

# KitchenAid Senior PGA Championship

PGA Frisco

Frisco, Texas, USA

Tuesday, May 23, 2023

## Justin Leonard

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We're joined now by Justin Leonard at the 83rd KitchenAid Senior PGA Championship. Thanks for the time today. As someone with some great local ties here, how excited are you to be playing in a major championship in Frisco?

JUSTIN LEONARD: Yeah, it's fun. Hard to imagine that sentence three or four years ago. But with the vision the PGA of America and moving their headquarters and this facility, it's fun. I've been looking forward to this for a couple years, and now that I've seen the golf course, I'm looking forward to it even more.

I think that Gil and his team did a really good job of a great challenge, but it's a course that the public can come out and play and they'll enjoy it, and they may lose a few golf balls, might make a few bogeys, and you'll probably see that from us this week.

But cool property, and yeah, it's always nice to be -- I haven't lived in Dallas since 2015, but growing up here, still have a lot of family and friends, so it's nice to be here.

**Q. Now that you've had a handful of starts out here, what's it been like to get the competitive juices going again?**

JUSTIN LEONARD: I've enjoyed it most of the time. I'd say there's -- it's funny at 50 years old, but still a few things I'm kind of relearning, competitive-wise and with my own game and things like that, trying to do some of the things I used to as far as practice and those things, but trying to do it more efficiently, I'd say, whether it's out here just to stay rested and stay fresh or at home with my kids and their sports and graduation last week and all that stuff.

I think I'm finding a good balance between the two. I'm not playing -- I played two events back-to-back, whatever it was, Las Colinas and then down at the Insuperity. But I'm pretty much kind of -- I'm only playing one week at a time, either a week or two weeks in between.

I think spacing it out kind of helps because I can kind of put everything into the week and then go home and rest and then practice and ramp back up.

I didn't do that a lot on the regular tour, but I think out here, it just works better for me, and with where I am now and my family and all that.

But yeah, there's moments when it feels totally familiar and second nature, and there's other times when I don't quite know what I'm doing. Hopefully more of those -- more moments of that first thing that I mentioned will happen and less of the second.

**Q. When you look at this course from a tournament standpoint, competitive standpoint, is there a stretch of holes that gets your attention potentially more than others, visualizing how it'll play under tournament conditions?**

JUSTIN LEONARD: Right, I was actually thinking about that kind of during the round today. At the start you've got the two par-5s at 1 and 3. For some guys they'll be reachable. I don't see myself reaching either of those holes with this wind.

But you know, you hit a couple decent shots, and I'll have wedges.

Then 5 is a little easier tee shot. 6 is really hard. 7 is a hole that's pretty gettable. Then you turn around, and 10 might be the hardest hole on the golf course.

There's not real, okay, here's a section of holes where I need to go be aggressive. I think 14, 15, 17 and 18 are probably the easiest stretch in there if you're going to put together a stretch, but otherwise you kind of play a hard hole and then a hole that maybe is more gettable. It seems to go kind of back and forth a good bit on this golf course.

Again, this is my second time playing it, so it's a little bit of a shot in the dark. But it'll be interesting to see scoring-wise how all that comes out.

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But I think with the last stretch, 14 being a par-5, you'll see guys get there. 15 is a shorter hole, and then 17, the short par-3, and 18 is reachable.

I think at the end of the round is when you'll see kind of more fireworks.

**Q. Obviously you're pretty famous around here. You're one of the Northern Texas PGAs --**

JUSTIN LEONARD: Oh, I'm really famous around here, let's just be honest.

**Q. I wondered if you've been down to the Northern Texas PGA where they have a replica of your Brookline putt, and what do you think of the campus as a whole?**

JUSTIN LEONARD: I haven't been down to that end of the facility yet. I'm going to go tomorrow afternoon once I'm kind of done with everything. But excited to see it.

I think they named like a bathroom or something after Randy. I'm excited to see that.

But no, it's great, what they've done here. The facility, the buildings, they're beautiful. Just the whole kind of campus, as you said. It feels like it is a bit of a campus.

I know that Seth Waugh and all the PGA of America have to be really proud of what they've done here.

We're the guinea pigs this week to see, but there's a lot that's going to happen here. I'm sure some changes will take place, but man, the bones are here for a great setting, for our major championship this week, and then PGA Championships and Ryder Cups and whatever else may follow.

**Q. I know that you're in South Florida now; have you played this course before this week?**

JUSTIN LEONARD: Yeah, I came over -- they gave us a couple days after our tournament at Las Colinas, the Invited Celebrity, that Monday and Tuesday after, they opened up the course to us to come play. So I came over and played on Monday, I think.

It was a little chilly. It was blowing about 30 out of the east.

Yeah, it was nice to be able to see it and kind of have a sense of like last week at home, shots I need to try and work on around the greens and those things. It certainly made -- yesterday I got out and played nine holes, and then today in the pro-am, just getting more familiar with it.

