

THE PLAYERS Championship

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Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, USA

TPC Sawgrass

Justin Rose

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Justin Rose to the interview room here at the 2026 PLAYERS Championship. Justin 13 time PGA TOUR winner and world No. 5. Justin, welcome. Making your 21st the start here at THE PLAYERS Championship. What is it like to be back?

JUSTIN ROSE: Always great to be back. I feel like this tournament has evolved so much through the years, but kind of got to the point where you sort of drive up through the driveway, you see the golf course unfold in front of you. It always looks perfect. I feel like the character of the course has changed for the better over the years.

Yeah, it's just an inspiring place to kind of walk, drive up the drive. So, yeah, excited to be back.

THE MODERATOR: Throughout your starts, any specific or favorite memories throughout the years?

JUSTIN ROSE: No. Sparse on great memories here. I feel like it's a course that I love it, actually. I think it's one of the best courses that we play on TOUR. I think it's very fitting for this championship. It suits all types of players.

But yeah, it's tricky as well. I feel like it's a venue that I've sort of would like to figure out a bit better this year, that is for sure. I've had some good weeks here, some great rounds, but yeah, would love to put four together this week.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up to questions.

Q. It's been feast or famine for you in this tournament. You've had some top 10s and missed some cuts. When things are going well for you, when you're comfortable out there, what are you doing well to score?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, I think it's feast or famine. A little bit risk and reward, really, I think is the ultimate way to play this golf course. You've got to obviously do a lot of things well to -- you've got to put the ball in the fairway off the tee. That doesn't mean you have to hit drivers everywhere.



There's a lot of holes that you can just get the ball in play with whether it be an iron or fairway wood.

I like the golf course when it has just that little bit of moisture in it to the point where can you use the sideboards and the side slopes to feed the ball kind of close to the hole. 13th, par-3, for example, being able to use the side hill to kind of come down to that left pin. Sometimes when it gets really, really, really firm, the ball skips through those sideboards.

So yeah, to answer your question, yeah, from the fairway if you're playing well, you can really attack those pins, those feeder pins, much like Augusta, actually, a very second-shot golf course from that point of view. I guess if you're on, you're playing well, making birdies, doing well in the tournament, but if you're a little bit off your game, you're missing those opportunities to make those easy birdies when they should come around.

I feel like this golf course does offer a lot of opportunities, but on the flipside of that, there's trouble everywhere too.

Q. In 21 previous appearances, what's the single most important thing you've learned?

JUSTIN ROSE: That's a good question. Pete Dye, I think, is a master from that point of view. Respect. Respecting the golf course. Respecting certain pin placements. The way the ball falls into bunkers here, you fall down in those flat spots, and you don't often get like a little upslope, which if you short-side yourself sometimes you're on a little upslope, it can be quite an easy up-and-down. I feel like this golf course doesn't offer you that.

So there's certain soles holes where you're down below the green. The par-5, 11th hole, the par-3 third hole, the left of the first hole even, when you're going in there with a wedge to a tight pin, you know that if you hit it in the middle of the green it's going to feed away 20, 25 feet. So it's very tempting to try to hit it up that eight-foot sliver of green. But if you hit that great shot, sure, you get rewarded, but if you just miss left, it's a pretty certain bogey. So respecting the golf course or respecting how you're feeling at a certain point in your round.

Q. Brooks was in here and said he's had an 8 and a 7



on the 17th. Not to bring up bad memories, but can you remember your worst scores on that hole?

JUSTIN ROSE: I think maybe one of my survival instincts and the reason I've been on TOUR so long is I don't have a great memory. I think probably that was starting my career with 21 missed cuts. I learned to not dwell too much on past mistakes.

I don't really remember. I think maybe I remember last year I think I hit it in the water close to the cut line on Friday. Yeah, it's a tough hole. I think it's the kind of hole that conditions make it tough. You play it on a Tuesday, greens are relatively soft, you know there's not much to it. Put a back pin there, you don't want to have that tough putt. You're still trying to hit the right shot, but the greens are getting firm where you slightly misjudge the wind by a few yards, yeah, certainly that greens plays small, which is obviously the beauty of the hole and why we're talking about it because, yeah, it does play tough some days.

Q. You've talked about how major championships and big events like this have become really important to you now as your career's evolved. Is there anything specifically in the off-season this year you've done to get ready for this year's majors that is different than in years past, picking up on experience in the last couple years and how you've been preparing for those events?

JUSTIN ROSE: No, I really don't think there's been anything different this particular off-season. I would say it's been sort of an overall shift in my mentality the last few seasons. But it's about pacing yourself, it's about finding those rhythms of how you like to prepare for tournaments.

Obviously you want to play well every single week for sure, but you do potentially roll the dice on front-loading going into certain weeks, or realizing -- for me it seems to be like that I play well on the second week after a break. So I'm trying to sort of go with those rhythms.

