

PNC Championship

Friday, December 15, 2023

Orlando, Florida, USA

The Ritz-Carlton Golf Club

Justin Thomas

Mike Thomas

Press Conference

JOHN BUSH: Justin, welcome back, get your comments on being here this week.

JUSTIN THOMAS: Very excited as always. Looks like we need to do our anti-rain dance a little bit tomorrow. We'll still make fun of it, and it's a very special week. It's a nice cap to end the year. We have really enjoyed it and made a tradition out of it, and hopefully we can play some good golf while we're here.

JOHN BUSH: How much are you looking forward to the week, and how is the state of your game after today's Pro-Am?

MIKE THOMAS: It was hard to find anything out there in the wind today. My game is day-to-day, so we'll see. But it's just a fun week. Get to play with Justin, it's a lot of fun. We've got my wife out here caddying, so it will be a good week.

Q. What is your thing favorite about being able to play with each other and your favorite thing about this tournament?

MIKE THOMAS: Favorite thing is getting to play together. We don't get to do that very often. When he's home, he doesn't want to play golf. And I teach a lot, so I don't get time to play golf. So this is where we play golf together.

Q. Is this the only time you play golf together?

MIKE THOMAS: No, I played in between now and then. Altogether, we probably play probably five times this year.

Q. What's it been like to watch the development of Charlie as this little tyke out here?

MIKE THOMAS: He's not a little tyke anymore.

JUSTIN THOMAS: I can't quite give him as much grief anymore because he's close to beating me up. Yeah, it's



impressive from a golfer standpoint because he's still, what, 14, and he's still a 14-year-old but maturing in the sense of his golf game, and he's more willing to learn and he's open to it at times, obviously.

But it's cool. I mean, he's -- you know, he won the state championship with the guys. That's really cool, I think playing on the high school team has been very beneficial for him. And yeah, I'm just glad he keeps moving back tee markers. He's leading the tournament in inches grown.

MIKE THOMAS: And muscles grown.

Q. We've been asking each team what the biggest pet peeve you guys have with each other non-golf related.

JUSTIN THOMAS: My dad, he always has a lot of change in his pocket. I'm warming up, it's kind of like, You want to stop doing that?

MIKE THOMAS: My pet peeve is he gets mad about that.

JUSTIN THOMAS: He has a pet peeve when people chew ice, but I know that so I don't do it around him.

Q. What are you looking at for next year?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Where am I starting?

Q. Scheduling and majors, and where do you see yourself playing in the first quarter?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, I'm going to start in Palm Springs, which I'm excited about. Obviously bummed to not be starting in Hawai'i. That's always one of my favorites. You never know what's going to happen, and World Ranking and whatnot.

But hopefully should be good to get into Pebble, Phoenix, L.A. I'd like to so I don't have to suck up to Tiger for an exemption. That would be nice on many fronts.

I think a lot of guys are going to be playing very similar schedules, and that Florida Swing can get a little -- I think you might see some difference here and there. I'm not sure we're going to do that three- or four-week stretch before Augusta maybe. Try to look at that and space that out. I'm obviously not too sure yet.



But yeah, it's been a very, very busy fall, so this is a nice, fun way to end it.

Q. When is the last time you wrote for an exemption?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Probably my rookie year. Been very fortunate. I love him to death, but I didn't write Tiger an exemption to Hero. There was probably some other words and expletives in there, but it worked out okay.

Q. Tiger was asked, but if he and Charlie were to win, where would that rank?

JUSTIN THOMAS: In terms of -- honestly in meaning, it would be No. 1 for special. Winning majors is unbelievable, and how he's won his majors, but seeing how much he cares about Charlie and having Sam out here and him doing that together with Charlie and as he's watched him grow up, it would be a very, very different kind of win that doesn't maybe come with the record books and history and whatnot.

I know it would suck for us because they would really rub that in our face.

Q. What is the meaning for you --

JUSTIN THOMAS: The meaning for it? When we won? It's unique. It's really hard to explain. I truly think it's one of those things, especially when we won, we started the second day a little bit back, but like you're having a lot of fun when you're out there. And we birdied I think like the first nine or ten. We made a lot of birdies, and then next thing you know, we are coming up 16, 17, and it's like okay, we have a chance to win.

MIKE THOMAS: On the leaderboard.

JUSTIN THOMAS: Something to be learned from my standpoint to maybe not get as wrapped up in it. But we're not -- say it every year, but we're not here grinding, really trying to knock this off, leaving without a win, but it's obviously nice leaving with one --

Q. It was a big deal to Vijay last year.

JUSTIN THOMAS: I didn't mean that it's not a big deal, but it's more so we get wrapped up in the moment of having fun and playing golf with each other. You kind of forget, maybe, about the bigger picture.

Q. You care more about him winning or you winning?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I was pushing to get a win at Kapalua.

Q. Is there anything swing-wise the two of you have worked on with some downtime? And if you look at last season, what is the best thing you took out of last season?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Swing-wise, I would say I think we got a pretty good gist of what we've been working on the last -- I feel like kind of from Minnesota through the end of the year, I feel it's very similar stuff. It might be worded a different way or thought differently, but it's very much in a similar bag, if you will.

