

RBC Heritage

Wednesday, April 16, 2025

Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, USA

Harbour Town Golf Links

Justin Rose

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome Justin Rose to the interview room. You're making your eighth start here at the RBC Heritage. Start off with some comments what it's like to be back here in Hilton Head.

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, I always love being back here in Hilton Head. I think just the vibe of the place I think is always a great place to be post-Masters, post -- I think for all players, you sort of amp up to the first major of the year so much in your own mind that coming into sort of a more cool holiday destination vibe for a couple days is nice just to reset, but clearly big tournament ahead for all of us. A lot of opportunity this week.

Again, Signature Event, a lot on the line. I think about now, everyone starts to then get focused with the job at hand.

Yeah, I really enjoy my time here.

Q. Coming off an exciting week last week, what do you do to turn the page after finishing runner-up at the Masters?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, I mean, I think it's definitely been one to process a little bit. There was a lot going on on Sunday. There was obviously a huge opportunity for me at the very end.

But to give myself that opportunity, I played some incredible golf. It was one of the most fun days I've ever had on the golf course. I felt like mindset-wise at the start of the day, would have said probably starting seven back, wasn't really thinking about winning the tournament. Was thinking about what it means to play at Augusta on Sunday and it's a very special day no matter what, and I feel like I just got into my round quite nicely from the beginning.

But then from around Amen Corner, which is probably the most special stretch of golf that there is, just went to this different place and things just started to flow for me and started to think that we were on to something really big.

Didn't really track Rory's round hole by hole, but then



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definitely got the sense on 16 that I was right in it and had an opportunity to sort of put some heat on it and to potentially win.

Great to kind of keep making birdies towards the end of my round. Clearly a couple mistakes here and there crept in. But other than that, it was a pretty flawless day.

Q. I'm guessing you drove down here Monday. What was that like or what was Monday like? Reflective? Balancing sort of excitement about how you played with what got away? What was it like?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, mixed emotions for sure. That's probably the -- a lot of outpouring from people with a lot of positive comments coming at me, so trying to absorb that, trying to absorb the week, but at the same time looking at my phone and just wishing there was a different message there. A lot of heartfelt commiserations and things like that. Clearly having been in situations like that before and even more this time could really sense what it would be like to win it, and felt like I was right there on the edge of winning it, obviously.

A little bit of -- certainly don't feel down in any way, shape or form just because of the performance I was able to put in and how I was able to feel putting in that performance, but just sort of -- don't know what the right word is, tormented probably, by the thought of what might have been.

Obviously just bouncing back and forth with those two emotions. But certainly I think no regrets. You can lose a golf tournament and there's a million things that you think I should have done this differently. There's not really much I can look back and gone, I should have done that differently on the day.

It's more just like wish it would have added up to a different result than wish I would have done things differently.

Q. On that, having been through this before and frankly losing to a friend, as you look back on '17, how did it process the rest of the year? Did it linger or were you able to put it away ever or did it stick with you?



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JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, good question. I would say lingered for a month, to '17, but I think it also spurred me on, if I look back historically, to play my best golf. 2017, August-ish, through to the end of '18 is probably the most consistently good golf that I've ever played, and obviously culminated in me going to World No. 1 and things like that. So certainly took that last and my career went forward.

Obviously I was a little bit more in the prime of my career around that time, or you could argue more prime. But I don't see any reason why that can't be the same this time around.

I'm working well. I'm working hard. I'm feeling good about my game. I've been saying all year that my good is good. I've just got to kind of make sure that I'm playing consistently well enough to give myself those opportunities because obviously majors come around fairly rarely, only four times a year. So you do need a level of consistency in your game to continue to create those opportunities to win.

The last two majors I've been right there and been beaten by the top players in the world at the peak of their game.

But on both occasions, I've felt like I've stepped up, I've hit the shots, I've played well, I've felt great, and I'm doing the right things to win. So just got to keep the level high enough to keep creating those opportunities.

Q. Rory said in his press conference on Sunday after he won that he was glad to see two Europeans in the playoff, obviously alluding to the Ryder Cup. Outside of the money that you won last week and whatever else was involved, you moved up considerably both in Ryder Cup and in World Rankings. Can you just talk about -- even though it's still early, can you talk about the importance of seeing European names on top of these leaderboards lately and how much that might mean when you get to September and Bethpage?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah. Obviously it's been noticed this year amongst us, the Europeans, that we're playing well. There's a lot of guys really contending for tournaments. There's a lot of guys playing some good golf. That's great to see. It's great to see that the boys are really adapting to the PGA TOUR, even some of the newer guys. They're beginning to sort of week in, week out, put up good performances. Obviously from a winning point of view, Rory has obviously had a great start to the year. His name has been up there a lot. Sepp Straka winning, things like that, it's been good to see.

But I don't know if it matters right now. Ryder Cup is a long way away. I think there's good energy around our team and what we're sort of trying to gear up for. By no means

do we underestimate the task at hand.

I think going to New York, we all know what a challenge that's going to be, and I think we all know it's going to have to be a fully firing European team to have a chance there.

So far, so good there for sure. There's definitely good form amongst the boys. But you can only hope that that continues into the months that matter right before the Ryder Cup.

But I think on track. I think if I was Luke Donald right now I'd be looking at my team going, okay, the boys are -- everything is according to plan at this present moment in time.

Q. Wondering before you won the U.S. Open in 2013, you had six years of solid results. Just wondering if you had put any mental burden on yourself beforehand to kind of when is it going to be my time, am I going to do this, and if that changed after you won.

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, I think there was definitely sort of a shift in -- well, there was a nice progression in my career around that time. I think it was 2010 I won on the PGA TOUR, 2011 I won a playoff event, 2012 I won a World Golf Championship event, so I kind of sold myself on that story that next stop, major championship. That's kind of the way it was going. It was quite a linear progression from that point of view. Then 2013 came along, and fortunate enough to knock off Merion.

