

# Chubb Classic presented by SERVPRO

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Naples, Florida, USA

Tiburón Golf Club

## Justin Leonard

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: This is your first professional win since 2008. You guys touched on that with John Cook. How much hard work went into this?

JUSTIN LEONARD: You know, last year was a struggle. I think finally I got to kind of rock bottom going to play at Troon, at The Open, and then at Carnoustie for the Senior British.

I just knew I had to kind of make some changes. Luke, my 18 year old son, has worked some with Mike Thomas. I've always enjoyed the way he communicated and his eye.

So I reached out to him when I was at Troon after the first round and he kind of showed me what was going on and why I was struggling.

So we tried to get a little work in there. You know, unfortunately Carnoustie the fairways are about 15 yards wide and it didn't translate immediately, but a lot of work with him, a lot of work and a lot of conversations with Randy Smith, my long-time instructor in Dallas.

Yeah, I mean, everybody out here is working hard. They're putting in the hours, and I think there for a little while I got a little complacent because I played pretty well my first year out. Thought, well, I'll just continue that.

Middle of the year realizing I needed to make some changes and it took a little while, but I saw some consistency in my game and things like that kind of in the fall, September, October.

And then the season was kind of over, but I kept working. I thought about, well, maybe I'll take a couple three weeks off and this and that. Why? I've got all this good time. Why not put it to good use?

A lot of work and a lot of early mornings in the gym and those things. You know, but I love to do it. You don't always get the results from it immediately, but I knew like



sooner rather than later it would pay off.

You know, I got a great verse today from a friend of mine, Galatians 6:9 I think it was. It just talks about being patient and keep putting in the work and you will reap a harvest at some point and just let it surprise you.

I'm always talking about results that way, just going to let to surprise me, keep my head down, not focus on the outcome, but focus on my process and the work that I put in, and I did that during the round today.

I mean, I didn't get off to a great start. It was a little scratchy there on the front nine, especially as well as I hit it and played yesterday.

Stayed patient; didn't get down; made a big par save at 11; and then I think I birdied the next three holes.

So, you know, all of a sudden now here I am reaping the harvest.

**Q. 17 years, obviously a very long time in between wins.**

JUSTIN LEONARD: Yeah.

**Q. Did you ever have any doubt that it was possible to get to that point again?**

JUSTIN LEONARD: I didn't have doubt, but I had to keep reminding myself that I've won. You know, so technically that makes me a winner, even though it was 17 years ago the last time I did it.

No, I never had any doubt. I would say at times I was impatient, and that was from focusing too much on trying to win and not just the things that I needed to do each and every day to try and have my game ready to be in a position like this.

**Q. You said on a Podcast you did last year or the year before that you put your clubs away for a bit when you were working in TV.**



JUSTIN LEONARD: Yeah.

**Q. Did you ever envision this after picking them back up? How difficult was it to get back to this point?**

JUSTIN LEONARD: Well, that was the goal. I mean, I started doing TV in 2016 and that was kind of my last year playing on the PGA TOUR. We were living in Colorado. There for about four years I myself played three or four rounds a year.

I really didn't -- I was doing TV, and when I was home, I was either skiing or mountain biking, watching lacrosse or volleyball, soccer, whatever it may be with my kids.

I think when I turned 48 I thought, well, if I am going to play, I can't wait until I turn 50. So I started getting a little bit more into it and practicing a little bit. But then I'd go six months without practicing, living in the winter in Colorado.

But this, like to be here, that was the goal through all of that. Not necessarily the four years when I wasn't playing or doing anything. I was just focused on being the best golf analyst I could be in whatever capacity, whether that was studio, live golf, those kind of things.

I really poured myself into that. It wasn't until I turned 50, I was still doing TV, but I found time to play like four events and I thought, you know what? I think if I can dedicate myself to playing the game that I can be competitive out here.

And so it was really kind of that fall of '22 that I made the commitment to go all in on myself. So, you know, it's fun now to come here full circle and have a trophy and see all those decisions that I didn't know where it would lead me, but they all lead me to here.

**Q. You answered it with me a little bit ago, but how special is this for you and your family?**

JUSTIN LEONARD: It feels like it's been a long time coming. It's something that we all -- like it's a team effort. It's an individual sport outside of a handful of events. Even within each individual we have our own little support system and team. Most of my team, their last name is Leonard, and there are a few others in there.

But for Amanda and the kids, they're going to be as excited about this as I am, and it's something I get to share, because they see all the work that you put in when I'm at home.

And it's nice to have the result like this and, you know, not so focused on it, but just like I said, let it surprise you.

**Q. Just two quick questions: So would you say at age 46 you focused on this Tour or closer to 48?**

JUSTIN LEONARD: No, no, it was -- right when I turned 48 I said, you know what? We were going out to California and I said, if I'm going to do this I probably needed to a club fitting. I hadn't been fit for golf clubs for a very long time.

So that was kind of the beginning of it, was summer of 2020 it would be.

**Q. So 48?**

JUSTIN LEONARD: Yeah, it was 48.

**Q. When you talk about the work ethic, can you give us a sample of what a day includes? What time you get up, go to the gym? What is the work ethic you're talking about?**

JUSTIN LEONARD: I'm usually up between 5:30 and 6:00 a.m. I meditate for anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour.

Then it's walking the four dogs before the boys leave for school. Then I go -- we've got a little gym in our house, and so I go upstairs to the gym. I'm in there for an hour, hour and a half. Fix something to eat, late breakfast, maybe take our dog that has the most energy, Scout, for another walk because she needs two a day; you know, kiss my wife and then I'm out the door to the golf course.

**Q. You spend four, five, six hours hitting balls, working on the game?**

JUSTIN LEONARD: You know, four to five hours typically at the golf course, you know, practicing. I like to get out on the golf course and play.

May not be able to do it every day, but I try and do it more often than not where I'm just out by myself playing -- if I'm playing five or six holes, playing nine holes, something just to get on the golf course and remind myself to score and it's not just full swing.

It's like you have to hit numbers with clubs, so you can really -- you can do that when you're practicing, but I just find I'm more focused when I get on the golf course.

**Q. One more question. What is your biggest surprise being out here for two years now? Anything that kind of surprises you, maybe their work ethic or anything you didn't expect?**



JUSTIN LEONARD: No. I think I knew what to expect. I had done a couple of Senior PGAs when I was with NBC. I remember the first one I did was in Washington D.C.

I went out on -- I flew in Tuesday morning, went out to the golf course on Tuesday afternoon just to get myself familiar with it. I was going to drive the course on Wednesday. I thought, you know what? I'm here.

Went to the range. It was about 4:00 in the afternoon. There were about 37 guys hitting balls at 4:00 in the afternoon on a Tuesday. I was like, oh, this isn't just a we're taking a victory lap kind of thing. These guys are working their tails on.

I saw it all week. The two or three Senior PGAs that I did I saw it, so I knew that's where I needed to be.

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