

TOUR Championship

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Atlanta, Georgia, USA

East Lake Golf Club

Justin Thomas

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome 2017 FedExCup champion Justin Thomas to the media center here at the 2025 TOUR Championship. This is your ninth career appearance here at East Lake. You make it a goal every year you want to make it to East Lake, but when you finally step on the grounds, is there any extra validation knowing that you're here and you're among the top 30?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Definitely. I would say it is even more so the past couple years. I feel like once the elevated events have started and just with kind of schedule changes and whatnot, the amount of depth and talent on TOUR, it's very difficult to make it here. It's always been tough, but I definitely feel like it is a little bit more so.

Everything is so great, from the ease of practice rounds, the ease of just everything the whole week. It's always a great place to end the year.

Q. How would you grade your season up to this point?

JUSTIN THOMAS: It's been a good year. It's kind of gone in waves. If I was to give it a letter grade, some kind of B, I think. Maybe B minus.

I definitely know a way that could trend it toward the A direction after this week. Hopefully we can change that letter grade.

Q. Is there anything in particular that you've been grinding on the past couple weeks or on the range this week in preparation for this tournament?

JUSTIN THOMAS: A little bit. I feel like the last really -- since the Scottish, I just haven't gotten very much out of my rounds. I feel like I've made too many mental mistakes. I just haven't been sharp. Kind of killed momentum, whether it's to start some momentum or to keep momentum going, whether it's through decisions or just the wrong shot at the wrong time kind of thing.

I just feel like I've maybe let the end of the season get to me a little bit and not being as sharp. I had a good



conversation with Rev this week trying to just not get lazy on any shots, not anything in particular, and play the course for what it is.

But definitely I think driving is such a premium this week and getting the ball in the fairway are how firm the greens are and the Bermuda rough.

I've definitely been putting a fair amount of work on that the past couple weeks.

Q. When you won the FedExCup in 2017, you were battling a couple of guys. I think Jordan was one of them. Now it's 30 players, winner takes all. What's the mindset change for this week? How much can you pull from previous times you've been at East Lake?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, I think there's definitely a lot of similarities to before. I like the sense of -- you still have a legitimate golf tournament winner. Obviously there was a winner the past however many years with the starting strokes, but it wasn't really.

It has the opportunity to be an unbelievable week in the sense of you could have 15, 20 guys that have chance to win on Sunday, which is pretty cool when it comes to in terms of the FedExCup. That's awesome, but it's more of just playing the tournament. I think with the starting strokes, it was very, very dependent on where you were, and more often than not, other than a handful of guys, your week was pretty quickly determined of your chances on the first -- or not the first nine holes, but your first day.

If you're starting at, say, 2- or 3-under or less and you don't go shoot 4- or 5-under the first day, then you pretty much don't have a chance to win anymore. You're just trying to get as high as you can. Which there's nothing wrong with that, but at least now everybody is starting at par. You can go salvage a potentially 1-under or even a 1-over round, and with three really good rounds or a great round, you're back in it, which I think is a better position.

Q. Do you ever struggle with making good decisions when it gets hot, you know, week after week after week after week, and what do you do to combat that? Do you take certain kinds of replacements, electrolytes or whatever?



JUSTIN THOMAS: I struggle making good decisions in any kind of weather sometimes, so definitely if it gets hot, I'm sure it doesn't help the case.

I think it's like anything. I just think there's some days or some weeks I'm in a better frame of mind than others. I'm sure it's the same for you guys. It's the end of the season. I think you see guys out here that are just a little bit more irritable, a little chipper, and I think it probably doesn't help battling the 100 plus heat index a couple weeks.

It was just an absolutely brutal walk last week. It is. Sometimes you're out there and you've played a couple holes and you're like, I don't even know where I am or what's going on. I have sweat coming out of my elbows and my shins. Like I don't even know what's happening.

It definitely is, yeah, a lot of electrolytes, a lot of LivPur, just trying to somehow stay hydrated and get as much rest as possible and shade as you can.

Q. Regarding team golf, obviously each team is a whole constellation of personalities, so I'm curious if there's a past captain that you played for that did something that surprised you in service of developing camaraderie amongst the group?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Which captain in particular?

Q. Any captain in particular that was really effective at that or did something that surprised you in that realm.

JUSTIN THOMAS: I think they're all -- the captains I've had have all been kind of different in their own rights, but in a great way. I think they were all close enough removed to golf that they understood and they knew all of us, that they were there to help however they could. But they also understood that probably the most productive way for them to captain was to just let us play golf.

I think that's kind of become the case more and more now. It's not a situation of everybody needs to get up and give some kind of motivational, tear-jerking message every night or whatever it may be. It's just a little different day and age, and in terms of all of our routines and how we go about things.

