

U.S. Open Championship 2025

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Oakmont, Pennsylvania, USA

Oakmont Country Club

Collin Morikawa

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome back to the interview area. We are joined by Collin Morikawa. Talk a little bit about your reaction to the golf course.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, first time here. I know a lot of guys took trips before, played in 2016, but saw my first look of Oakmont and what it has to offer yesterday, and man, it's just tough. I think you keep hearing the word tough and rough, a lot of rhyming words, but overall you have to hit the ball really well. You know you're going to get penalized even on good shots, and that's just part of this golf course.

We'll see how it plays out. Greens already today are getting a lot faster compared to yesterday. Depending on the weather, you kind of have to adapt to that as the week goes on.

Q. Tough test always at a U.S. Open. Talk about your mindset when you enter this week.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, it's changed. I remember my first U.S. Open, which was my first major, in 2019 at Pebble, and my eyes lit up thinking -- I think I psyched myself out a little bit too much. It was finally nice to think -- growing up, you always think of the U.S. Open as the hardest test in golf, not only because of the rough but because of the greens and the courses we play.

So it was finally nice to get some good finishes as my years went through. I feel like I have the game to win out here. You just have to put it together.

On a course like this, step number 1 is to hit it in the fairways, and hopefully we can do that.

Q. Muirfield Village was set up very tough. How comparable is this to what that was a couple weeks ago?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, I would say the rough is the only similarities. This golf course, it's weird, a lot of the tee shots, they're very straight, but depending on the wind, the crosswinds, you kind of have to play it and favor one side with a lot of the slope, or they're a blind tee shot. You don't

get that too much at Muirfield.

Then the greens are so different because you don't really see a lot of golf courses with front-to-back slopes, so that changes a lot with how we're approaching these greens and depending where you are on the fairway or the rough. Then just how the slopes of these greens, the greens remind more of a links style green than anywhere else. So other than long rough, not so much.

Q. It seemed like you had sort of a funny interaction on hole 8 yesterday. Can you talk us through that and just how you're planning to attack that hole throughout the week?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, I completely forgot that that was the long par-3, and I honestly asked Joe, my caddie, and everyone in the group, I was like, is this like a -- do you go for this par-4 or do you lay up? I recommend going for it.

What was the second part? Do I like it?

Q. How are you planning to attack that hole throughout the week?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Probably hit driver or 3-wood and hopefully hit the green. If not, make up-and-down. Honestly, there's not a ton of strategy other than like hitting your driver within 15 yards or your 3-wood within 15 yards.

Just hit and hope, honestly. It's a hole I'll take four pars right now and walk away.

Q. 2016, the last time the U.S. Open was here, you were 50 miles east of here winning the Sunnehanna Amateur. What can you remember about those days?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, they were great. They were amazing. The people we stayed with, the host families, hanging out with your buddies, long drive competitions, just a lot of fun. Amateur golf is -- I enjoyed it so much because it's just pure golf. We have a lot of fun. I have to bring that out.



It's a lot of good memories. Someone asked me if I had been to Pittsburgh before, and I said I hadn't, and then I remember we used to fly into Pittsburgh and take the two-hour van ride over. It's bringing back a lot of good memories, obviously having won there before. Hopefully we can make it pretty special out here in this area.

Q. I've seen you doing this thing where you're holding the club behind your back and it looks like a posture drill. What's going on there?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, it's all posture. I said it last week or two weeks ago at Muirfield, I've been trying to find this little thing that just allows me to use my hands that I know I can use. A lot of the feel comes from our hands and dictating where that shot goes. You look at the best in the world, Scottie Scheffler, doesn't matter where his feet and everything move, he has control of that golf club.

Recently I feel like I've been a little too crowded at setup, and this posture is just allowing me to give myself space without forcing my body in bad positions. We all want good posture, but it's how do you get in good posture and feel relaxed, not stiff. It's the balance of finding those two.

Q. It gives you normal space --

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, but even how you did that, it's not space just pulling my shoulders back. That's stiff. It's finding little ways to get in good posture but just be relaxed so I can use my hands.

Q. When you said that at Pebble you maybe psyched yourself out because it was the U.S. Open. What does that look like or mean that you were psyching yourself out?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, it's watching all the rough videos that have been popping up. It's saying, I'm just going to try and shoot even par or I'm going to just hopefully do this.

Look, when it's your first major championship, that's part of the learning curve of just going in and saying, okay, let's make the cut, let's have a decent finish, let's take it all in.

But I've played enough majors now where I know what my game plan and how I have to attack this golf course. Yes, there's going to be some holes that I will take par. There's a handful of holes this week already I would take par four days in a row. But there's other holes where you've got to take advantage.

Q. Did you do any previewing of this course on

YouTube, watching content of it?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I did watch a little bit of Bryson's video. I want to say there was another video on Twitter that had like a flyover that I watched.

But it's so hard -- like I watch it and then I try and almost forget about it because it's nice to have a good sense of what it's like, but then when you actually step foot on 1 or you step foot on 17 and 18, your head and how I process a golf course completely changes because maybe it looked like this on a TV, but then you step there and you're like, oh, it's how I would shape this hole, how I would play this hole is completely different.

It's trying to get familiar but not too familiar because, look, I show up yesterday, I've got a game plan, I've seen all 18. I feel like this course, it's weird, it's memorable. Even though every hole is very straight, it's very memorable in my head already to where I can go through the holes and say this is what I'm going to do, which is great.

