

The 152nd Open

Mixed Zone

Thursday, 18 July 2024

Justin Thomas



JUSTIN THOMAS: I played really solid, got it around. I felt like I had great control of the ball. I hit a lot of fairways, which is a key I would say to any major, but definitely in an open being able to control the ball coming into the greens. A little bit of a hiccup in the beginning of the back nine but stayed patient and kept plugging kind of thing.

Q. How do you rate this as an Open venue, kind of an out-and-back layout?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I love them all. I have yet to play a links course that I dislike or I think is bad. I think they're all so unique and so fun. They can play so differently, obviously, with the conditions. But I think it's a proper test.

It's very similar to a lot of others. You can kind of get some weather that can make it tough or not, but I think there's some very, very subtle which I don't remember in '16 uneven lies in the fairways that make the approach shots just a fraction -- just a little bit more difficult and just a little bit more, I would say, creativity and -- you could say skill involved to be able to hold against the wind and control your trajectory.

It's a great track.

Q. How tricky were the winds today?

JUSTIN THOMAS: They were pretty consistent in terms of direction. It just was tricky because it was pretty solid, I'd say 15 to 20, whatever, 15-ish. I just had not played that front nine into the wind before, and that was wild. Hitting some clubs -- I remember driving -- trying to drive 1 and 3 in 2016, and I hit 7-iron into 1 today, and I hit a 3-wood up there on 3 to have wedge in. But it just was very, very different. But it just was all very typical of an Open, just trying to make the best out of the conditions that you have.

Q. How much of a difference do you feel from a year ago to how you feel right now?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Well, I would guess about 15 strokes better, 13 strokes? What did I shoot?

Yeah, I couldn't even tell you what I was thinking or how it was then. I'm just worried about how I am now, and I'm very

pleased with my game and know things are continuing to work in the right direction. I've just got to keep trying to play well.

Q. What part has been the biggest difference?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I don't know. I'm just doing, I would say, everything better.

Q. Different course, different place, but last week you were the first-round leader. How different was your play today? Did it kind of feel the same or slightly better?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Than Thursday last week? Yeah, I would say it was better today. I felt like I had great control off the tee. I hit some great drives, and I felt like I was creative on some of them of just trying to hold it against the winds, off the tees to make the fairways a little bigger and hold it in the fairways. Felt like I had a couple times that I could have maybe been a little bit more aggressive, but I just felt like it wasn't the right time or necessarily didn't need to.

I think that's parts of links golf and also just of golf in general that I've gotten better at and matured. I feel better about this round than I did the one last week just in the sense of, I would say, the quality of play.

Q. How difficult were the closing holes, given the wind you didn't have during practice? Was that an adjustment?

JUSTIN THOMAS: It was, but I would say it's always -- it's generally easier to adjust from when you're used to into the wind and a gust downwind versus vice versa. I'd much rather hit a 6-iron on 17 or a 4-iron and a wedge into 18 than I hit 5-wood in a practice round on 17 and hitting 3-wood, 8-iron into 18 or whatever. It's a good adjustment, but you still have to -- with it being downwind, the ball that starts right, if you're trying to hold it, it's going to keep pushing, versus into the wind sometimes it can hold and fight it a little bit more.

It's like anything, though. You've got to really hit the ball solid, control it in the wind.

Q. Do you use what happened last year as motivation when you're going out there? Has that crossed your mind, what happened last year?



JUSTIN THOMAS: No. Hasn't at all.

Q. Last week what didn't work for you over the course of the weekend at the Scottish?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I just didn't get anything out of my rounds. Literally nothing out of my rounds. I felt like on Saturday I hit it in six first cuts, and they were just kind of a strange length. It's similar to here where you have to guess if it's going to jump, if it's going to spin, and I'm pretty sure I was 0 for 6 on those. It's just little things like that that obviously you don't see as an outsider or really anybody else when you're looking at a scorecard, but when I'm out there playing, I feel like I'm hitting a lot of really quality shots or drives and just getting nothing out of it.

Obviously there's plenty of things I could have done better, but definitely not -- it wasn't bad enough to shoot over par both days.

Q. A while ago you said you loved links golf but you've not got the record you hoped for. Do you think that gap is narrowing?

JUSTIN THOMAS: The record? I would hope so. It was a good start today. I don't know, there's a lot of factors and variables that go into it, but no, I thought I had to choose one style of golf or probably even one golf course the rest of my life to play, it would be a links course. It's fun.

You're not going to get the same course consistently. I could stand there middle of the fairway on 18 from 180 yards and I feel like I could hit seven different clubs, but that's the fun part of it, and I have to use a little bit of my creative side, which I like doing.

Q. A few players this week have said that the best par-3s in the world are shorter ones. Would you agree, and how would you assess that hole?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I completely agree, and I would double down by saying all the worst par-3s in the world are the long ones. I've never played a bad one that's 120 yards.

But it's just kind of the general, I would say, consensus of architecture in general. It seems like it needs to be longer to be difficult. One of my favourite holes in the world is still from the Northeast Amateur, playing -- it's like a 110- or 120-yard par-3 and it's a super small green, and those holes can be just as challenging. But because of the club you have in your hand, you're expecting and thinking you should make birdie.

I think the 8th hole here is a great example of that, especially given certain winds. You're very happy to walk off with a 3. It was nice to make a 2 today.

Q. The key is for you to find consistency of four rounds in a major?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Anywhere. I just want to just keep playing as good as I can.

I feel like everything has been turning the right way, and I've been working on the right things. Just like I said, I haven't really had much to show for it. That's just how this game works sometimes. But I know that I'm close the way it is, and I'm just going to keep playing and not play for results, just play for my game, and it'll take care of itself.

Q. What tells you that you're close?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Just the shots I'm hitting, the scores I'm shooting. I'm doing a lot of things a lot better, I would say.

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