

Sony Open in Hawaii

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Honolulu, Hawaii, USA

Waialae Country Club

Collin Morikawa

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Collin, thank you for joining us. Let's kick off by hearing a few thoughts on the Sony Open in Hawai'i, and talk us through how you have some ties on the islands.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I love the Hawai'i swing. Any time I can start in Maui, come to Oahu I'm going to be playing, obviously having family out here, my entire dad's side, it makes things a little more special and makes it feel more like home even though I grew up here, never lived here. It's all part of it. Any time you have a tie to location or a golf course, whatever it is, it just makes you want to kind of win at that location a little more. So hopefully we have a good week this week.

Q. Have you had a chance to play? We know you were here last year.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: No, I haven't checked it out yet. Today will be the first day. Obviously last year we had some windy, wet conditions so we'll see what it's like this year but it's very scorable. Birdies are going to be out there no matter what the conditions are like. Guys are going to not let their foot off the pedal and keep making a lot of low numbers.

Q. This is a weird hypothetical for you, I think, anyway. You've never been to the Sony Open without having played the Tournament of Champions, because you won so early, right? So curious, is this an event, do you think that you would play if it was the start of the year? In other words, fly all the way over for one week before heading off for the rest of your West Coast Swing?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: It's a great hypothetical. But Hawai'i is special to me, and you know, I would love to come out here starting the year out in Hawai'i. It has obviously the right kind of vibes. It gets you going to start the year. And I love it out here.

So if it were like that, I'd definitely give it a good thought and I'd probably come out here and play. Like I said, I've

got a lot of family out here, means a lot. West Coast Swing means a lot to me and just means a lot, being a guy from the West Coast. I love these events out here.

Q. And quickly, another probably unfair question, but which course do you enjoy playing more? Totally different.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I enjoyed walking Sony, I'll tell you that.

Q. I don't know if you heard, the Masters said they are going to have limited fans this year. What are your thoughts on that? Do you find that encouraging or discouraging?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, I saw that this morning. I think it's obviously encouraging. You know, I think all these tournaments are going to start bringing fans back, whether it's limited capacity or a certain amount per day. They are going to do it right.

The PGA TOUR, I think they are going to allow it at Phoenix. We are always going to follow the right rules. We built a system, PGA TOUR has built a system, and I'm sure the Masters, Augusta, have built a system or are building a system right now with everyone else to make sure this doesn't get out of hand. We've done a really good job since the start of, whatever, May, since we've started and I think the PGA TOUR, they need to be given the credit. We are the first really big tour to come out here and do this stuff, so I think we still need to watch ourselves on what we do and where we're going to be going, but for the most part, you know, slowly to start seeing fans, it's going to be really exciting.

Q. Could you drill down a little bit more on family history in Hawai'i for me?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, so my entire dad's side was born on Maui, or I think was born on Maui. We've got, you know, ten-plus cousins and he has a bunch, we have so many cousins; I lose count. So they start in Maui. They used to have a restaurant called Morikawa Restaurant that was on Front Street. I had never been to it. My dad used



to goes a little kid when he would come but my dad was born in California, so a lot of our cousins now live on Oahu. They live on the island where the Sony Open is. We've come a bunch as a little kid. Never lived here. Now playing out here, you can tell the family ties are just getting stronger and stronger.

Q. What type of food did they serve there and did you visit Hawai'i much as a kid on family vacations or anything like that?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, it was just kind of local Hawaiian food. Plate lunches, noodles, all that type of stuff. I wish I could go back because my dad remembers the food and he wants that type of food, specific certain types of food that just hard to find, like new restaurants out here. But you know, we visited a good handful of times when I was a kid. So we'd come every year, year, two years. We'd try at least summer vacation, whatever vacation it was. I've been back to Hawai'i pretty much every year since senior year of high school now. We've come for college and played tournaments out here, so hopefully just keep this going.

Q. You've been such a good closer in the early part of your career. What did you learn about yourself, your game, from Sunday?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: You know, that's golf. And I'm going to learn from it. It's going to be tough, obviously. A lot of guys are still playing well and that's what you have to do. On a course like that, where guys are making birdie, you have to keep your foot on the pedal, you have to keep making birdies but you have to stay patient.

I got off to a rough start and had a couple bad breaks not go my way. I didn't make a few putts that I needed to and I think I was 1-over through the turn instead of 2-, 3-under. What I'm going to take from that, you know, I think there's a lot. I think the biggest thing is I just have to be ready. I felt like I was ready but I gave myself -- and I put myself into contention and that's what I wanted to do more come Sunday for this year in 2021 is just to put myself in contention because, you know, I've got a chance come Sunday with nine holes left. I've done everything I could and hopefully just close it out like that.

Q. Just a couple of things. Curious, you've had more than a handful of starts now since winning the PGA and it's been up-and-down. Some of that's obviously just golf. Curious, though, how you view that since your win, and what you've maybe learned.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, obviously I wouldn't say golf has been great the tail end of 2020 but I think I've kind of

turned it around slowly at the end of December when I played on The European Tour and that was the last week.

I just had to reset. That's the biggest thing. For me setting goals, trying to figure out what I need to get better at and really telling myself, okay, I need to focus on this. I need to give myself a few days to really grind and practice. I sat down with my coach for a couple days and we had a really good talk about what I need to do and what we need to do better, especially after something like that happens.