I always tee it up no matter when I play thinking I'm prepared and I'm ready to play well, but you've got to kind of, like, build your schedule around what historically and what the data tells you that your most likely chance of performing on a given week. So really that's all I'm thinking about this year with the majors. I'm not really trying to overhype them as well. Of course they're huge focuses, but at the same time, you want to be a hundred percent prepared, they are massively in my thinking, but when it gets to the moment, you have to go out and execute. So if you build it up too much you can get in your own way. So I haven't really done anything too different, to be honest.

Q. There's been some talk this week among some players about maybe the rough being a tidbit longer than it has been in the past. From what you've seen so far, do you think the rough will play more penal this week than it has?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, I haven't seen it yet. I haven't been out there. I just got in today. I've heard that it was four and a half inches, not four inches, so I think it's a conscious decision to go a tiny bit longer this year. I don't know if that's accurate or not; that's just going from what Fooch told me today. But I think he's been out there and he felt like it was a little bit longer, yeah.

So emphasis is on hitting the fairway. This is a golf course that I've always feel like that has been, first and foremost, get the ball on the fairway. So it doesn't change your strategy, but it might change the penal side if you're unable to do part one of your job, which is get the ball in play.

Q. As one of the more elder statesmen out here, do you have any expectations for Brian Rolapp's news conference tomorrow? It seems like the buzz words on potential changes have been scarcity, owning the summer, those sort of things. What are your expectations for any changes?

JUSTIN ROSE: Well, yeah, I mean just the news would be obviously great. I know obviously the communication's been good. I just wonder if there is actually any update, significant update. I know in order to get a significant update, there's a lot of things that have to fall into place.

I think obviously the guys behind the scenes, the competitions committee or the future competitions committee, I think it's called, have clearly been trying to figure out what our best product is. I don't know if we're any closer to sort of announcing what that may or may not look like.

There's obviously been a push for a number of years now of trying to find a product or a tour or a whatever that the top players play more often together. I think we have done that with the elevated events for sure, but then obviously that's not a perfect system in terms of the rest of the TOUR, as well, that sort of you're in it and then the other guys that aren't in it -- it's just not perfect yet.

So I think in order to get there, there's obviously been some trial and error through the last three or four or five years.

But I think we're getting to a good place as a tour. I think competition is so strong out here. That's the main thing. That's the best thing. There's tons of history out here, tons

of things to build on. I think the future's bright. But, yeah, I would be excited about it for sure.

For me in my career, being able to play a more tightly focused schedule would be great; give a little bit back to the family after a certain period of time, but yeah, also playing in a very condensed schedule, too, means that most sports leagues there's not a lot of wiggle room in there. You're going to have to pretty much be all in week in week out. So there's going to be some give and take no matter what.

Q. As a major champion and an Olympic gold medalist, where do you put THE PLAYERS in the golfing firmament?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, really good question. Obviously for me I dreamt about major championships as a kid. Ryder Cups. Olympics was obviously clearly never a thing growing up, but it's become a thing. Obviously being the first guy to win gold in a long, long, long time, 112 years, I hoped that it would become a thing.

Obviously we've had two great champions since me in Xander and Scottie, and I think the Olympics has been a thing that's grown in my career and sort of the validity of it has grown. THE PLAYERS Championship has had that, but also, it's also been on the up as well. The stature of this tournament has grown and grown and grown and grown as well.

It would be right there, of course. I'm always going to say a major championship, just because of the years on being on the putting green trying to win the Open in my own mind is always going to put that, like, at the peak of my to-do list, but at the same time, THE PLAYERS Championship is alongside a FedExCup, alongside an Olympic gold, alongside all of those things. A PLAYERS Championship would be right there.

Q. Are you one who likes to go to Augusta to play before the Masters? What would be the advantages? Brooks even says he sees it sometimes as a disadvantage because things might change if you go two weeks out, two weeks later. What is your feeling on that?

JUSTIN ROSE: My feeling is I like to go just to go. Why wouldn't you? As a golf fan, just if you can have a chance to play Augusta National, you're like, yeah, why sure, let's do it. I think there's always a green or two that they tend to renew or refresh or rebuild. So you just often are looking for slight subtle nuanced changes to those greens. They don't try to change them, you know, the topography of them too much, but it's not a perfect science to re-lay a

green, so you're always trying to remember the breaks or there might be subtle notes that you had on previous pin placements. You're just trying to make sure and double check that those parameters of the putts that you hit in the past are still somewhat similar.

But those would be the things that I would do if I do go ahead of time, but those are also the things I can do the week of. So it depends. I don't have a plan to go this year prior to the Masters, and I'm playing again Valero, Texas Open, the week before, so I may well be going in there on Monday afternoon. But I have enjoyed my trips, my scouting trips in the past, but they have been in recent years more for fun than necessity.

Q. Last week we got the news about Luke coming back as captain. I know that you pretty quickly ruled it out, but did you ever speak to them formally about it? Did you ever really consider it?

JUSTIN ROSE: Well I think first and foremost, it was always Luke's decision to make before it was anybody else's decision to sort of make. Yeah, they sounded me out to see where my thinking was for sure, but I think it was always going to be -- Luke's done such an incredible job the last three or four years, however long he was in his position, you know, he gets first call, which I think is absolutely right.

