

Sentry Tournament of Champions

Thursday, January 5, 2023

Kapalua, Maui, Hawaii, USA

Plantation Course at Kapalua

Collin Morikawa

Quick Quotes

Q. How would you assess the play today?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: It was the game plan today. It was just to go out and be patient and give yourself opportunities. Beginning of the week the prep felt great. Didn't really see many putts go in. It was nice to see one go in on 4 from like 30 feet. That just kind of got the round propelled from there.

Q. Is there anything comforting starting a season knowing that you have like an end to the season more this year?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: What do you mean?

Q. Is there anything nice about having an off-season coming up for the first time in your PGA TOUR career?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I thought it did before we started the season in the fall. But in reality like I still want to play golf. I got to focus on this season. If I start thinking about the off-season, I'm going to put the brakes on, and we're going to be in August and I'm not going to be in the playoffs. I don't want to look at it like that.

I think in the history of, or I look back at golf in general for me to play since I've been a junior, you've played all year. There's still going to be tournaments to play. There's still going to be things you're going to play in.

But the meaning-wise, maybe it's a little different. Maybe it's more like how we looked at in college, per se, of like you just have this amateur event or you have this fall event. Everything's meaningful, but for me I've just got to focus on kind of now, especially where I've kind of put myself, so far, through the season starting the fall.

Q. Is there anything that you were specifically working on these last few weeks that you were able to successfully put in play today?



COLLIN MORIKAWA: There's a lot. I worked on my swing with Rick, kind of positionally, just making things a little more simple. For me, it's always been kind of just feels, where do my hands feel in this right position, try to get it there. You take two weeks off and feels versus reals are a little off.

I worked with Stephen Sweeney a bunch on putting. Speed control was a big one. I think today I did a pretty good part on that, just kind of dripping them in, having really good speed. I think I had one or two putts that were just a little off.

And then I've been talking with Parker McLachlin a little bit about short game. We worked last week in Hawaii. Just kind of figuring new things out. The reason why I hit my irons so good is because of that bowed wrist and how I come through impact just makes chipping really tough. It's good to have someone that knows a lot about short game and you just kind of bounce ideas off.

Q. How did the new driver work out today for you?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: It was great. Driver's tough and 3-woods are tough and woods are tough. We've got to do it every year, but TaylorMade came out with a really good driver, Stealth 2. For me, it's all about can I get my lie angle right so I can get center of the face, and then can you get the spin and launch and everything. Obviously that's the entire ball flight of the driver.

But I really found a nice sweet spot, I think. I'm sure you'll tweak here and there, but I'm really happy with how I kind of saw the ball flight today, especially I was hitting driver on the range yesterday it was getting a little spinny, getting a little spinny in the pro-am, so it was nice to see kind of tournament speed how things kind of played out.

Q. How long did it take you? When did you first get the head?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I got it two months ago, maybe. It's funny because I was working with the head, I was working actually with a really high-lofted driver. Go on my honeymoon for two weeks, come back, and I can't hit it.



And I was freaking out a little bit.

But we made some tweaks when I got here to Hawaii. It's not that hard when you really just copy what you had before. Obviously I played the SIM driver for quite a long time and in reality, if you just kind of match it as close as you can to that, it's not going to be far off. That's kind of what we did. I've got a 9-degree head, one click up. My SIM was an 8, two clicks up. Same exact shaft, same shaft that I've been using, and you just kind of roll with that.

Q. Obviously you came into last year thinking that you would have a good year. You did have a good year, but you didn't get everything that you wanted out of it. Did you change anything in your process, in your head, about how you were going to approach this year after last year?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I think just the work ethic I was going to put in. It's not that I was lazy. It's not that I wasn't doing things. But by hiring like Stephen Sweeney, right, for example, hiring a putting coach where Rick wasn't specialized in, hiring someone I can bounce ideas off of.

Towards the latter part of last year, I was kind of using J.J. as my bouncing board. And he's very good. Don't get me wrong. Like, he knows golf. But sometimes it's nice to hear an explanation or a way to do something from someone that's specializes in that.

So it's really just putting a game plan together, whether it's my mental game, my swing, my putting, my warm-up routine, everything. It's just simplify everything but just really have a laid out process of what I need to do, and if I just kind of check those boxes every single day, it's going to get easier and easier.

That's where I was for awhile when I first turned pro and then something catches up. The body doesn't feel right and then you just kind of go in a searching mode. But I'm just kind of checking those boxes off as we go and just let things happen.

Q. When did you bring your putting coach on?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: We worked the first week of Mayakoba. So we met each other first week of, what was that, November? Beginning of November, I think.

Q. How did you hook up with him versus someone else?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, I mean, it's a great question, to be honest. I asked a lot of questions. At our TaylorMade photo shoot I was asking Tommy, I was asking

Rory. All these guys have different putting coaches. I've talked to Max Homa a bunch. Just kind of, not a bunch but just kind of sneakily asking them questions what they think of their coaches. They're all great guys. You see 'em week-in and week-out. And you got to vibe well. For me, it was like how do you have that balance. I mean, some guys are very technical. Some guys are very free-flowing. I felt like Stephen was kind of that perfect mix where I needed to understand technical from the very start. For that and chipping like I want to just pretend like I knew nothing about it, teach me the basics and then from there go.

So he's been able to kind of blend in both and it's been amazing. It really has. Every question I have for him he has an answer. I tend to talk too much and I tend to answer my own questions sometimes, but he's standing right there to say yes or no and I have full trust in what we're doing.

Q. Is Parker like a relationship going forward or is that just kind of a one-off?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I think it's something we'll see. He's not someone that's going to travel on the road, but someone that I can kind of talk to and once again bounce ideas off of. I never had a chipping coach and we're not here to get too technical it's just to kind of have feels and, once again, have someone else bounce ideas off of, someone that I trust, see who how it goes. So it's been working, but it's, yeah, it's someone that, you know, I throw ideas at and have an answer.

Q. I'm a Cubs fan and we're trying to fill different spots, different holes. Do you feel like you filled every hole you need to to be successful this year?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: For right now, yes. I think I have the team I need. It's more than I've ever had. That's two more people. Some guys have way more. Some guys have way less. But I feel at ease. It doesn't feel like I have to over stretch myself to find answers. It doesn't feel like I have to work harder out there.

It's just now I know what I'm doing. Now I know an actual drill that I might need to do if I didn't do something or I'm doing something well to just kind of reinforce things.

Q. So is it fair to say you know what you need?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah. I just have answers. Before when I was putting it was like it was guess work. I might have putted well today and then thought I was doing something, but in reality it was something else.



I go back to what I did, my putting thought for what I did when I won the PGA and it makes sense when I see it in the lab and I see things and when I talk with Stephen. But what I did was not really the actual cause of why I was putting well. I thought it was and it worked for a short period of time. But we have seen that consistency and what it was like. So we are here to just kind of be a little more consistent on the entire game.

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