I win the PGA Championship, but the year's not over. The season wasn't over. For me, it was just about figuring out what I want to do for the rest of the season. Obviously winning a major last year was a huge, you know, check off the box. You know, put a smile on my face. I still wanted more. But I thought that good play would just kind of lead over and that's never the case. I think any golfer will tell you that. That's just never the case on how golf works. You guys know that. And you have to come every week and every week is a new course and you just have to be prepared and that's what I really didn't do towards the tail end.

So no matter what happens this year, if I play well, I've just got to keep resetting and keep focusing on what I want to kind of achieve for the year.

Q. You obviously had success at a very young age and we're seeing more and more guys win out here earlier and earlier. Do you think an amateur could win on the PGA TOUR right now, and if so, why or why not?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: They could. I can't see why not. When I was a senior in college, I could have come out here and won.

The hardest thing is the opportunities. On the PGA TOUR we can play any week or any week we want to. Guys that are amateurs, it's not like they can pick a schedule and they can go play 15 events, 20 events a year. Most likely they are going to have one or two starts where they have got to show what they got. For a lot of them, it's going to be their first time on the PGA TOUR and first time seeing a bunch of guys that they have kind of idolized, and that's the same thing we all go through.

It's just whatever level you can understand that at the end of the day, it's just golf, who is going to play the best golf for four days. I can see it happening. It's not easy. It's not easy at all. That's the simple answer right there.

Q. I can't recall off the top of my head the first event you would have played in, but I'm curious if you're at

all wowed at all being in that environment and if you think that's the case for some guys or if that's less so now.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: So the first professional event I played was a Web.com in Kansas. Lost in a playoff. But then my first PGA TOUR event was the Safeway Open. And you know, of course there's going to be that wow factor. Did I believe I belonged? Of course. I didn't come there just to enjoy the experience. I still wanted to play really well and have a good finish.

But that week I missed the cut and you learn a lot. You learn a lot from missing cuts. You learn a lot from those two days of what you did wrong and what you need to do better. But I think a lot of guys coming out and seeing young guys like me, Wolff, Joaquin Niemann, Schauffele, guys that we have grown up watching, seeing them play well gives them confidence to play well because that's all in it. You see a fellow guy that you've grown up for -- excuse me, you've grown up for ten-plus years play well, and you know you've beaten them, kind of gives them another edge to say ok they can do it, I can do it, as well.

Q. That week at Safeway, why do you think you could play well, and I don't want to say contend, but you weren't -- you had expectations. Why was that?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I mean, you know, like I said, at the end of the day, it just golf. And how you plot around a golf course Monday through Wednesday how you can beat the course, really. I didn't come out there to see if my game was good enough. I already thought my game was good enough. I just needed to -- yeah, I didn't show up to the Safeway because I wanted to just have fun. I wouldn't take a spot like that from another player or whatever just to see if my game is good enough.

I know my game is good enough. I wanted to go out and compete. So getting that start at Safeway, getting the start at the Arnold Palmer Invitational the next -- or the following year, they mean a lot because those are the opportunities where you really get to see your game against everyone else.

Q. I heard the story about the matchbox. What have you done with the matchbox?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I don't know. I don't even know where it was sent to be honest. I don't think it was even sent to me. It might have been sent to my agent or my family. But you know, my dad talks about the restaurant every time we're here, and he misses it. I wish we had it, because how cool would that be to have it on Front Street where every tourist goes pretty much everywhere on Maui

now.

Q. Do you know when it closed?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I don't.

Q. I want to come one more time back to the Masters with this weird question. When the last time that you can recall that you heard a cheer? I'm not talking about a couple hundred about around the 18th at Harding. I mean a real, throaty cheer, and did you forget what it's like?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I don't even remember. That's a great question. I really don't. But I miss it. It's good to start the new year, 2021, because it's so refreshing and everyone gets to start fresh and come out new, or at least we think so. Because for me, you know, the tail end of 2020 it was just getting dull. It's not like how I was coming out, not ready to play golf or anything. But we do miss those cheers, when you hear a couple guys or you hear 20 people give you some claps and they are really into it, it just gets you going. It gets you into wanting to play just a little more.

That's why we love our job is to kind of entertain people.

Q. I have to think you're not alone in that, if you ask a number of people if they could really remember the last one.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: It would be really tough. You know, you go all the way back to PLAYERS, and even then, it was kind of a blur because all of that happened within a week and everyone's lives changed within 24 hours. That was not our focus on seeing all the fans. I remember being out there walking around 17 with a bunch of people out there and that was really cool but to have a memory like that for almost a year now, that kind of sucks.

Q. This is a horrible example and don't hate me for it, but think back to 3M a couple years ago with you and Wolff. Do you remember that?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Oh, yeah. I can definitely remember that.

Q. Just how noisy it was?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, you know, I think as golfers, with all the fans, it's cool because they line the fairways. They block off greens with grandstands and everything. And it creates a whole different sense of the golf course. Guys have to adjust to certain courses like Augusta without grandstands, without fans, without whatever's out there,

and you know, that's just all part of it because when you're a golfer, you're one person standing in the middle of the fairway with thousands of people around you, and we just haven't seen that, and that's a whole different dynamic. That's a whole different setting of feeling that you get coming down 18 coming down the back nine, whatever it may be, that we miss because for me, that's just an extra sense of focus that you have to be there to really close out a tournament.

Q. You've never been heckled, have you?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Not yet (laughing). Hopefully not too much.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for your time, Collin. Good luck this week.

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