

AT&T Byron Nelson

Wednesday, May 11, 2022

McKinney, Texas, USA

TPC Craig Ranch

Justin Thomas

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Justin Thomas to the interview room here at the 2022 At&T Byron Nelson. Making your second start here in the event, first since 2015 at Los Colinas. So just some thoughts on decision to come back here and just thoughts on what you've seen so far.

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, the biggest decision for me was, I mean same as always when I'm planning my schedule for the year, is around the majors. And first off I felt like taking four weeks off into a major wasn't a very smart idea. And with the Wells Fargo not being at Quail Hollow last week I knew I wasn't going to play. And I just, I personally just want to try something a little different this year. I wasn't going to play Valero before the Masters, but these last three majors, I'm going to see how I feel this week, and potentially add Canada, but I just want to play the week before and see how that feels and see how that gets going, going into next week and seeing if that can lead to some success.

So that was a massive part in me playing here. I played here in Q-School nine years ago, as crazy as it is to say, with Michael Greller on my bag. So, yeah, I mean it hasn't changed, it's all right in front of you, pretty big fairways and big greens and just all depends on the wind.

THE MODERATOR: And you mentioned having not played since Hilton Head. You're making your 12th start this week, six of those top 10s and half of those top 5s. Just kind of assess the state of your game, how you're feeling as you're heading into the week.

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, I mean my game has been very, very solid this season, this year. I mean it just hasn't necessarily, it hasn't produced any wins, which is what we play for, what I play for. So I would gladly trade a handful of those 8s and 10s or 30s for a couple missed cuts and a couple wins, as much as how great it is to be as consistent and be around there as much as I have, come out here and play to win.

So I'm getting close, I just got to stay patient and just let it



come. I know that it will. Just have to be in the right frame of mind for it and hopefully we can get on a little run whenever it does happen.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take some questions.

Q. You talked about the course and how it's wide open and how the greens are big. Is that a good thing when you're trying to prepare for a major and trying to try a few things, obviously trying to win this golf tournament, but does that help you or do you like to be challenged and have to hit windows and hit specific spots in a week before a major?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I can't honestly answer that just from the lack of playing the week before a major, you know what I mean? I mean my only major I won I played the week before in Akron and Akron is very different than this place. It's very tough, the fairways are damn near impossible to hit half of them, it can play very difficult.

But that being said it's just more for me I'm thinking just kind of getting into a rhythm and playing and not, I'm not thinking about next week, I'm just, I'm obviously prepping for next week and I'm trying to get my game to a point where it's peaking come Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday next week, as opposed to peaking this week and then going on the down, on the decline.

But yeah, I mean you can look at it either way. If it's easy then it doesn't get you ready for hard, but then if it's too tough then you beat yourself up and you're exhausted going into next week. So I would like to say this is kind of a perfect balance and a good mixture. I mean it's very similar heat, wind, we're going to get some wind next week, I'm sure we'll get it here, usually do. So, yeah, hopefully it's perfect.

Q. In 2017 the calendar was different. When you won it the PGA Championship was at a different time. We've settled back into normal life, let's hope. Next week, last year when we played the PGA Championship you missed the cut if I'm not mistaken. Does it mess -- have you guys kind of gotten into the groove of the major schedule the way it is now and if



so what do you think about it?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, I don't think I have personally. I think, I mean I've tinkered with my schedule more than I thought that I would. I mean this year I probably have four or five events from March until the Playoffs start that I've not even really sure what I'm going to do until maybe a couple weeks prior. There's still a three or, two, three events the rest of this year that I might play, I might not play, I'm not sure. That's just kind of a part of it and everybody's dealing with the same thing, it's not like I'm the only person, but, yeah, you get used to it. It's like anything, you change at first and you get adjusted and get used to it and then you get used to whatever that is and they will probably change it again and have to get used to that.

Q. You mentioned playing in the heat and wind to get you ready for next week. Southern Hills, is that a course that you like, that you can score well on or is it too soon to tell?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I mean Monday was the first time I've ever been there. I really, really liked it. I mean I was blown away with just how, I thought how good of a golf course it was. I thought tee to green it was excellent. I thought it challenged kind of all facets of your game. You have to work the ball quite a bit, you have to, you really, really have to be good around the greens. You can't fake your way around it.

