

Valspar Championship

Friday, March 18, 2022

Palm Harbor, Florida, USA

Innisbrook Resort (Copperhead)

Justin Thomas

Quick Quotes

Q. (No Microphone.)

JUSTIN THOMAS: I wanted to make all five of them after hitting the first three. Kind of ruined that on 4.

But, yeah, anytime you can play par-3s on any golf course under par is great, but yeah, birdieing the three on the back nine here was very nice.

Q. Obviously, you've had two really good rounds now. What do you think about your position and where you are compared to the rest of the year the way you've been playing?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I mean, I feel like I've been trending the right direction. I said it, I've been saying it. I feel like I'm really close to playing some good golf and getting on a run and winning some tournaments.

But that being said, it doesn't mean that it's going to happen. I'm not owed anything. I just have to go out and get it and execute, and I feel like the areas that I needed to improve are starting to improve, and I feel like the areas that were pretty good are maintaining that or even getting a little bit better. So at this point, it's just about kind of staying in that focus and really just trying to execute each shot.

Q. You talked the other day about not being happy with your World Ranking and not winning in a while and at the same time staying patient. What's that line like?

JUSTIN THOMAS: It's tough. Those two, when you use both of those, I guess, phrases in the same sentence they just don't make sense. It's easy to be frustrated with it, but usually when you're frustrated, you force things or want things to start happening.

But I just know, I mean, I haven't been out here a crazy long time, but I've been out here long enough to know that stuff like this happens, and you're going to go on times where things maybe aren't going as well or some of the



difference of those putts going in don't go in and some of balls that bounce in the fairway bounce in the bunker. And then when you get on those hot streaks, those 10-month, year-and-a-half, two-year stretches, like I was on in 2017 and 2018, or like D.J.'s been on, Rahm's been on, Collin, and those guys, like it happens.

But you just have to be in the right frame of mind for it to happen. I can't be all pissed off and moping around the golf course and somehow expect things to start going my way. I just have to stay in that positive frame of mind, so that way when it does happen I'm expecting it.

Q. You don't have too many stinker weeks either, do you?

JUSTIN THOMAS: What's that?

Q. Missed cuts. 62nd finishes.

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah. No, and I think I said that in my presser. It's like that kind of shows how good golf is right now. I mean, I've played some good golf. Although I haven't won very often the last year and a half or so, I mean, I've played some really good golf and had chances to win some tournaments and had some top 10s.

But you got to win golf tournaments and the biggest golf tournaments to be kind of maintaining and moving up in the World Ranking kind of stuff. So that's where I'm, again, trying to hammer that patience down and just let it happen.

Q. What did you need improving on and how did you improve it?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I felt like I needed to drive the ball better consistently to take advantage of a strength of mine, my iron play and my wedge game.

Obviously putting can always be better. It doesn't matter how good you are, you always want to make more putts. And it's more so about the last, I think four, five weeks where I've had some quote/unquote bad putting days or statistically not great putting days, but if those can be my bad putting days, I'm going to do some great things.



I know my good putting days, my great putting days are really good, but it's just about maintaining those bad ones because I can win golf tournaments with stuff like that. So that's just where I've been trying to get it. And Jon is the same way I am. He might be harder on himself than I am on myself, and it's just about just saying, hey, it's good, we're moving the right way, we just keep getting 1 percent better, 1 percent better, middle of the year, end of the season, that's going to turn out to be pretty good.

Q. What is the course management error you considered to be at number 7 that you made?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I mean, not trying to snap hook a 52 degree around a tree and, I mean, I should have just tried to hit it in the front bunker and it was a pretty easy up-and-down. And those wedges, which is why I use the Vokey wedges, like in a pitching wedge and gap wedge is because you can get a lot more spin on it out of the rough. But the rough is just a little too dry to where I couldn't get enough spin on the ball to curve it, but obviously I felt like I could.

And as soft as the greens are, I was like, if I can get this you thing turning and landing around there, I can have it, I can actually have a putt at this. And as good as I feel with my putter, I felt like if I got it on the green, I could make a 3. But it wasn't necessary. It just didn't really need to happen.

Q. When you first came here was this a course that you instantly felt like you could win at?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah. I mean, I've loved it ever since playing the Junior tournaments here. And I've just, yeah, it's a place that I just, I feel like I can get my way around really well and I feel like every time I tee it up I can go shoot 7-, 8-, 9-under, although it can play pretty difficult.

But at the same time if you're not playing well and not driving it well it's a tough golf course. It's very similar to like Sawgrass or Riviera to me to where you put the ball in play or at least you put it on the right side of the holes off the tees I feel like can you do some damage.

Q. When you look at your years on TOUR do you think it's a lot harder to win now than it was when you came out or doing the same things to get the job done?

JUSTIN THOMAS: No, it's always hard to win.

Q. Is there something that you've learned over the years that you know now that you wish you had known the first or second time you went to Augusta? Any

knowledge that you gained that just took time?

JUSTIN THOMAS: To be honest, not really. I mean, I feel like I did my homework really well and I played practice rounds with the right guys. I picked the right guys' brains. And to be honest, I feel like all of my finishes at Augusta are just due to poor execution.

I feel very confident that I know how to get around that place and I know what pins, where to hit it, where to go off the tees, and how holes play with certain winds, etcetera, but I just, I've yet to catch a remotely hot putter that week and it just, it's just about making those putts or hitting those shots when you just quite need to and I think that's why I have a handful of 10th to 25ths instead of a couple wins.

Q. Do you mind one more stupid one? When they start showing Masters commercials in January and the public starts kind of getting fired up about that second week in April and it's on our mind as we're writing, what's it like for a player?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, it's the same way.

Q. You're playing a tournament this week, by the way. But I mean, how much of you is fired up about it?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I'm very fired up. I have to talk myself down probably. There's so many, it's just unlike any tournament or any course. I don't understand why, but I feel like everybody's very similar to the fact that I'm hitting some of those tee shots last week and it's, I'm trying to hit that like low hooking driver on No. 2, and I know that there's a, this is what I'm going to hit on 13. This is what I'm going to hit off of 2, or I'm sorry, off 10.

You have some second shots into par-5s where like this is, I feel like I'm going to be able to hit this into the second shot into 15 or potentially you hit a ball above your feet. You're like, okay, this is kind of good practice for a second shot on 13.

So it's weird. There's no other golf tournament, no other golf course, that I do that on, but for some reason Augusta's just always on your mind.

Q. You didn't do that for Chambers?

JUSTIN THOMAS: No, I didn't. I didn't play --

Q. Did you have a wow factor your first time playing the Masters and do you still have it when you go?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I definitely don't now. I try to play -- I played a bunch beforehand, before my first Masters, so I

didn't have that. I felt -- I mean, the practice rounds were honestly like wow, this is so cool, how many people are out here, but I felt like once the tournament started, I was over that, which is great.

But that was the reason why I took four, five trips beforehand, so I could try to get all of that out of me.

Q. Do you still get a skip in your heartbeat when you drive down --

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah. No, it is. There's nothing -- I think there's a handful of places in the world where you get really excited to take someone for the first time, and that drive is definitely one of them, when you're able to take 'em down Magnolia Lane.

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