

The 153rd Open

Mixed Zone

Thursday, 17 July 2025

Justin Hastings



Q. A little bit of a rough start, obviously. What do you attribute it to? Were you a little nervous?

JUSTIN HASTINGS: No, it was quite calm. It was cold in the morning, and it's not like the wind laid down the earlier it was. I felt like I hit a lot of quality shots out of the gate and I was just getting awful bounces.

The first seven holes I hit three what I would classify as good drives into pot bunkers where I was splashing sand wedge out, so you're losing shots there. I lipped out hard on 3 and 4, three-putted 5 from the front edge of the green, so it felt like I was just pulling together the worst-case scenario, but it was nice to battle back the back nine.

Q. Obviously you ended up finishing 3-over, so the last 15 holes were even. Pretty good to hang in there when it would have been easy to get down?

JUSTIN HASTINGS: Yeah, that's where you rely on the mental game. I was pretty upset when I hit my third or fourth driver in a bunker on 8, but I just had to keep telling myself that I was hitting quality shots, and if I kept doing that for another 12 holes that I couldn't get unlucky for the whole golf tournament.

It kind of leveled out a little bit and I started to -- the scores started to show.

Q. It sounds like it's a course where the bunkers are really strategic --

JUSTIN HASTINGS: Absolutely.

Q. -- so that you can't just blow it over them, or if you try to play short of them you still might come into play. Was there any strategy misfires there or was it bad bounces or --

JUSTIN HASTINGS: Yeah, I don't think it's strategy misfire. I think with the bunkers being so well-placed, there's just a lot of times where you have to sack up and hit a really good golf shot. Unfortunately I guess all the shots that I hit were on the edge of being really good but just on the wrong side.

I think our strategy was good. Like I said, we did a lot of things well. It's just that tight margin. I'm sure everybody out there is

dealing with it. Yeah, I'm excited for tomorrow.

Q. You got to play with Cam Smith. I don't know if you got to talk to him much. Was that a cool experience?

JUSTIN HASTINGS: Yeah, we talked a little bit. It was a cool experience. He's obviously -- I grew up watching him. He's an unbelievable player. I remember when he won the Open at St Andrews. It was definitely like an "oh wow" kind of thing when you see the tee time. But it was cool. Everybody is doing their thing out there, so it's not exactly super social, but yeah, it was cool.

Q. What's the game plan tomorrow?

JUSTIN HASTINGS: Yeah, keep doing what we're doing. I really feel like for the same price, that round could have been four shots better. I'm just going to bank on that being the case, and if we go out and maybe get a couple of the good breaks that we're hopefully due, we can have a good one tomorrow.

Q. Does your past experience of playing links help you here this week at all?

JUSTIN HASTINGS: I wouldn't say I've relied much on past experience because I just haven't had much. I think the last time I played links golf was 2018. How old was I in 2018, 15 years old? It's kind of like, I was kind of learning a lot this week. That's why we got out here really early. We got out Saturday before the tournament and we played every day just to get used to a lot of the different shots.

I think early on, the putting from off the green was poor. The touch wasn't very good, and that led to a couple of the bogeys as well, so that's one thing that I want to clean up for tomorrow. I feel like the preparation was good, and I've learned a little bit to be good enough here.

Q. We were talking with J.J. about three guys from San Diego State here, which is not the most usual thing. Why do you think that happens, and have you talked to them about it?

JUSTIN HASTINGS: Yeah, it's funny, I saw J.J. and Xander were playing together. It would have been cool if we could have had all Aztecs in the group. It's something I take



tremendous pride in being fresh out of SDSU, and hopefully they do as well. I know the guys back on the team that I'm still super close with are pretty excited to see it.

Yeah, it's a cool thing, so I'm going to take pride in it for sure.

Q. Early in the week still, but this is your last major from winning LAAC. If you look back at what the LAAC gave you during this year, what are your reflections on that?

JUSTIN HASTINGS: It's unbelievable looking back on the last six months now, it's just been -- it's nothing short of life-changing. It really is difficult to put into words six months later what that tournament has done for me, and hopefully I can take advantage of the last hoorah here.

Q. Have you had much experience in bad weather? I'm sure you did in college, right?

JUSTIN HASTINGS: Yeah, wind. I feel like I've played in as much wind as this earth can offer. I've played in rain, obviously. You can't play golf your whole life and not play in rain. But I'd say less rain, especially less cold rain. Where I'm from, it's obviously not cold. I would say that's a little bit of a new thing this week. But we didn't -- there was about an hour where it sprinkled today, and it wasn't too bad.

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