And it's tough to chip. I mean the balls roll off the green, they go pretty far away. You get some grainy, elevated greens to where it's difficult to get the ball around the hole and over the course of the round in a tournament that can be quite a few shots and the person I think that does that the best is going to have the best chance of winning.

Q. What's the best piece of advice you've ever gotten from Jack Nicklaus?

JUSTIN THOMAS: The best advice I've gotten from Jack I would say is to adjust your game plan based off of how you're playing. I think that's something that I didn't really think of before. I think I went into -- specifically I remember I was asking him about the Open Championship and I was just talking about, would you hit driver everywhere, because you did so well, I mean he did well in all the majors, but he did so well in Open Championships. And I was like, what was your basically strategy and he's like, Well I would go to each course and I would see how it was. You're going to have years where you have rough, you're going to have years where you don't and then you're going to have times where you're playing well and you're not. And if it was maybe a year where it was a little thinner rough and I was playing well I would hit driver a lot. Versus

if not I would just get it in play. Like I would never go into the week saying, All right, the 4th hole I'm going to hit driver every single day, because the wind can switch, you can not feel good over the ball, the conditions can be totally different. And as a golfer you need to be able to adjust that game plan on the run sometimes. I thought that's something that's really helped me.

Q. Do you recall when that might have been?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Probably five years, four, five years ago, something like that.

Q. What was your reaction last night to the PGA TOUR not granting releases and do you think it will detour guys from going over there?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I mean, I would hope it would deter them from going over there. I mean, I think Jay's made it very clear from the start of what would happen or, you know, I think a lot of people are probably like, I can't believe you did this or, Wow, you went through with it. But I mean this is what he said was going to happen all along. And, yeah, it's one of those things to where he just doesn't want the competing tour, the back and forth. You know, it's like, Look, if you want to go, go. I mean there's been plenty of guys that have been advocates of it and have just talked it up all the time and they have been guys behind the scenes that are saying, I'm going, I'm doing this. And like my whole thing is, like just go then. Like stop going back and forth or like you say you're going to do this, it's like you can do -- everybody's entitled to do what they want, you know what I mean? Like if I wanted to go play that tour I could go play that tour. But I'm loyal to the PGA TOUR and I've said that and I think there's a lot of opportunity for me to, I mean, break records, make history, do a lot of things on the PGA TOUR I want to do. And there could be people that want to make that change and it's like you're allowed to have that decision, you're a human being and that's just a part of it.

So I mean I don't think it was -- I mean maybe, I'm sure there's a little bit of surprise, like, Oh, wow, like, yeah, he really did it, that kind of thing. But, yeah, it was nothing off the beaten path that Jay didn't say he was going to do.

Q. You talked about -- I want to talk about Craig Ranch here for a second. You talked about the wide open fairways. It's definitely looking to be pretty windy this week though, right, and I'm walking around and the rough looks to me thicker than I expected, maybe thicker than it may have been last year. I know you weren't here last year, but does it give you any pause at all with the wind and that rough pulling driver and how many drivers do you think you're going to hit in a



given round out here?

JUSTIN THOMAS: The rough's definitely spotty. I think it's very, at least for a Monday at Southern Hills it's similar to where it's kind of flier city. You get it -- it's not -- when you get that really long Bermuda you know it's going to come out thick and likely going to just kind of be more of a pitch out kind of thing. But when you get this kind of rough it's really judging how far the ball's going to fly as well as you can and, yeah, I mean I wouldn't -- the fairways are big, I mean you have a pretty good amount of room, but I've definitely played wider fairways, like Caves Valley last year the fairways were just massive. It's not like to that extent, but, yeah, when you get some wind, and it seems like there's going to be a fair amount of crosswinds just by, I could be wrong, but at least off of some of the practice I've had the last couple days. So that shrinks the fairways quite a bit.

Yeah, at the end of the day you're still, it still is important to hit the fairway and you still have to go execute the shot. It's just more of maybe that one that was 50, 60 feet offline at another course that could have found a hazard or under a tree could maybe just catch the edge of the fairway or the rough and then you're just going to have to kind of go forward from there.

THE MODERATOR: All right, Justin, we appreciate your time. Best of luck this week.

JUSTIN THOMAS: Thank you.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports