

RBC Heritage

Sunday, April 20, 2025

Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, USA

Harbour Town Golf Links

Justin Thomas

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome the champion of the 2025 RBC Heritage, Justin Thomas. He picks up his 16th PGA TOUR victory in his 250th start, and he wins for the first time since 2022. I know you would have liked to have won before this, but I know this place is super special to you and a great place to get this done. If we can get some comments.

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, thank you. This is a golf course and a place that I love. I've been fortunate to play a junior tournament here, the Junior Heritage. I feel like it's a golf course that fits my game or it's a place that I really enjoy to play because I think it's a place that rewards good golf, but it can really, really penalize you and you can make bogeys so fast if you get out of position.

I was really proud today of just staying patient and kind of plotting our way along, and yeah, I feel like winning on a golf course like this is a pretty cool thing to add to your resume. Not that I wouldn't have taken one wherever I could get it, and still will, but it's a great feeling.

Q. Take us through the putt, the first hole, first playoff hole, and also to win with Jillian and Molly there which I know is super special.

JUSTIN THOMAS: For sure, for sure. Unfortunately we had the disappointing walk together as a family in Tampa after I had a couple-shot lead there with a couple holes to go and didn't have a good finish, and Viktor winning there.

I feel like I used a lot of that as kind of momentum or just a -- it build on and motivation, if you will. So it was great to have them there behind the green and be able to enjoy that win and celebrate with them. The joy and excitement it brought to me to be able to see them after the putt went in and even walking up to the green was something I definitely didn't think I would feel in the past.

But the putt in the playoff was a putt I feel like I'd seen in the past. It's kind of a funky little pin. If you try to play too much break, it seems like it kind of stays out. But more than anything, like I did all weekend, I just felt like I had my



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read a little bit outside the left of it being straight and falling right, and I just committed to that and really tried to put a good stroke with good speed on it, and it looked good the whole way.

Q. More relief or more joy?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I think joy. I think there's definitely some relief in there, but it was -- when the ball went in, it was pure joy. It was excitement and happy, but yeah, after I kind of had that interaction with Joe, it was just looking around and it was joy. I just was so happy. I couldn't stop smiling.

Q. You know you dropped your putter before the ball went in, right?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I did?

Q. Given your career path the last three years and all we've talked about, what was the hardest part? Was it working through that or waiting on today? Was it finding the key or waiting for today?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I don't know. I think the hard part about it is it's just really hard to win. I feel like I've been playing well enough to win for a couple years, but just because you feel that way and you are, obviously that doesn't mean that you're going to.

Obviously '23 was tough and I was trying to work my way through it and get out of that, but it definitely -- I feel like I was putting more pressure on myself even last year to win than I was this year, and I just feel like my game is in such a better place and in a good spot to where I'm just really trying as hard as I can to get myself in a place mentally of just trusting and playing and just committing to what I'm doing and having the belief that it's going to be good enough the more often I get myself there, and I've done that a couple times this year and haven't been able to close it out.

Even knowing in the playoff, it was like, obviously I planned and hoped and wanted to win, but if it doesn't we're just going to keep plugging and try to put ourselves there the next time.

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Q. You had obviously played much better golf last year compared to what you did in 2023 and great golf here. Did you feel at all like, still, you needed a win to feel that bad stretch could be actually kind of put to bed and behind you?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I'd say so. I mean, I think it was the last thing missing, if you will. I don't know. It's hard to say because obviously careers are so long and there's so much up and down and lots going on that you never know what point of your career you're at until it's over. At least for me, I felt like it was the last thing that I needed to do for my own well-being.

I unfortunately but also fortunately had been long enough without winning that I wasn't getting the same question every week. It was just kind of like it's so far in the past, we've got other things we can talk about type thing.

Yeah, I'm way, way, way more happy for myself than I am of anything in that regard, of not having to deal with that or anything anymore.

Q. I was talking to Jordan, and he said he saw you out here grinding on Monday, day after the Masters. What were you working on?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Just trying to sharpen things up. Last week I felt like was weird at Augusta. I hit some really, really good shots and then I just hit some good shots. I felt like there wasn't really anything in between. Then again when sitting and looking back at the week, I tried to be reasonable with myself and it was very clearly not a normal week, with the very unfortunate situation with Rev and his back going out and then not knowing what I'm going to do for a caddie and then figuring out Tuesday Joe could come and then us having nine holes together and pretty much like on the fly and on the go figuring out how it's going and then also trying to play well.

I gave myself a little bit of grace once it was over, but that round I played on Sunday on the back nine and birdieing the last two holes, nobody would pay -- they have no reason to pay attention to it, especially with what happened on Sunday at Augusta.

