

BMW Championship

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Castle Rock, Colorado, USA

Castle Pines Golf Club

Justin Thomas

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by 2019 BMW Championship winner Justin Thomas. Welcome back, making your ninth tournament appearance. Want to get some thoughts on the course.

JUSTIN THOMAS: It's a very cool course. It's all right in front of you. Obviously like everybody else this week, just trying to get engaged for the altitude and catch your breath when you have to hit after walking up some big hills.

No, it's a very cool place, and I think it's one that maybe requires a little bit of strategy and some clubs you can hit off tees, but for the most part it's just going to be who can control their distance the best and take advantage of those opportunities when they get them.

Q. We've had pretty historic years by Scottie and Xander, as well. If you had a choice to take one of those seasons or the other, which one of them would you take and why?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I've had this conversation with a couple different group texts. It's tough. I think it's very situational of where you are in your career. For me personally, two majors sounds a lot cooler than one. But then again, winning six times, all of which being elevated events and PLAYERS and a gold medal sounds nice, too. Might be better to answer that question if something were to happen the next couple weeks.

For me personally, I would -- I can't believe I'm saying this, but I think I would take Xander's just because of two majors. But yeah, talk about a no-lose situation, those are two pretty good ones.

Q. If someone were to ask you and they didn't know much about golf, perhaps, oh, you've got these two guys, one, two, in the FedExCup, what's the difference between Scheffler and Schauffele? Their last names sound the name. What's the difference? How do they approach it differently, or are they just pretty much approaching it the same way?



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JUSTIN THOMAS: I wouldn't say they approach it the same way. They're both really good at everything. I think that's something that's very similar with them both, especially this year, is that every aspect of the game they do really well. So that's always a good thing.

But I think they're known for different things. I think I've always said if you could choose any player on TOUR to have a putt on your line that you can get a read from, I think Xander is No. 1, how well he rolls it and he lines it up and the ball rolls end over end every time. It's very, very impressive watching him go around a course. Both of them are so good at minimizing mistakes. I think that's why they've found themselves in contention so often, because they make so few bogeys that as many birdie chances as they give themselves, it's kind of hard not to.

Q. At 22 in the FedExCup, are you one to want to know what your scenario is to get to East Lake or would you just rather go play and shoot the best score you can without knowing a thing?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I'd rather definitely just try to play as well as I can. I know if I put myself in contention to win the tournament and have a good chance, I'll be more than okay.

There's I'm sure a lot of statistics involved of what percent chance you have, how many points it might take to get through, and I probably am not the person to ask because my rookie year when I finished at this tournament I was told that I'm in Atlanta and everything -- I'm in, and there was a lot of groups left, and I went on to finish 31st. I'm not a huge fan of that situation, when you finish on 18 and being told what's happening because as we saw last week, there's a lot of variables and things that can happen.

I just feel like trying to finish a certain top 16 or whatever the heck it may be, I know I'm in a good place, and I feel like likely if I play how I feel like I should, I'm fine.

But I'm trying to get -- move up as far as possible to start as many under par as I can next week.

Q. I don't know if the right word is comfortable or anxiety or however you'd describe it, your feeling now about being on the Presidents Cup team, how would you compare it with where you were a year ago as it

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related to the Ryder Cup?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I'd say both of those words come to mind, comfort and anxiety. I think last year I had a lot of anxiety about making the Ryder Cup team. I want to make the Presidents Cup team just as bad. But I just -- I'm in such a better place and my game is in such a better place that I'm not coming to tournaments trying to play well to try to make a team.

I feel that I'm fully capable and I'm playing well enough that I can win every tournament I'm playing in. It's just about putting myself there and doing it.

I think that's just the biggest difference is last year I was playing to try to play well to make the Ryder Cup team versus now I feel I'm trying to play well to try to win golf tournaments and try to have a chance at the FedExCup, and I feel like if I do those things, then that should be good enough for the Presidents Cup team.

Like I said, my want is there just as bad. It's just how I'm thinking about it in my head is a lot healthier and a lot better.

Q. How would you rate your season, your year so far?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I mean, it's been fine. I'd say it's been a good year. It just hasn't -- I feel like I've done a lot of really good things. I just haven't scored as well as I feel like I've kind of played, especially these last couple tournaments. I feel like getting off to a good start -- I mean, most seasons for everybody kind of have ups and downs and kind of after the start of the year feel like I just kind of hit a little bit of a lull of getting back in contention.

The biggest thing is I just haven't won, and I think that's really the only thing or the difference of keeping it from being a really, really good year, and I have two weeks left to try to capitalize on that and see if we can't make it a great year.

Q. The schedule for next year came out recently. It looks pretty similar. Strategic Sports Group invested all this money. Do you get the sense that moving forward past '25 it will start to look different or the changes will start to implement?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I don't know. I would think that it's going to change at some point. I don't know when it is. I think everything does eventually, and I think when all of us are -- and the TOUR is pretty committed to trying to make our product as good as humanly possible, I'm sure there's other ways to do that. What that is, I don't know. Yeah, it wouldn't surprise me to see things different after next year.

