put it in play yet. It was something that we built earlier this week.

Just to know where my misses would be, even though I missed a few left, I just know once I hit it off the face, I know where the misses are going to be. It's nice to have something trusty.

But I just didn't have time to test my other one enough, especially after kind of having the misses on the last week.

Q. Your results on this golf course aside, do you feel comfortable here? Jon Rahm was talking how it's hard to get comfortable on this golf course.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, people really dig in these results. I've played it two years, and last year was a weird



one. My first year was, you know, it is what it is.

I do feel comfortable. I think out here you have to -- it's a course you really can't get away with anything. You have to hit it well off the tee. Obviously you have to hit some good approach shots. But if you're hitting it well off the tee, you're going to give yourself some birdie opportunities.

I think today that's what I was able to do. Even though I missed a few fairways, for the most part the birdie holes I was in the middle of the fairway and I was able to get myself close enough to have a good putt at it and have a good look. I think that's where it starts. Even though they say it's an approach-shot golf course, you have to be in the fairway out here.

Q. How difficult is it out of the rough? How is the rough playing if you do miss? Is it hard to get it on the green or hard to get it close to the hole?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, it's just the way greens are angled out here and obviously where they put pins you can't attack them. You're just going to have no spin.

So when the ball's sitting down that much, I mean you're just trying to put it on the front edge and trying to make 4. So that's why it's just really important. I got lucky today; the ones I did miss, I was in the bunker or the pine straw or first cut. So I got away with a few, which is really nice, and you kind of take that to your advantage.

Q. Details on your eagle?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, so I'll tag on to that. It was a 4-iron. I mean, it was a nice draw through it off the tee, hit it really, really flush. JJ and I were kind of going back in between 5-iron and 4-iron. Hit a little spinny cut 4-iron, mis-hit it a little bit over the toe but landed exactly where we wanted, and it was nice for it to roll out where it did and not roll out over.

When you hit it that close, you really hope to make the putt. It was a nice way to make the turn, birdie, eagle, to start the back nine.

Q. Were conditions out there as benign as it looked, wind-wise?



COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, I mean the winds aren't up. It's not gusting too bad. Greens, some are firm, some are soft. I think you're still able to stop a 7-iron and in. You can get one bounce and have it stop.

We're definitely seeing the fairways roll out quite a bit. I missed my drive on 9, and the ball rolled out past 300 yards. So you got to be aware of the lines you're taking off the tees out here.

Q. Do you feel like this is your back more to playing the game that you were playing before? Last year you talked about you weren't hitting the cut, then you're trying to work it different ways. Do you feel like you're back to doing what you were doing earlier?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, I would say for the most part, all 2023, I'm back to playing how I used to. I'm trying to enjoy it.

I would say this week, what I found earlier this week, my swing hasn't looked this good probably since 2019 when I first came out. I've played very well, 2020, 2021, but position-wise I just love where I'm at right now and just freeing everything up, just allowing me to just look up at my target and hit the ball, and hopefully it goes where I want it.

So, yeah, I think I'm very happy with that, and that just allows that freedom to just kind of forget about everything else and hit your shot.

Q. You were the only guy working on the back of the range yesterday morning. Was that a wind direction thing or wanted some quiet or why go back there?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I mean, yeah, I just figured, the wind was on the front side over here, wind was like down out of the left, and a lot of guys hate that. I think it's always nice to kind of practice into the wind sometimes. Yeah, I was actually shocked that more guys weren't back there.

Q. 13 of the last 15 champions here went early-late. Coincidence, reason why? Any idea?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Your guess is as good as mine.

Q. You talked about the conditions last year. When people bring it up, when you go through something like that, is it just as if it didn't happen when you have to go through what you guys went through last year here?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I mean, look, I don't really take too much -- I don't take too much from like previous history.

Obviously when you play well you feel comfortable, so there is a reason why you played well.

But the places that I haven't played well at, I don't look at it as like, oh, man like this course doesn't suit my game. So I think if you look at stats like that, yeah, you can look at it that way, but I haven't had a course where I've been like, man, like I can't play here. That's a thing. So I wouldn't really buy into that as much as a lot of people like to do.

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