I think the more common we can keep things, the better, and captains understand that.

Everybody kind of does it different ways, and I love bits and pieces of what all of them have done that I've played for.

Q. Justin, considering where you were kind of with

your game a couple of years ago, do you think you appreciate a B+, maybe A season more than you did early in your career when this stuff came easy to you?

JUSTIN THOMAS: You'd think I'd say yes, but no. I'm still a golfer and I'm still really hard on myself. It's funny, I feel like it's so easy to have recency bias when it comes to any kind of season, especially I got off to a really good start in the season and then I kind of slowed down a little bit and then I had it there in April and kind of through May got it going then a little bit again and had a chance to win some tournaments and won Hilton Head and feel like I slowed down a little bit and then played well at Travelers.

It's kind of going a little bit up and down to where if the beginning of the season had happened a little bit more recently, I might be feeling a little bit differently about the season. Where at the end of the day, it's still what it is from start to finish. Probably a little bit more so, I would hope. From a maturity standpoint, I'm able to realize that. But like I said, I don't know if I'm fully there yet, but I'm trying.

Q. Aside from the year when you won here, what is your most vivid memory of this tournament either as a player or as a spectator?

JUSTIN THOMAS: That's a good question. Probably my best memory, and I couldn't even tell you what year it was, it was probably -- I guess it would have been 2020. I remember playing here, playing a practice round and walking down 18 and FaceTiming Tiger and -- because he wasn't here and didn't qualify, just showing him how the course was and how great it was, and then he acted like his phone cut out and then he called me back two minutes later with green jacket on. I remember that very, very, very vividly.

Just a typical conversation of thinking I am having some kind of upper edge, and I get shut down and put in my place pretty quickly.

There's a lot of golf things here and there that have obviously happened, but that's the first thing that came to mind when you said that.

Q. Have you had a chance to look at the schedule that was released this morning?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Very briefly.

Q. If I could fill in one part to you that kind of stood out, you go Masters, Hilton Head, and then after New Orleans, you go Signature Event, Signature Event, PGA Championship. Did that come up at all during

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

any of the PAC meetings, and was there any solution around, A, having so much crammed into such a short amount of time, and B, the idea that come coming off the Korn are not eligible for those are going to be playing twice in six weeks, one of them being Myrtle Beach?

JUSTIN THOMAS: No, I get that. There wasn't conversation on the PAC, at least in terms of my specific subcommittee. That's not necessarily something that we're focused on or talking about.

It's tough. I definitely understand it. I think it has felt -- it definitely has felt a little bunched over the past couple years, honestly. I'm not sure how different it could feel, you know what I mean? But it's something that it's always a work in progress.

Over the course of the years, and I think it's just kind of figuring out how the plan can work out the best or make the most sense, but it definitely is a situation where, yeah, you wouldn't, I would think, want to run into something like that as often as you can.

But it's just more of, hey, I like the fact that the TOUR is looking at it in the sense of here we are, this is what we have this year, and we're just going to keep trying to change it for the better and better and so on and so forth as opposed to just putting it off until however many years until we feel like we have the perfect model, perfect fit kind of thing.

Q. Can you see yourself skipping any of those big events given how many there are, and can you see other players doing it, and would it be a problem if they did? I guess Rory set the example this year in some respects.

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, I go back and forth on that. I'm a believer in the sense of all of us playing in all these events is kind of the purpose of them. But at the same time, yeah, it's something I've -- I look at it in the sense of if there's a particular golf course or there's something to where I don't feel like I can play well or it's a place that maybe doesn't fit my eye historically, whatever it may be, then as a professional golfer, I have a hard time -- I always felt that way about the WGC in China. That was a course where it's like, I went and played, and I am grinding my tail off to shoot like 1- or 2-under every day, and like 25-under wins. I'm like, I don't see it. I can't fathom how people can shoot those scores.

After going for two years, I'm like, it doesn't make sense for me to play this golf tournament because I can't physically do that. So if there are places that I think people look at

that way, then you have to do what's best for that particular person.

Obviously the perfect model would be for all of us to be at all the events as often as possible.

Q. How different do you feel about your chances of making the Ryder Cup this year versus two years ago?

JUSTIN THOMAS: A lot better. Yeah. I had no idea what was going to happen two years ago. Every day, every hour of every day was something different of how I felt, was going to happen, was not going to happen.

I understood completely both sides. I understood why if I didn't get picked, why that would have been the choice, and so on and so forth. I feel like I've earned -- I've given a little bit more reason or opportunity to not be in that position that I was two years ago for sure. It helps being in Atlanta versus not even making the playoffs kind of thing.

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