

# Senior PGA Championship

The Concession Golf Club

Bradenton, Florida, USA

Sunday, April 19, 2026

## Justin Hicks

### Press Conference



**THE MODERATOR:** We're now joined by Justin Hicks here at the 2026 Senior PGA Championship. Justin, you're the low PGA golf professional this week here. What has this week been like, and how do you feel winning that honor?

**JUSTIN HICKS:** It was a very exciting week from start to finish. I mean, the course was a great challenge, every aspect, whether we're putting, chipping, irons, tee balls. It was something.

The wind was kind of switching around. We kind of picked up a little bit this weekend on Saturday and Sunday, but yeah, just a lot of fun. Had a good time. Had a good friend of mine out that was a good player in his own right. He played on tour, Tom Gillis. He helped me out a lot out there. He kept me in a good place.

I'm still kind of riding a wave of things here. The last couple of years have been pretty good for me. Been getting along well with all the Callaway stuff. They've been great and supportive.

My members have been really supportive of me out here playing in these events too and rooting me on back home. I've got quite a few text message to do so catch up with tonight. Had a few of my guys show up and watch me over the last couple of days, which was cool to see too. Had dinner with a couple of them last night.

So, yeah, it was just a lot of fun. Had my wife and son here to take it all in as well. I don't know if my son knows too many of these guys out here yet, but I'm trying to kind of tell him, that guy right there, he was No. 1, and that guy right there, he won the Masters and he won the U.S. Open. It's been a lot of fun showing him all this stuff too. I almost get more fun out of that than myself being around these guys.

I grew up watching some of these guys. I grew up chasing the tour down while these guys were killing it too. Then luckily, I was able to play with them for a little bit and now to have a chance to play again with them.

I don't know, it's weird. Like my caddie was saying, he thinks I'm longer now than when I played full-time. I made it out there okay, though, and I feel competitive out here with these guys. Hopefully I can continue to find some opportunities going forward to maybe see some starts out here with these guys and maybe see what happens.

I know it's a really, really tough place. It's been easier for me at 51 to get starts on the PGA TOUR than out here on the Champions Tour, which is kind of a weird statement, but it's the truth.

So I'll just keep doing what I do, teaching and getting my starts whenever I can and having fun with it.

**THE MODERATOR:** Questions.

**Q. Was your caddie this week the guy for you when you were on tour?**

**JUSTIN HICKS:** No, no, I played with him when I was on tour. He used to play. He played out here for three years. He's only caddied but maybe a few times. He caddied for George McNeill this year in Boca, which I Mondayed into, because it's right down the road there from where I work and live.

I didn't even realize he was really getting into caddying. I guess just physically he's not able to get out of his game what he wants to anymore, so he's kind of going that route of he knows so many guys out here that he's going to hang out and caddie.

But, yeah, we had a really good time with it. We've known each other for years. He's a Michigan guy like myself. Big U of M, University of Michigan, supporter like I am too, where I went to school and Detroit sports. We've got a lot of stuff that we can kind of talk about out there.

We know a lot of the same people down in Florida too. Yeah, he's a great guy, and we had a lot of fun.

**Q. Were you worried at any time yesterday after the**



**round and did you work on some things? Were you worried yesterday when you finished your round, because it didn't go that well, and did you have to work on some things?**

JUSTIN HICKS: I don't know if I was worried. The weekend, it felt like almost every pin that we were putting to was, like, up on top of a volcano. It was very rare that we were putting to flat spots, and it was hard with the wind and the firmness of the greens and the speed of them to get them really close at times.

You know, even though I had wedges, it was like trying to figure out where it's going to land and how it's going to react and bounce and spin and all the slopes going on. You need like a Ph degree out here to figure out what's going on with some of this stuff. It was a challenge.

Stewart Cink is obviously on a big roll himself, and he's really getting after it. I think some of that is, you know, for some of these guys when you're playing well and it's kind of like, you know, at the casino, I'm up high on house money, so to speak, and I think he's just continuing to roll with that. Doesn't have much to lose almost.

Obviously he's doing a lot of good stuff too. I mean, he's hitting it far. He's making putts. He's not showing much weakness. So someone is going to have to go out there and try to chase him down.

