

# THE PLAYERS Championship

Thursday, March 12, 2026

Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, USA

TPC Sawgrass

## Justin Thomas

### Quick Quotes

**Q. How did that feel after last week and did you feel it coming a couple of days before today?**

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, it felt great. Just feels great to get off to a great start at a big tournament, a tournament that I love. I always enjoy playing this place. I just feel like it's just a fun course to play.

I feel like you can, given the different wind conditions or whatever, you have a lot of variety of shots and things that Sawgrass kind of asks of you.

But yeah, I can't necessarily say I've been playing well because last week was my first tournament in six months, but I felt I was more than capable of doing that.

But just was able to knock a little bit of rust off last -- a lot of rust off last week, and obviously felt a lot more comfortable today.

**Q. Is there one thing you thought you maybe did better this week specifically than last week?**

JUSTIN THOMAS: Literally everything. Actually, I don't know. My bunker game and my chipping last week was pretty ridiculous for someone who shot 14 over par.

But yeah, literally every single thing you could imagine I did quite a bit better.

**Q. Is there something about TPC Sawgrass having to work it both ways, having to flight shots in the wind that forces you to not play golf swing, which is maybe good for you at this point?**

JUSTIN THOMAS: Could be, yeah. It's just a place like visually, it just fits my eye. There's a lot of trees I feel like I can work things off of that I just don't even need to go out there and I can envision them.

Like they're just there. I don't know, you're more kind of working balls into the fairway, and then some holes you're almost hitting distances off of tees to get certain yardages



into the greens.

I feel like I play this course backwards a decent bit of looking where the pin is to see what I want into the green, so on and so forth. It's a place that just requires your sole attention on every shot and you can get exposed pretty quickly just as well as you can get rewarded.

**Q. You've never had to knock off six months' worth of rust playing at a PGA TOUR level. What's the toughest part of that effort?**

JUSTIN THOMAS: Probably just the ease of everything, the confidence, the belief. A lot of confidence comes from doing it in competition. It doesn't matter necessarily how much -- it helps when you're able to do things a lot in practice. You're almost kind of muscle memory.

But at the same time, all the clutch putters feel as good as they do because they made that many when it matters. A basketball player like MJ made so many of those shots, and he was comfortable because he made so many of those shots in games.

It just comes with the territory, I think, of just -- it's really, really, really hard to emulate how you feel in a tournament in competition. That's something I think that people that are able to do it is a pretty tremendous skill.

**Q. You talked about giving yourself some grace after last week, being realistic about the fact it hadn't been that long. How much do you think that helped you ease into this week, the fact that you weren't hard on yourself?**

JUSTIN THOMAS: You probably wouldn't say that if you were around me on Friday afternoon. I was more just sad and upset.

Look, I wasn't expecting to go be in contention and have a chance to win the golf tournament. I fully believed that I could. Like I was hitting all these shots and doing things well enough to, but I knew it was going to be tough mentally being out there and playing.

But when you kind of post two pretty humiliating scores, it's not really -- it's hard to give yourself too much grace. But it



took a little longer for me to kind of decompress and just feel like I was able to get to a place where I'm like, okay, if I had this over tomorrow, what would I do differently to learn from it kind of thing.

And it was, I felt like it really was just all mental. I had a little bit of fatigue out there. I had a hard time keeping my focus the whole -- just like I did going back out after the rain delay. I said to Rev, I was like, I'm very spacey than I was before, so just almost like a little talk just to get me back into it.

I haven't had to keep my focus on something for five hours in high competitive atmosphere like this for a long time. So it just takes a little bit.

**Q. How much is this sort of validating, that maybe you weren't as far off as it might have seemed on Friday afternoon?**

JUSTIN THOMAS: Man, it helps. I kind of had a deep breath to myself walking off 9 and even, like I said, internally, I needed that. Just to -- again, I feel like I've been playing well at home. I feel like I'm doing the right thing swinging well.

I feel confident with things. But again, until it happens in competition, it's kind of hard to fully buy into you're ready.

I think that was kind of what I said last week. My main goal is getting through these weeks and really feeling like I'm not having to try so hard to be in a good place at Augusta.

I think yes, I know that I want to try and play well and try and win these next couple events, but it's also going to be harder for me to probably continue to focus and keep my concentration this week versus a couple weeks.

Just all part of it.

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