But I kind of knew that there's sort of the other side narrative I had with myself was let's call it age 30 to 40, 10 years I was going to play 40 major championships and I was going to create opportunities in that 40. So when my first opportunity came around don't strangle it.

I even said last week, when you have the opportunity to win in these events that really can move the needle in your career, you've also got to sort of let it happen. So I think that's what I did a great job of at Merion; I was very process driven all week because I knew that I was going to have other opportunities in the future, as well.

Obviously, yeah, I think since then I've been racking up too many seconds than I care to think about now, but I'm still creating opportunities. You can't skip throughout your career without a little heartache here and there. But I've had the luck go my way on occasion, as well.

Hope that if I can keep doing what I'm doing, get that little bit of luck to get across the line again.

Q. Sometimes when we see someone break through

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with a first major, mentally it frees them up, they feel like they can be more themselves, publicly they can live in it a little bit more. Did that happen at all for you?

JUSTIN ROSE: I mean, I think so. I was very grateful to have won a major because I also realized how many great players had not won major championships. So when I had that box checked, I was like, okay, great, we can now use that -- that's definitely the mindset. You can use this to free yourself up and hopefully be the catalyst to winning more and winning them more easily once that monkey is off the back.

Yeah, even in my situation now, I take that loss pretty badly. Yesterday was tough. But had I not won a major, it would have been even more brutal, no doubt about it. So yes, it is a great thing to have already achieved and -- it's a good thing in every other major championship you play, yeah, 100 percent. But you do look at the majors each individually as Rory did. The Masters was elusive, even though he was a five-time major champion -- five? Four. That was the one that mattered.

But listen, I was a stone's throw away from winning the Open, winning the Masters. I would have been going for a Grand Slam at the PGA. It's like, it can be that close. I've got to believe that.

I'm close to kind of some seriously good stuff, yeah.

Q. What are you thinking about this week? How do you think you're going to perform? I was just looking back at '17, I think you were off for a month after that last Masters. Are you happy to be here? It's a terrible question, sorry.

JUSTIN ROSE: A month off. Yeah, I'll probably -- yeah, I'm happy to be here, to be honest with you. Yeah, I am. I'm very motivated just generally this year, and I would say that's been the difference this year; I'm creating these better opportunities, these better weeks, because I feel like I'm doing the work away from golf tournaments, as well. There's just a bit more energy and motivation and belief in what I'm doing and what I'm trying to achieve.

Yeah, I'm looking forward to going home next week for a two-week reset. I think that's important, especially living in England. I feel like those are very key weeks for me to make sure I'm kind of maintaining my energy and things like that to come back and compete.

Yeah, all in all, I'm not yearning for time off or anything like that. I'm quite focused on the next objectives, yeah.

Q. You may have addressed this a little bit last week, but why do you have energy? Why are you doing this at age 43 with a pretty sizable list of accomplishments already? What keeps you going at this stage?

JUSTIN ROSE: Just the belief that I still can have these special moments in the game is what I'm calling them. I think little things like holing the putt on the Friday at the Ryder Cup with all the team around me, that's a moment I'll remember. That's a special moment.

Even the Open Championship was special walking down 18, being right in it, holing the putt at Augusta on 18 on Sunday and seeing the crowd stand up. Those are special moments.

Yeah, I want it to be accompanied with the requisite trophy, as well; don't get me wrong. But the reason I'm playing is to sort of feel those moments that really matter in your career and in your life.

I believe the point is the reason I'm working hard enough to do it is because I still have that belief that it's possible. I think that that's why these weeks are important for me still is that it's just reaffirming that it's still possible.

Q. You talked a little bit about the moment of the hug you had with Rory, but were you able to see or talk to your wife afterward about the hug that she had with Rory, because that looked like a pretty cool moment, too.

JUSTIN ROSE: No, not really. The "mystery woman." There was some article somewhere like who's the mystery woman that was hugging Rory. It turned out to be Kate. That was pretty funny.

Listen, I think in the moment you realize what it means to everybody involved. You realize what it means to other families, what they must be feeling. Yeah, you kind of -- you're a part of the moment. You're a part of the story. You're a part of all of the energy that's going on in that moment. I think that's what happens. You embrace that connection that you have with everybody and all that's going on in the moment.

No, I don't know what she said to him. No, I don't think that was discussion worthy or anything, to be honest.

Q. Have you ever had a hug like that in golf with a competitor?

JUSTIN ROSE: I got a great hug from Tommy Fleetwood when I walked off 18 on Sunday. Meant a lot. It's not always about the result. It's about how someone can make

you feel or what they say and stuff like that.

No, I don't know. I can't think of it, to be honest. But sometimes your mind is spinning a million miles an hour in those situations, and often it's hard to take in what someone might say to you in that moment anyway, I believe.

Q. I'd like to ask you what you think your biggest inspiration would be as a golfer.

JUSTIN ROSE: Well, I think my dad early in my career was a big, big inspiration for me. I think he kind of laid out -- well, he taught me the game, and I think sort of very subtly kind of like guided me down a little path where I began to realize what I was capable of or what it might look like to be a pro, and I think I always felt like I had a talent to play the game, but that talent was always -- like it's a double-edged sword. It's great to have a talent for something but I always felt like it was a burden to have it, as well. I never wanted to see it as a burden.

So I guess my inspiration, to answer your question, has always been to maximize the potential that I've had in my game and the potential that my dad saw in me, not waste it, squander it, not sort of -- yeah, put in the requisite work, put in the work that's required to make talent worth it or to make your ability shine through.

I guess that's been my inspiration is just like, getting the most out of yourself.

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