Q. Scottie was just talking about how a big part of his preparation is money matches against other guys and having that out there. He said that he played you on Monday. Is he as dominant in those matches as he has been on the major course?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Well, all I know is our match got rained out, so it was a draw if you ask me. That's the only thing that I remember it at. We definitely weren't 2-down through 13. It was a push.

Q. In general, though, is that something that helps you guys prepare, to have something -- even if it's just a little something, have that friendly banter, et cetera, in prep?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I like it. I think it's kind of situational, as weird as it is, on courses. We get to places that we've been a lot, I think it's just you can kind of go through the motions, and it can almost be a wasted day or a wasted practice round.

You end up hitting the same chips, the same putts, you already know what they do, and then you get to 5 or 6 and you're like, I'm over this day. I think everybody is different, but for me I definitely like having something -- even if it's just a birdie game of hey, you don't make birdie, we're done with the hole and then go on about your business. But I like doing it just for the sake of the competition, because there's something about having to hand over \$100 or whatever it may be that hurts worse than a lot more money than that.

Q. When the PGA TOUR was here before it was a modified Stableford system. In stroke play terms, what would you guess from seeing it the last few days, what would be a good winning score here in your estimation?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I'm terrible at -- I'm absolutely terrible at that. If I had to guess, I would guess, like most events, it would be 15- to 20-under. It just depends on how -- the fairways are pretty receptive. They're generous. A lot of less-than-drivers. But I also thought 6-under was going to win Medinah, and I think I shot 24 or 25.

As I said, I'm pretty terrible at guessing. All I know is I hope whatever I shoot is the winning score.

Q. Over the course of your career, you have obviously had friendships with Phil and Jon and a number of the other guys that have gone to LIV. Could you speak to your relationships today with those guys and if there are any communications and what the state of that



relationship is?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, I mean, it was -- I would say it was kind of a cordial friendship or relationship. Just similar to what it is now. We never were planning any trips together or having dinners together or anything like that. It was just we were peers that played with and against each other on TOUR. We said "hey" and caught up when we saw each other. Nothing has changed from when I've seen them in the majors. You just kind of say hi and go about your business.

Q. What do you consider to be the single greatest meltdown you've ever had on the golf course, and what did you learn from it?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Meltdown?

Q. Not score but meltdown.

JUSTIN THOMAS: So like emotionally --

Q. Yes, very much emotionally.

JUSTIN THOMAS: That's a tough one. Shocking, nothing comes to mind of any, like, outbursts or anything that maybe I saw on camera or something to where I was like, wow, I look really dumb. I'm not saying I haven't had those moments. I definitely have. But nothing fortunately that has been enough of an issue or enough of a thing to have been brought to my attention.

Q. Have you ever had attitude problems, whatever that means?

JUSTIN THOMAS: For sure.

Q. Have you fixed them yourself or gotten help from someone?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, I don't know when this was, but I was a pretty fiery kid. I would get pretty pissed off and slam clubs or whatever and it was not a good look. My dad always preached attitude on me and to have a better attitude and everything. We were out playing with a member one day, and I was probably eight or nine years old, and I don't know what I did, but I had one of my little temper tantrums and my dad was pretty embarrassed, playing with a member and being the pro at the club. He was like, I'm so sorry, and the member said, I get it, he wants to play well. But one thing is you can't put the fire in somebody, but you can kind of rein it down.

I think when my dad heard that, it kind of resonated or clicked to him that -- it's hard for someone who's very here

to be like, all right, just show some passion, really get into this, versus I find it a lot easier or at least better for me personally of like, okay, I have that. I have that fire and intensity and it's easier as I've matured and gotten older to kind of tame it down a little bit.

That's been a big thing for me that I've learned just through experiences and trial of different things. It doesn't work for me to go out there like DJ. I love his demeanor -- and Xander, I love his demeanor. But I need to slam a club every once in a while. If that's what I've got to do to get it out of my system, that's what works for me.

First off, as long as I'm not embarrassing myself, hurting the golf course, doing anything like that, but as long as my next shot isn't affected by that, then whatever I've got to do I've got to do.

Q. Back on the subject of Presidents Cup, Sahith Theegala is currently projected to be on that team. I was wondering if you've had much chance to see his game. Also, what would you think of him as a potential partner or teammate on the Presidents Cup team?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, his game is really impressive. I played with him a couple times this year. I like what he does. It's similar to I feel like how I play golf, very feel. He's not scared to aim 40, 50 yards left and hit a huge slice out there. He has unbelievable hands, unbelievable touch, and obviously great instincts to where it's not necessarily -- I'm sure he has certain fundamentals or things that he checks, but it's more about am I getting the ball in the hole as quick as possible or am I hitting the fairway however I can, not is it some certain position.

I like that about him, and 100 percent, he's got all the shots. He's obviously a great competitor, and he's put himself in contention at a lot of big tournaments. I obviously hope to be on that team, but whether I'm on that team or not, I think I'd feel comfortable to partner with any of them, but I need to play my way on that team first.

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