

TGL Playoff Semifinals Presented By SoFi: Los Angeles Golf Club vs Atlanta Drive Golf Club

Tuesday, March 17, 2026

Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, USA

SoFi Center

Los Angeles Golf Club

Justin Rose

Tommy Fleetwood

Sahith Theegala

Semifinals Press Conference

Los Angeles Golf Club - 6, Atlanta Drive GC - 4

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations to Los Angeles Golf Club with a semifinals victory moving on to the finals. I'm actually going to start with question for Tommy. It seems like you've probably seen it as many times as anybody, but every time Justin Rose has an important putt he makes it. What's it like to have a teammate like that?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: It's nice. Yeah, he has a way with the ones. Just, you know, he hit some great putts today. I love watching him go through his process and the way that he goes about it and the way he hits his putts. He hit them with unbelievable pace and freedom, really, and knocked 'em in. But again, I've been lucky enough to be his partner before and watch him hole putts at the perfect moments, and he did that two or three more times he did that tonight. So it's always a pleasure having that on your side.

THE MODERATOR: Justin, other way around, Tommy's on the final hole, and you know you at least have to get a tie to take the point, what confidence did you have in your partner?

JUSTIN ROSE: Absolutely. I think the boys kind of came up with that pretty cool strategy -- I'm sure you'll talk about the hammer strategy to give 'em that sort of that opportunity on the last hole. But still, we still had to play that hole well. They were going to throw that hammer. So it was always going to -- it kind of became evident that it was coming down to the last hole.



Obviously with Tommy on a par-5, the way he strikes the golf ball, you can kind of hope that he's going to put two good swings on it. The problem with Tommy is that it was a hole where you couldn't hit it straight. If it was a hole that you had to hit it straight, it would have been like, oh, this is all in. But it was a hole you had to hit it right or left. So that was the only slight challenge I suppose for him. But, yeah, two good swings. He left himself obviously 5-iron in there. Yeah, I mean, listen, the rest is all business. It's very easy to say that though, but like it was enough of a chip where you had to cover enough of the fringe and come out just a bit soft enough to keep it close to the pin. It looks like a formality, but it's not a formality. So good nerves at the end. And when you're watching on, it's sort of like, you know, you're just hoping for the best, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Take some questions.

Q. You guys noted in the broadcast that you were keeping a hammer in your back pocket for singles. How intentional was that going into the match?

SAHITH THEEGALA: I think it was pretty intentional. We've kind of had that strategy for most of the year, I think. It's just, a hammer late in the match is so important, especially -- either way, actually. If we're up a few points we can really put the match on ice. And if we're down two or three points, like we found ourselves a couple times, we could make a really quick come back. I think that strategy works out great. As the opposing team, you know that we have a hammer or two in our back pocket and they're probably thinking about when we're going to throw it, too.

So, yeah, it just worked out. It's nice when it works out how you think about it. I think our hammers were all well timed and well thrown. And, yeah, it's easy to say that when it all works out, but, yeah I'm glad we had one there.

Q. Justin, to carry the hammer strategy a bit further, I asked Billy the question about the hammer you guys threw on 14. He looked pretty frustrated by that hammer. Can you guys just explain the strategy?

JUSTIN ROSE: No, I can't. I was unaware of it. Next thing I knew the thing was on the ground. So it was like,

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What the hell's going on here. So I'll let the boys explain. Because I was reading the putt from the other end. I had no part of it. But it was genius.

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, it was all Tommy. I mean, he made it clear that we have a hammer and we're probably going to tie that hole if Billy made the putt and I made the putt, and we would be up one point and they would throw the hammer regardless, so we wouldn't have a chance to use it on the last hole. And, yeah, it was just it was a great call by Tommy. I wasn't even thinking about it, really.

But it was a tricky 5-footer. I mean, he has a putt to win the hole, and all of a sudden he's ran it five, five and a half feet by, and it's a big situation, mind starts racing a little bit, and all of a sudden he's got an outside left, five and a half foot putt that if he misses the match is completely over now that the hammer's thrown.

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: I just felt like, when Billy had hit it to where he was, our hammer became useless, effectively. Because we're not going to use it on the last hole, we're 1-up, so our hammer is gone.

But Billy's got a 5-footer, so there's three options, really. He accepts it, and they both hole, because I was very confident Sahith was going to hole his putt. So we go to the last one up anyway. They're going to throw the hammer anyway, it's going to come down to the last hole. Billy can accept it and they miss, the match is over. Billy can turn it town, and it goes to the last hole anyway, and they're going to throw the hammer anyway.