I learned a lot this past season. No. 1 thing is things are never as bad as people make them out to be. At times I was just a couple putts, shots, swings, here and there away from at least having a chance of making a run in the Playoffs. But it's a fine line out here. Obviously I did not have a very good year in terms of my standards, but it wasn't maybe at the -- where the results ended up. I think we both tried to do a better job of keeping it simple and playing golf but also keeping an eye on things that maybe got away from us.

Q. Back to basics?

MIKE THOMAS: Yeah, I think getting out some swings from his good years, like '17, '18 and kind of putting them side by side on an iPad or computer where we can compare positions from what was then and what was now.

It's hard because your body changes and maybe you don't want to do this or maybe you want to get back to this. So it's just a lot of trial and error of matching up what things looked like before, and is it producing those results.

Q. You mentioned you're going to play Palm Springs. There has been a little concern about the fields for non-Signature events. Did you hold that concern at all in getting some of the guys who are getting in all the Signature events and playing some of those, does it bother you?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Probably depends who you ask. To be honest, my schedule isn't overly different than it has been for a while now. At the beginning of the year, it's different from not being in Kapalua and then obviously playing, adding Pebble.

But as I go through the year, it's not very different. I totally understand -- I hate to use the word concern, because I feel like that definitely is a negative, kind of gives it a negative connotation, but everybody still has a great opportunity. It's based off of whatever, it's algorithms or things that the Tour came up with, the points system of still

winning a Tour event is going to put you in a great position, and it's going to help you a lot in the FedExCup and it's going to create for some great storylines as the season continues.

I still also think that guys like golf courses, they are going to go play it. I think that's the fact of the matter.

Q. So you might play an event regardless of its status because you like it?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Phoenix is a great example. I've played Phoenix really well and I think it's a great golf course, and I'm not going to miss it because it's not an elevated event. Just it's -- I want to go to a golf course that I feel like I have a chance to win at and that I like. You know, I've done that at Tampa in the past. I really, really like that golf course, and I think I have a great opportunity to win there.

So I mean, that's one that I'm not sure what's going to happen this year, but a lot of guys, like I said, if they have either had success there or they like it, they are probably more likely to make it work in their schedule versus just throwing it away because it's not an elevated event.

Q. There's a perception of the elite and the rest of the Tour, but if you look at like Brian Harman, someone like you, what are they thinking -- why do you think --

JUSTIN THOMAS: I don't know. I think it's the easy thing to do, honestly, is to sit there and say, why me, why is this happening to me, why are they getting this, as opposed to -- I use Adam Schenk as a great example last year. He very realistically -- he was three back of the FedExCup with like three or four holes left and to me that wasn't a big enough story.

Absolutely zero offense to Adam whatsoever, but if you would have put us side by side at the beginning of the year and said who is going to do what, you know what I'm saying, but that's the way that I think so many people look at it, is like, well, they are going to play in all these events. Everything is going to be great, or it's like you can look at it like Adam Schenk did and say, I'm going to play my way into those events; Eric Cole, I'm going to play my way into those events.

Golf is a funky game. I mean, anybody can -- doesn't matter how good of a player, very good player, any accomplishments you've had, you can have an off-year and miss the Playoffs just like I did. Everybody has got to work hard and you have to earn it. It doesn't matter what sport you play. That's just facts.

Q. You never shared your goals with us at the end of the year that you have made. Did you tick any off?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Did I tick any?

Q. Is that harsh?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I can't imagine I did, at least in a golf standpoint. I didn't put them in my phone this year. I wrote them down. I should go look back and see. I probably should post them. I need to go back and look at them, but I can't imagine I ticked any off.

Q. A lot of activity going on on the PIF, etc., etc. How much do you know and how much do you want to know?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I think I'm in the middle of both. I have so much respect for those guys on the board and the amount of time and effort that they have put in, and the families for allowing it, honestly -- not allowing it, being good with it.

It's been frustrating on my end as a player and having someone on the board, and the things that Patrick Cantlay said about them, I understand Patrick is who he is, but he's beyond busted his ass to get the Tour in the best place possible, and for it to be -- with the rest of the guys on the PGA TOUR board to make things the best possible place for us players going forward. And I know all of them have done that.

I feel like when I know, want to know something, like all of -- everybody else, I know that I can call any of those guys and they will tell me, but naturally they are not -- no. They don't reach out to people and say, hey, do you want to know what's going -- to be quite frank, they are too busy to do something like that.

Q. Sounds like you don't pick up the phone either and call and ask. Makes you wonder how much --

JUSTIN THOMAS: I mean, I have faith and I have trust. I understand I get updated maybe from time to time but I am -- especially last year at the end, I have bigger and better things to worry about, to be selfish and honest. My golf is -- I shouldn't say more important because the future of the PGA TOUR is more important, but selfishly for me, my golf is. And I know that those guys are willing to pick up the phone and talk to anybody if they want. They just have to call them, and I just haven't really had the desire to do that much. I've got faith and trust in them.

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