

THE PLAYERS Championship

Thursday, March 11, 2021

Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, USA

TPC Sawgrass

Justin Thomas

Quick Quotes

Q. Can you just kind of talk about the golf course and the day. I mean it's kind of a different golf course with a different wind and obviously kind of progressed along today where it got harder and harder it seemed like.

JUSTIN THOMAS: It did. It didn't -- I mean, it seemed like the same old Sawgrass to me, but at the same time the scores are a lot higher, so clearly it isn't. The wind is definitely there, especially finishing the round, but it's the same direction at least we have had the last couple days. Hard part is at least I think there's a lot of crosswind holes that are like straight across or a lot of straight-in and straight-down to where if it kind of bounces one way or the other, gets a little bit north-northeast versus just east, it can be off of one direction or it can be a little hurt versus a little help if it's cross. It's really just about timing that right and committing to it.

In terms of myself, I mean I drove it very, very mediocre I thought today but it was a pretty consistent miss to the right so hopefully after lunch just go figure that out.

Q. When you get a course that can throw some big numbers at you at any moment but also give you birdie chances on almost every hole, is it easier not to want to quit if you get off to a bad start?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, absolutely. I know I've been fortunate to have a couple really good rounds out here and I know that you can go really, really low. You can make a lot of birdies. I mean, the greens are still very soft. The fairways are soft. It's just about -- but the rough is very -- it's the longest I've seen it. The pins were, I thought, very difficult today for a Thursday.

It's really just about getting the ball in play, like you said, and I do know -- although I for some reason have struggled starting off that back nine in the past, I know that as I played that front nine well before so just kind of stay patient and hope you get on one of those runs.

Q. Why do you think they hammered you with the pins



today?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Probably because they weren't really too excited about how low the scores have been the last few years. But it's in March. I mean you can't really do much about it being soft.

Q. How is 17 playing so much harder today?

JUSTIN THOMAS: 17? It played really, really short. I mean, that green is substantially firmer than the rest of them, I would say. I had a 5-iron on 2 today that rolled out probably eight paces and then I had a pitching wedge on that hole that rolled out like six. So that, it doesn't add up, and they were very consistent over the course except for that hole. Just, it always is a little bit firmer for I would say obvious reasons, but especially up there on top, where you have the gradual upslope that you know if you land it into it, as soft as it is, it's going to rip back, but then you want to land it up top with the helping breeze, you know, you get it up in the air or a little bit of adrenaline with fans out here now, you can land it pin high and one hop in the water like I did.

Q. You were talking to us the other day about trying not to press too much to kind of regain your mojo a little bit. What is the trick to that, and do you feel like a round today where you didn't have it completely but you still kept it under par is a good start to kind of getting that momentum going?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, it's getting closer. I'm still emotional on the course a little bit more so than I would like. I mean, I just am having still some thoughts in my head that I don't usually have when I'm playing well. It's just, it's like a lot, not anger, but it's just like you just want to like yell, you know? It's nothing that you want to do that's overly bad but it's just like it's -- I just keep missing that driver to the right and leaving the club face open and it's just like, why will you not just start the ball left if you're trying to cut it. So it's stuff like that that's frustrating. But it is, I'm getting closer. I'm getting better. I'm trying to do all I can to stay patient.

This game can be so hard like that and grueling, and it's only been a rough couple months but it feels like an eternity, so it's just really about realizing that I can't control



what I can't control, I can only do something about what I can and that's my mentality and how well I can play.

Q. How was 12 playing today? Is that driver for most of those guys today?

JUSTIN THOMAS: No, I mean the tee was back -- I mean, there's not really any risk-reward. Bryson's probably the only person that can get to the green if there's no wind, but it's into the wind, at least it was when we played, so I don't really -- it's not really any risk-reward. It's just what do you want to hit in the fairway and then from there try to hit it on the green. But it's a very, very narrow tee shot from that back tee. It's definitely more exciting from the up tee but I don't mind it. It's somewhat similar to the old hole which I liked a lot more, so hopefully that will kind of channel some vibes like that, but I'm sure that they'll put the tee up most of the days for the remainder of the week.

Q. From a fan's perspective, Dustin and Bryson are going to tee off together here shortly in about another 15 minutes. Can you see them in this what is starting I guess to be some sort of post-Tiger era being guys that fans are just going to naturally gravitate to because power is such an attraction for most golf fans, especially the casual golf fan?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I think D.J.'s definitely been a fan favorite for a long time and I think Bryson's kind of working his way there, and everybody likes people who are for the most part like people who win tournaments, so that definitely hasn't hurt their cases at all.

Q. What about the power aspect?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, everybody likes to see people hit it far. Everybody except for the USGA, so yeah, I would say that they're going to have a lot of fans that are rooting for them if they keep hitting it like they do off the tee.

Q. Can you explain from your vantage point what happened on 11 with Viktor, the rules situation?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, it just was, it was something where didn't know where his ball landed. I saw it land, obviously, but I wasn't on a good angle to see the flight of the ball and they asked me, him and his caddie and I said, I saw it land, it was near the line. But I can't -- I wouldn't put my life on either one because I don't know.

That's just unfortunately how golf is to where if you don't know, if you're uncertain, you have to take the worst situation for yourself and I think that's what they wanted because they were very confident and certain that it was landed left of the line, which we all would have been fine

with, but we just didn't know.

Then once we were able to see it on TV to have some kind of confirmation, then everyone was okay with it. It was just, I don't feel comfortable just saying, yeah, you're good, just to say it; you know what I mean? We all want to protect the field out here, and everyone's going to do the right thing and Viktor would definitely do the right thing, but I didn't see enough to be able to say yes it did or didn't.

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