I think from my point of view, it might have been good timing, but I think also at the same time I still believe that I can play in another one or two or more; let's see, who knows. I don't really want to put a time limit on it. But certainly the next one I would love to have a crack at, for sure, as a player.

That's been the advice from all the captains and vice captains and players that I played with through the years on Team Europe. They're like, nothing trumps playing. So that's always going to be the ultimate goal.

But yeah, like I said, Luke's decision, and I'm glad he's doing it, because he's obviously, what also what he's brought to the captaincy is big shoes to fill from that point of view and obviously the next guy that takes on that responsibility, it's pretty much a full-time job from that point of view. So to do it justice, you want to be ready and give it everything.

Q. Also wanted your reaction to your teammate Jon Rahm. I mean, he had some pretty extensive comments last week about his situation with the deal that he decided not to take from the Tour, and obviously there's a long way to go, but it does still put in doubt the Ryder Cup. Do you have any sense how



you would like to see that go or what you would like to see him do?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, listen, I would like to see Jon -- how many guys, eight? The other seven did it. So obviously eight did it and Jon didn't. So I mean, there's pretty decent precedent that the deal wasn't outrageous that they were proposing.

But at the same time, I would like to see Jon pay his fines for sure and be a part of the Ryder Cup. For me, obviously playing on LIV was a decision that he made and wanted to make, and fair play to him for making it and good for him. He's playing good golf out there. He's winning. He's making a lot of money, and he's -- you know, you can't argue, can't knock what he's been able to achieve out there.

So I would just see it as a cost of doing business for Jon. Like for me, being in the Ryder Cup is more than about money. What I would say, where he may have a point is the Tour making him play extra events. Maybe he has a point there. So maybe there's some middle ground where he would do his best to support the Tour as and when, but not necessarily have that hung over his head, but paying his fines is obviously step No. 1.

Q. I want to follow-up on the question about Brian Rolapp and tomorrow's press conference. What would you like to hear him say? What would you like to see the TOUR or how would you like to see it continue to evolve?

JUSTIN ROSE: I just think -- well I would like it to be sort of well thought through, which I think it is. I think everybody is doing a good job. We've been iterating for a while now, and a little bit like the FedExCup too, we keep iterating to find the best version of it, and you think you have, and then tweaks are always inevitable.

But I feel like for the fans' sake and the players' sake, just to sort of get some clarity. We're halfway through -- well not halfway through the season, but we kind of feel like we're getting into the meat of the season now, so I think it's probably fair to the players to know if there's going to be a change this year or next year or is it going to be the year after or whatever it is, what's at stake.

So I think now would be a good time just to get some clarity from the players' point of view, but obviously from a fans' point of view, because ultimately that's Brian's job is to grow this TOUR and to engage -- golf's doing well as a sport, and we want the PGA TOUR to do well as a business. So that's the key, the key driver for him -- and obviously the players are engaged more in the business

than they have ever been, so getting the product right is hugely important.

Q. You just said tweaks are inevitable. Do you foresee these changes as tweaks or do you see 'em more as a full-blown re-haul of what's been going on over the last 20 years?

JUSTIN ROSE: I hope it's simplification is what I hope it is. I feel like the TOUR's -- there's a lot more opportunity out there than there has been ever in terms of the quality of events, the quality of fields that we're getting together on a more regular basis, the money that we're playing for, so there's a lot of opportunity. But it feels quite complex and quite A and B, and players are in or they're out, and it's a little bit of a too many layers to it, I think. So it would just be nice to sort of have all of the opportunity and upside with just a more simplified system. That's what I would hope for. So don't really know where we'll net out on that, but I think sitting here as a player and realizing that we've been pretty fortunate as well the last five years. The iterating is not necessarily a bad thing, but it would be nice to just to kind of get it to a very simple, simple structure, where the fans can follow, the players know where they stand, and we go. You know, every season, it's like a -- well I would say a level playing field -- not that it's not now -- but just a simple structure where you can sit down in January and say right, that's my schedule, and it doesn't really depend how much how I play that week and that week and that week and what I gain entry into. It's like, that's the schedule.

Q. Because you're a European Tour player, you obviously have some allegiance to that. Do you think that at the end of the day that should also be factored in what goes on with the European Tour, how that could be a better tour because of the benefits to come out of here out of the PGA TOUR?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, I mean I always hope that the DP World Tour or European Tour will be a viable, strong tour. It's got great history as well. It's obviously been a partnership with the PGA TOUR in the last five years or so. It doesn't necessarily look like -- you know, the PGA TOUR obviously do have to sort of prop up the European Tour right now, for sure. But I would love to know what my life looks like for the next few years, but I would love to continue to support the European Tour as best I can as well going forward.

So right now it feels like my job is to secure my PGA TOUR status and all those things, January to August, and then return my attentions to where I can then sort of fulfill my obligations to the European Tour after that. So again, until I really know what this tour looks like going forward it's hard

to know how that tour gets impacted from my own playing schedule, let alone as a business and let alone how the future looks between the two tours. Yeah, I don't know how that will play out.

THE MODERATOR: As always, Justin thank you for the time.

JUSTIN ROSE: Oh, yeah, thank you.

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