It's something for us as players, we take a lot of pride in, and I felt like it was easy to take the day off but just needed a little bit that I felt like if I could just sharpen some things up and really come into a week at a place that I loved, prepared and ready to go, then we could have a chance to win this week.

Q. Wanted to ask, as you came into the final round,

did you think you had an idea of how those greens were moving with the ball and across the grain and stuff like that?

JUSTIN THOMAS: A little bit. It was so fun playing this place like this. Obviously this isn't normal circumstances of them -- at least to my understanding, kind of tearing them up -- I don't know if it's tomorrow or soon, but they could let the greens go.

It just was so hard to get the ball close to the hole. I kind of was talking to my dad last night about that. I played well yesterday. I just kept having numbers and clubs or angles that a really good shot was 20, 25 feet or it was a club that I couldn't quite get to the hole but the other one wasn't going to have enough spin to stop near the hole and it was going to go past, and when you get at places like this, it really is just about being patient and kind of picking the spots when you have them.

I felt like we had a good idea of how the course was playing, and it was almost kind of like hitting a tee shot, getting out there, assessing, okay, this is a pin we can go after, this is a pin we can't, and then just being aggressive to those conservative targets, if you will.

Q. You may have just answered this, but beyond the playoff hole, what do you feel like you did the best today? Was it just patience and staying where your feet are at the moment?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Probably. But man, I putted the ball beautifully today. I played really, really well. Tee to green I didn't really hit very many what I felt like bad shots. It's just so fun stepping up on holes like 17, although it would be a 9-iron, but it's got to be hit perfectly to get in that little window and land it where you want to land it and executing those kind of shots, and even missing that putt on 17. But that putt is breaking five feet and so downhill, and hitting it exactly how I wanted and it almost going in, I felt like I had control of everything.

It never felt like I needed to force things out there or was hoping things were happening. I just was kind of like, let's just keep playing and I'll make birdies when I can. The patience was great, but those par putts and putts I made on the front nine were huge for my momentum and keeping them.

Q. Your daughter Molly is not old enough to where she'll remember this, but in 10 years from now, what are the memories or the moments that stick out that you're going to look back on and tell her about?

JUSTIN THOMAS: From today?



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Q. Yeah.

JUSTIN THOMAS: Just having her here, having her and Jill here. Just seeing them walking up 18 green even in regulation, I had to look away because when you're out there in the moment, you're focused on what you're doing. It's business. I'm trying to execute and do what I'm doing and trying to win a golf tournament, and just walking up there and seeing them and not knowing what Andrew did on 17 and I'm obviously trying to figure out how I'm going to either make this putt and also two-putt it, and it's hard to not start thinking about what could be when I see them, so that's where I had to kind of put my head down and take a deep breath because it is, that's when I feel like I can get into I want this so bad for us. How unbelievable my wife Jill has been and just being a rock star and supporting. I just would tell her how much fun it was for us to do this as a family, I'd say.

Q. Those putts you holed from 5 through 8, would you big were those in the scheme of the whole day?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Huge. I'd say 4 through 8, as well.

Q. What happened on 4?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I made like an eight-footer for par. They were massive. It was something I felt -- I remembered specifically telling myself in Tampa that starting a little back or being in the position I was going into Sunday, if I could go bogey-free, I felt like that was huge in the sense of most likely other guys are going to make some bogeys, whether it be one or multiple. Not everyone is going to go bogey free.

I felt like I put a lot of emphasis on that and playing smart and picking my spots of, like, if I can go bogey free, I feel like that's really going to put me in position. So making those putts and also making them with conviction and in the middle and how I wanted the speed I wanted, it just is -- they're huge for confidence because, like Joe kept saying, he's like, just put the ball in the fairway and put it on the green type of thing. You're rolling it so well; start making some putts for birdie instead of for par.

Who knows if I don't make those putts on 4, 5, yeah, 6, 7, 8, it's a totally, totally different day and then I have to start pressing on the back nine versus just staying patient.

Q. I'm curious about the 7-iron on 8. What did you have there and where did you hit it?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, that was a steal, to be honest, because I had just pulled my tee shot. I actually don't

know how the ball really did that because I had mud on the left side of it, and I needed to hit a little bit of a low draw. It's actually a pin that I feel like you can get close to just because of how firm the greens were, and it all kind of funnels to it. If you can just get it on the green, it does funnel to the pin.

But given the mud on the ball, it really was luck. It was a guess. I'm like, I need to -- I had plenty of distance to get there with an 8-iron, but I felt like if I could knock down a 7-iron to where if the mud did take it, at least it would get on the ground before it got to the people versus if an 8-iron getting up in the air, if the mud took it, it could fly over the people and who knows what could happen.

That's another one I feel like of me just kind of trusting the millions of golf shots I've hit and just seeing the amount of mud and just guessing it's going to move a little bit and I just kind of turned the club face down. I'm not trying to get my aim in a certain spot or swing a certain direction or whatever it is. I'm just kind of looking up and I'm just trying to be more of an athlete type thing and just hit and accept where it goes.

I was very fortunate that it went to where it did.

Q. Statistically this is the best you've putted in years. What's behind the improvement that you've seen?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I'd say I told Todd this a couple days ago, we were talking about it, it just is -- obviously it's a lot of work and time spent on it, but a huge -- as funny as it is, a huge help. I called Xander at the end of last year because I think he's one of the best putters in fundamentals and not just putting but everything and I was just like, can I just pick your brain for like two or three hours, just talk to you about putting.

So he came out with me, and he just was asking me a bunch of different questions. You guys obviously know Xander, but he doesn't leave any box unchecked. He's going to -- like he said that day, he's like, if it has anything to do with you potentially improving in golf, I've probably done it or tried it.

So I just was talking to him about this process and how he reads greens and how he sees things and his practice and everything, and it honestly was just being with him, and he would kind of ask something and I was like, yeah, I used to do that. And then he was like, well, how about something like this. Like, I used to use the string line here. Okay.

The more I was talking, I'm like, I don't do any of the things that I used to do in my best putting years. 2017-18, I was very, very regimented of the things that I did, and how he



said it is I had a home base and I had no home base. I had things that I did, but it was a very vague bag of things and there was no consistency to it.

I feel like I used to have a very good home base of fundamentals and things that I did.

So it honestly, while he helped, it was more of the questions he asked me made me realize that I'm trying basically too hard and I'm trying too many different things versus I think it's a serious, serious, serious skill to continue to work on the things that you do really well and not doing it differently, and I think that's been more of what it is. I have my fundamentals and things that I do and checkpoints, and I'm sticking to them.

Q. Was it confusing in those years where you weren't putting well because you knew you had been a good putter in the past, and it wasn't translating?

JUSTIN THOMAS: It's more it wasn't that I was a good putter. I still was a good putter those years and am a good putter. It's just -- it's unique and different because it's I'd say the only part of golf you can't really make the ball do things. If I'm not hitting it good, I can step up on the first tee here with a driver and I can hit some kind of little low chip cut and try to just advance it, but if I don't know or feel good over a putter, if a putt is left edge, it's pretty much left edge. I can't create enough.

I got into -- I'm very artistic and feel based in all of my game, and I think once I got to putting and the putting green, I turned into way too mechanical and robotic and that's not me.

I'm better off, I call it pro-am putting, when it's like I obviously want to make a putt that I'm hitting in a pro-am but I'm not grinding on read and thinking about all these different things. I'm pretty much stepping up, give it a look and go, and how often I make putts.

It was probably more up here than it was anywhere else.

Q. You've never been paired with Andrew before; did you know much about him until the playoff? Had you met him?

JUSTIN THOMAS: No, but funny enough, Joe said in the playoff, he's like, I've never been out with Andrew, have you? I was like, I actually have. He's like, when was that. I was like, well, I played a practice round at the Travelers a couple years ago. Like I wanted to just play the back nine and I got to 10 tee and it was in the afternoon and I don't want to be jumping in front of anybody or whatever it is, so it's like him and Ben Griffin were playing, and I was like,

can I just join you guys. It's like, yeah.

So I played the back nine with them, and they were having some kind of match, and all of a sudden they're talking, and Andrew shot 59 that day. So I told Joe. I was like, yeah, I've played with him once and he shot 59 at TPC River Highlands.

Yeah, he's obviously very good. So yes, that was my experience, and you could see in the shot he hit into 18, when he gets going, he's going.

Q. Where were you when he stood over that eight-footer? Did you see or were you just --

JUSTIN THOMAS: I was in the scoring tent. They had a TV in there and I was watching.

Q. I wanted to ask how your feelings were on the golf course compared with Tampa, compared with Amex, for example. Do you think this gives you any more freedom going forward, or did you need any?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I felt more and more comfortable each time. I was very -- don't get me wrong, I was nervous, but it was way different kind of nerves today. I felt very calm. I didn't feel like I was going to win. I didn't feel like I was going to lose. I was just playing. It's just so hard to -- unfortunately so hard to get into that place mentally of just trusting and believing it and just kind of letting it happen.

But I would say like Amex, I was so nervous before the day starting and it's like the more you're there the more comfortable I am with it, and then Tampa I was nervous but it was the first very comfortable nervous I felt while I was out there playing and just really kind of got into the whole situation and process and whatnot.

Then today, I don't know, I didn't have -- I was way, way more nervous on Friday than I was today. It was weird. I said that to Joe. I said, I feel like this is a Sunday. I'm playing for something today, to win the tournament or not. Very clearly it obviously was not the case. Just like everything else, you feel different every day. Just fortunately it felt great today.

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