But, yeah, I mean, the more I kind of get comfortable out here, I think that was a big part of it for me. I've never been the heir in the race. I've always been the tortoise. I had my first Champions start this spring during my work season. Finished 24th with a not-so-great Sunday. My next start in a major was 17th. Little by little I just keep trying to get that tortoise going.

**Q. What are you most proud of this weekend?**

JUSTIN HICKS: Well, I mean, I think finishing low professional, that would be part of it. I had my mind and sights set on top 10, top 5, see if we can challenge the lead. I felt like we did a pretty good job of that.

Like I said, I think if I just get a little more comfortable in this environment with these guys, the crowds, the TV cameras and all that stuff. It's not really what -- playing in the Section stuff and the PGA stuff has been kind of cool because there has been cameras out there, so I actually feel like I've got more cameras out there now than ever almost.

There's just a certain level of getting comfortable with that. I think for people that are just at home playing golf, all of a

sudden there's a camera there filming you, and it's like, Huh, who is going to watch this, and what are they going to see? Hopefully I give them a good show. You know, I don't want to be hitting one of those bad ones right about now.

I think there's just a level of comfortability for me. I don't know, growing in Michigan where there weren't a lot of professional golfers running out of that state into this world. When I came down to Florida I worked for six-plus years at various courses and then kind of slowly got my status on the Korn Ferry TOUR at the time, and it was conditional. Then slowly got a little better with that status. Then I found a way to lead a U.S. Open, and then two weeks later I won on the Korn Ferry TOUR.

So there's a little of that slow grind. I'm a slow burn of a player. I wish I could say I was faster. Some of these guys come out like lightning, and they just blow up. I've just never been that guy. I wish I had more of it, but in some ways I'm thrilled with -- 17th is a good finish here this week. I felt like it could have been better. I know it could have been better, but you could say that about every time you play golf I think so...

**Q. Will you and Tom continue to work together?**

JUSTIN HICKS: He's scheduled to get together with George McNeill, but George has another guy that's in there. So, you know, if he's available, I definitely would have him out. I just don't know when I'm going to be getting in again.

We're both from Michigan, and I grew up in the Detroit area. Man, if I could get into that event up there, I'd really enjoy that. Never played that event because when the tour played there, I wasn't on tour, and then when I got on tour, they lost the event. As soon as I lost my card, they have the new event in Detroit now.

Now that I'm 50 and in the Champions Tour, maybe I'll have a chance to see Grand Blanc and see what that course is all about.

I think it would be a good story, especially if I had him on the bag. A couple of Michigan guys out there would be kind of fun for I think the locals to see and watch and understand, like, you know, hey, it's possible. If you've got the time, the desire, and the work ethic, you know, see what happens.

**Q. Next stop Bandon Dunes, PPC?**

JUSTIN HICKS: Correct.

**Q. What do you feel about these younger guys and measuring yourself to them?**

JUSTIN HICKS: Yeah, obviously it's the younger guys. There's some pretty long players, you know, in that group of players, but we're going to be battling some elements. It's going to be like a European Tour event out there. It's going to be 50s and wind and rain and everything else.

Hopefully it will be a little bit more of a shot-making contest than a I can hit it 350 in the air kind of contest. With that, you know, I'm more than willing to take on that challenge if it turns into shot-making and understanding, you know, how to maybe navigate the course and play the bounces and the rolls and all that stuff.

I think it should be a good week. I mentioned to Tom, like, Hey, maybe I get in a round and maybe I'll have to get you a buzz and see what happens. Who knows?

Yeah, it was a lot of fun having a good player like him on the bag. I've had kind of mixed reactions with that in the past, because you feel like you really let him down when you hit a bad shot. It's like you've got a guy standing next to you that could hit a really good shot, and you are over there kind of chopping one up, but this week was a lot of fun.

**Q. Through the struggles and adversity, how do you stay so consistent?**

JUSTIN HICKS: I don't know if there's struggles and adversity. There's ups and downs. That's just life. As you get older, you'll realize you got to just keep your head down and keep going. There's no letting anything kind of get you down out there, because you still got holes left to make birdies. So, yeah, you'll be all right.

My son (smiling).

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