I think that it reminds me a little bit of Whistling Straits in the respect of -- and there's not as much going on, but there's some big features, and trying to really determine what's in play and what you need to focus on. I feel like it takes a couple of rounds.

So I was definitely more comfortable today playing the golf course, certainly on the front nine since today was my third time to play it. I'll play nine holes tomorrow, but yeah, I think having a sense of what's going on certainly helps.

**Q. Pros are good at figuring out what score is going to be needed to win a golf tournament. Do you see some low 60s here by somebody during the week?**

JUSTIN LEONARD: Well, I guess not all pros are because I've never been good at figuring out what the winning number is going to be. I don't know. The guys out here are so good, I wouldn't be surprised at anything.

I think it doesn't look like the wind is going to blow real hard this week. Yeah, something in the low 60s would probably surprise me a little bit. But I think for me, I just try and approach it what's the right shot to play right here regardless of score.

You know, I'm not sure what -- I couldn't probably guess within five shots what the winning score will be.

**Q. Dallas hasn't been home for a while, but what would it mean to get this one here, your first win on this tour, and I don't know whether you felt like it was a hole not to win Nelson or Colonial back in those days, but getting a chance to win this one here, what would that mean to you?**

JUSTIN LEONARD: Yeah, it would be a lot of fun to do it close to home. My parents are still here. I get here every once in a while to see them. I've got our second daughter is going to be coming to SMU in the fall.

And then of course Randy Smith, my sister lives here.

Lots of reasons to come to Dallas. Yeah, look, I'm looking forward to my first win, wherever it is. But if I could pick one, it would probably be here, and that's the last time I'm going to think about winning for the rest of the week.

**Q. What are the challenges playing on a course that you've never played before?**

JUSTIN LEONARD: Yeah, understanding kind of some of the areas where you can miss the ball and still be okay. Then just kind of what the tendencies are. Because the

wind is not very strong, it's moving around a decent bit, and not like 180, but a 15 or 20 percent shift in the wind makes a big difference on a golf course like this where it's all pretty exposed.

Just kind of figuring those things out. There's a couple of shots that are blind, and getting comfortable with those. It's always hard to get comfortable on blinds shots. But I think the more you play and understand what's down the fairway or up by the green, what's going on, I think it's easier to get more comfortable.

But there are some things here that are kind of hidden from your view, and it creates a little depth perception, those kind of things.

I think just getting comfortable with those aspects is the biggest thing of trying to get ready to contend this week.

**Q. Did your son commit to Texas? You have a really good playing son, right, Luke? I didn't know if he committed anywhere.**

JUSTIN LEONARD: No, he is not committed anywhere. But his golf is really coming along. This is the first -- he just really started playing three years ago, and this is the first time he's been able to play like year-round. Living in Colorado, the clubs went on the shelf for seven or eight months.

His skiing is actually pretty good. We went in March. He's still skiing well. But his golf game, we can now see the results of being able to go at it year-round. He's playing lacrosse and stuff like that, as well.

But he's really gotten into it, and he's kind of shot a couple personal bests here in the last couple weeks, and so yeah, he's excited.

Amanda and the kids are coming in Friday and he asked me if I thought he'd be able to hit balls here, and I said, well, I don't know. I know a couple guys -- maybe if we got over on the side. Anyways, if you see some young looking guy out there with curly hair that's about three inches taller than me and swings at it better than I do, it might be Luke.

**Q. There was a Leonard-Woods showdown recently down there.**

JUSTIN LEONARD: Really? Yes, that was fun.

**Q. Did you enjoy that?**

JUSTIN LEONARD: That was fun. Yeah, they both played in the junior club championship, and Luke got paired with

Charlie. They go to the same school, although they're on different campuses. He'll be a freshman, so they'll be at the same school. But I think it was Luke's first time to play with him, and I know it was his first time to play in front of Tiger Woods.

It was cool. It was fun to watch him. It was fun -- I enjoyed not only watching my son play, watching Charlie play because he played great, and then talking about junior golf with Tiger for nine holes and little things that we see in our kids that they need to work on or whatever it may be.

But there was a shot that Charlie hit into 12, which was a par-5, this beautiful high like soft cut, looked like a 3-hybrid or something. Landed on the green, and it stopped dead. There might have been a little bit of a club twirl at the end of it, and I walked by Tiger, I go, okay, a lot of that looked very familiar, and we both had a good chuckle.

Yeah, it was fun. It's fun to see the lightbulb go off and gain a little momentum, because this game -- dad, I keep practicing, I'm not shooting any better. I go, trust me, your game is getting better, the scores will come. I'm talking to myself, too, at the same time. We're learning a lot of lessons. I'm relearning them, he's learning them for the first time. But yeah, it was a pretty fun Saturday.

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