Q. You thought about all that quick in that amount of time?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Yeah, (laughing). It just felt like the right thing to do. But obviously it was as well. In the nicest possible way, like Billy's shown his frustration that it obviously gave them a pretty tough decision to make. Maybe I got lucky with thinking the right way at the right time, but obviously, you know, it went well.

Q. The kind of celebration at the end, coming into this thing like last year, did you ever envision being out here and being that excited to win a match? Being that kind of, you know, that kind of celebration? Did it have anything to do with losing last year at this point, or was it just you guys just having a lot of fun?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Well, yeah, I think for sure. I think when TGL started I think all of us can honestly say nobody knew what to expect, but we wanted to be a part of it. Because you didn't know what was, what it was going to be like. I think very quickly you become close, you become a

team, you play for each other, and you're competitive, and it's a really cool thing.

For us there, of course it's wildly different to playing on a golf course. But at the same time, there's so many similarities to it. I was nervous playing the last hole. I loved that I had the opportunity to be playing the last hole for the boys and we could win the match there. And you got to use a lot of the same mental skills that you use every single day.

So, but yeah, like, for sure, holing that putt being able to look at the boys and know that we made it to the final, that was awesome. That's what it's all about. And it's just great playing as a team and especially with the team that we've got. For me.

Q. Great comeback, and congratulations on making it to the finals. To what do you attribute the Europeans' great team success in golf events over the years?

JUSTIN ROSE: I think, just quite simply, I mean we can go into many, many different things I suppose, but just having a bit of a vision and some sort of like leaders and legacies that have been left behind from other players, namely Seve, for example. That was a turning point. Before that there wasn't really a European legacy or story or history. So I just think that honoring those players for sure of the past.

And that's becoming more difficult, like I said as well I think, is that a lot of the youngsters now never met Seve, never played with Seve, don't identify really with Seve, as maybe the Westwoods, Poulter, myself even we did. So yeah, that story might change. We have to find new narratives. But I think that's been a big part of it.

And that's probably kept us -- that's probably what's been cohesive for us, not necessarily our nationalities, yeah.

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Sahith had his own song today from the European guys.

SAHITH THEEGALA: I already forgot what it was, but it was like, Sahith, Sahith, I like it like that, or something like that.

Q. Tommy, for Stinger to work for you, but how have you settled on driver to tee off that hole?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: It's the easiest shot for me to hit low and carry it far enough in a way. I enjoy practicing that shot. I hit a similar shot on the golf course a lot, in terms of like a bullet driver, but obviously not that minus one degree launch angle. But it's like an extreme version of a shot that

I actually hit on the golf course. And yeah, like I felt pretty comfortable with it so far. It's nice getting to practice that shot and having a feel for it. But yeah, for me -- I know Chris hit like a 1-iron, and I've seen Min Woo hit a 1-iron. My longest iron is a 5-iron, and then I go to a 9-wood, and I don't think 9-wood -- that would be a struggle.

Q. Have you tried it?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: I tried it and I missed the screen. But yeah, so driver end up being the play for me.

Q. We spoke a couple weeks ago, your backs were kind of up against the wall to even get into the playoffs. Down 4-1 again tonight. How were you able to elevate as a team and rise to the occasion when you're in those positions?

JUSTIN ROSE: I think it just shows the quality that we have as a team, the quality of golfers that we have on the team, and just trust that over time the theory of large numbers will kind of play in our favor. I think that you have to think that way and you have to trust the team and you have to trust the golf. And there's no magic. Just good attitude, I think that was a big thing tonight. I think Tommy said we showed a bit of a different skill tonight. There's been other skills that we've shown, good golf, making putts, whatever it's been, ball striking, iron play. But tonight was just a little bit more, no panic, and just patience and calmness under pressure, I think. So yeah, we're still learning as a team of what we're capable of really as well, but I think the more we do we can kind of realize that we can get through certain situations.

Q. Sahith, you guys FaceTimed Collin after the match. What was that like? Any fun exchanges as part of that?

SAHITH THEEGALA: Yeah, you know, honestly, Collin is, I've known Collin my whole life. We both grew up in L.A. and he's one of the most passionate dudes. He gets so fired up for this. I was thinking of him before the match. And even during the match he sent us a nice text just kind of firing us up. And I knew he would be watching back home and cheering us on probably harder than we were cheering each other on here. It was great to see him after, and he was pumped. Rosie was saying, Make sure you don't throw your back out fist pumping too hard.

But it's really cool to get it done for him as well, because he's a huge part of this team. And every one of us have put a lot of work and effort into this as well, so it's really nice to see the payout of this making it to the finals.

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