Q. So many players when they're competing talk about staying in the present, taking it shot by shot. Can you take us inside the mind of you when you're out there and some of the techniques that you're doing to stay present when you're in contention and trying to win?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah. Some places are easier than others. I think when there are big crowds, it honestly allows me to do that better because it just -- you hit your shot, and you can focus on someone in the crowd or you look out in the crowd, and it almost distracts you in a way. When you're playing near the ocean, for me it's really beautiful.

But I would say on a normal week where it might be a Thursday afternoon, you're just trying to find the rhythm or you're trying to keep the rhythm, those are the points where the best players, you have to be able to separate yourself after every shot and say, okay, this is my shot, this is the two minutes I'm going to put 100 percent effort into it, be able to relax after that, not dwell on the great shot or dwell on the poor shot too much and then move on. It's a very hard thing to do.

When you find that rhythm, you just kind of stay into it. But it's not five hours of constant stress in your head. It's never good like that. I don't think it ever plays out well for anyone if that's how they're trying to approach the day.

Q. How do you feel about this trend of getting rid of trees on golf courses?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I like trees. I think it creates a

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penalty that you don't actually have to add anything. It lines tee shots a lot better for me, I think, when there are trees. But that's also part of -- a lot of blind tee shots make it harder out here this week.

But I think trees just make the course, I think personally, look nicer, more esthetically pleasing. Trees are great. They're great for the world. They honestly are.

Look, I don't know if the trees were really along the fairways or they were really far out. But that's where a lot of this long rough -- it's not just the thick rough a foot away from the fairway. It's like you've got fescue, you've got little hazards you have to worry about. Thankfully those are red. If those weren't hazards, we'd be in for a long, long week.

Q. The consensus from a lot of guys is they find the rough, they're just going to hack out sideways back into the fairway. To what extent is that based around a fear of leaving the ball in the rough?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Huge. Look, I've got a 9-wood. It's like cheating. I told that to myself yesterday, and then I had some lies today that were not playable.

Look, at the end of the day, when you have really long rough, hitting a 9-iron is going to be more beneficial than trying to hit a 6-iron if the ball is really down just because you need loft to get out of the rough. I don't think people understand how thick the rough is. It's not wispy like the club is going to go through. Sometimes you see that at The Open.

This is just thick. Clubs will turn over. You're going to see guys trying to hit pitching wedge out and it's going to go 45 degrees left because that's how thick the rough is. That's just how you have to play it.

It's just being smart. When you're in the rough out here, there's still bunkers you have to carry. It's not like you just play it out to the front of the green. There's bunkers you might have to carry if you hit it off line. You're just honestly trying to make 4 from 150 yards.

Q. Is it the longer the club, the more risk there is of manipulating it?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Absolutely, because there's no loft. There's no loft. You have to get down. You have to be steep to get to the ball in the rough, and when you're steep, it delofts the face, so you're just hitting it deeper into the earth. It's very, very hard.

Q. You mentioned about being focused on the course,

how you give that 100 percent after each shot, but it's a long week. How do you stay relaxed off the course this week? What are things that you might do to make sure that you can stay focused when you get here?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Honestly, I think once I leave property, I kind of let my mind go where it needs to be, hang out with my wife, our dog. I've done it enough to where I know when to stress and when not to stress and when to be focused. But look, these weeks, you're very motivated. You know what's at stake. You know what you're trying to accomplish at the end of the week. Everything is a calculated thing with what we're doing.

You've got to remember to enjoy it, as well, but we didn't come here just to have fun.

Q. I usually hate this question and I might even today, but what kind of score do you think wins this week?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I'm really bad at this.

Q. Me too.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, I honestly don't know. I'm going to say single digits under par. I think the forecast this week looks like it could be some rain maybe Friday night, Saturday. But already even compared to yesterday, I know it rained in the afternoon, to today, greens are already speeding up. They will get firmer as the sun comes out, as the wind picks up.

Q. In tournament golf, if you didn't have leaderboards, would you have a good sense of how you're doing relative to the field as you're playing?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: No. You'd have no idea. I mean, it could be what you would think is an easy day and you could be 2-over par and you could be top 10. You really don't have any idea. Are there no scoreboards out here? I like looking at leaderboards.

I honestly don't know. You watch guys play these practice rounds and you can watch a guy shoot a couple under and be stress free, but it's hard. Even practice round pins, normally you put them in the middle of the green. They're not all in the middle of the green this week. They're kind of favoring certain sides because these greens are a lot smaller. Where you can put pins are a lot smaller than a lot of other places we play.

Q. When you're in these lies in the rough and the ball is kind of up in the grass but not fully, there's a tendency to catch it a little high on the face for some golfers. How do you evaluate that and account for it

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and make sure you hit it good?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: It's just knowing where the low point is of your swing and knowing how steep you need to get at the ball. It's a hard judgment because you have to get steep in the rough, so you have to get steep to get down to the ball, yet you can't just keep going because there's no ground to let it bounce off of and then come up.

It just depends -- it honestly just depends on the grass behind it, too. Golfers, you have to realize, yeah, the lie looks bad, but it's also where is the club coming from; it's coming from behind the ball. So it's like, am I going to be hitting a lot of grass, can I get steep to the ball, can I honestly get through the grass to where you don't have to get it steep? That plays in a big factor of the shot that's going to be played and the club.

Q. Yesterday you had a local caddie help you guys out. What did you learn from him? Second, do you have a mini-driver in your bag?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: The local was helping out, Harrison Ott. I actually didn't ask him anything. That was with another player.

And then no. I've tried a mini-driver; just not my thing.

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