

FedEx St. Jude Championship

Tuesday, August 11, 2026

Memphis, Tennessee, USA

TPC Southwind

Justin Rose

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We are here with the defending champion, Justin Rose, at the FedEx St. Jude Championship. Justin, welcome back. A year ago you won here in an exciting playoff. What memories do you have from last year?

JUSTIN ROSE: Absolutely. Super exciting to be back. Great memories from last year. Obviously, yeah, there was a lot going on. Played down the stretch with Tommy, and he was vying to win his first tournament. There was mixed emotions because of that. I always root for Tommy Fleetwood, but obviously it got to the point where I had to kind of finish out. I had a very strong finish to the back nine on Sunday and ultimately put myself in a playoff.

Then it was myself and J.J. going back and forth playing great golf.

Typically, I've never played the 18th hole so aggressively. Not normally a driver hole for me, but last year in the playoff, I just felt the way the wind was, the way everything was playing, I just kept playing aggressively, and fortunately that worked out really, really well.

Timely win. Obviously any time you can win at this point in the season, it really kind of gives you -- that's a huge shot in the arm as we all chase for the FedExCup at East Lake.

Q. It's always in a good spot when you're here making playoffs, but for this 2026 season, how would you assess your season so far?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, got off to a great start winning early, which is always really, really nice, kind of sets momentum for the year. I had a great win and won by seven at the Farmers, which is one of my most enjoyable wins, one of my most stress-free wins on TOUR. That really felt like it gave me the opportunity to have a big season.

Felt like since then I showed elements and showed good form. Obviously the Masters, I played great golf there.



That's the one that I look back and feel like that one got away.

Then the rest of the season, I'm kind of waiting to sort of really catch fire again. I played some good, solid golf, but I'm kind of waiting for a run. Hopefully the three weeks off that we've just had is a bit of a refresher now, and I can really focus on this last, final push.

Q. With a year of perspective, what was the most satisfying part of that win here last year? You mentioned 18. What else did you learn about the course that you can apply this year?

JUSTIN ROSE: I think this is a very strategic golf course. I think it's a golf course that it suits a lot of players in the field. It doesn't have an obvious way of playing it. It doesn't -- for example, distance isn't a huge prerequisite out here. It becomes strategy. It becomes putting the ball in play. It becomes all of those things.

Also, sort of having the fitness and the mental resilience to deal with the heat, those are the things that I probably look back at last year and was proud of in terms of how I played.

I think, in terms of this year, yeah, you're trying to sort of feed off putting the ball in play off the tee. I've tried to -- coming out of links season, I really feel like -- I was trying to prepare for links golf, so a bit more 2-irons and long irons.

I feel like playing this week it's getting back to more mini-driver, 5-woods. Kind of the bag setup, just readjusting that to kind of really put the ball in play off the tee so you can then be aggressive with your approach play.

The course is, I think, not there for the taking this year, but I feel like the rough is possibly a little down, and greens at the moment are relatively soft. So we'll see. We'll see how the course plays. Like I said, it's a course that needs respect; get it in play first and foremost, and go from there.

Q. Along those same lines, the last four years, the 5th hole has been the most difficult hole here. When



you're standing on the tee, what are you seeing, and how have you played that hole, and what makes that hole so hard, and what do you have to do specifically on that hole?

JUSTIN ROSE: It's a hole with quite a bit of distance to it, so getting it in play off the tee is important. It's a hole that sets up really well off the tee. It's got two bunkers that you can aim at, and those bunkers spread about 40 yards of lines. So if you can keep it in that window, you should be okay.

For some reason, because you know it's a long hole, you want to cheat the corner a little bit and you always try to take a little bit of yardage off. As soon as you miss it to the right, you're in trouble. Even from the fairway, today actually, I hit 4-iron in from 225 and it was a little bit into the wind. So it's clearly a long hole, and it's a narrow green.

I think when you're going in from -- typically when you're hitting balls on the range, you keep your short irons obviously quite straight, and then your long irons tend to spread out a little bit left and right. So the fact that it's a narrow green, I think, is why it's a tricky hole.

Q. Justin, you're at an age where a lot of guys might be slowing down. What keeps you hungry and focused and still playing as well as you have this year and over the last several years?

JUSTIN ROSE: Obviously been around a long time, had a great career. I'm not really interested in sticking around and just making up the numbers and waiting for the Champions Tour or whatever that might be. For me, it's about just really pushing myself to stay elite, to stay playing at the top end of the game, and to kind of keep giving myself and putting myself in with experiences that will create lifetime memories.

That's only going to happen by playing in the biggest tournaments and at the highest level. That's my motivation, and if I'm not achieving that, I would sort of really question why I'm making the sacrifice away from family and friends and all the other great things that I have going on in my life.

But I am enjoying the challenge. I'm enjoying bucking the trend of what the narrative should be at this point in your career, and that's a huge motivation for me as well. So I'm enjoying that game against myself.

Q. Obviously the heat is something that this tournament is known for. Is there anything that you've learned about how to perform through that, especially last year, and are there any ways that you approach

things differently when you're playing and you have to deal with that kind of heat?

JUSTIN ROSE: I think just staying on top of the discipline, the obvious things. Clearly hydration, I mean, that's so obvious. I think sort of understanding that even at the beginning part of the week -- just making sure by Tuesday, Wednesday, you're already off to good habits. If you get behind on one particular day, it feels like actually it's quite hard to catch up.

It's sometimes making sure you're ahead of the game by the time you get to the golf course. It's not just, okay, I'm now on the golf course, let's drink a lot of water. It's just being ahead of things this week.

I'm considering using a parasol, umbrella. It's like 20 degrees cooler under the umbrella. I think especially as the week cranks up towards 100 degrees on the weekend, that might be something I will do, which is something I haven't done before, to be honest with you, but I used it in the practice round today, and it definitely made a difference.

There's a little bit of breeze out there today, which kind of made it feel manageable.

Listen, everybody's in the same boat. It's a long three weeks actually, as I'm talking about doing things well daily. But if you want to kind of continue your momentum through the FedExCup Playoffs, there's a lot of discipline required this next month or so.

Q. First tournament for you since the British Open. What's the biggest thing you've been focusing on in your game as you gear up for the three weeks in the FedExCup Playoffs?

JUSTIN ROSE: These three weeks off at this time of year, it offers you a great chance to sort of connect with family, go on a vacation. One week off are always really tough. Two weeks off, you sort of take a week off and you're ready to get back practicing, whereas I think on this three-week stretch you can take meaningful time away with your family and still have the time to come back and feel sharp and ready to play. So that's what I've done.

It's been really nice to go away with my family, then the last week or so work on all areas of my game. Nothing really specific, just kind of going through all areas. I feel like there's no -- nothing's jumping out at me. There's not an area of my game that I'm panic stations on. I've just been really trying to work on everything. Probably short game is the one thing I've been maybe spending more or paying a little bit more attention to if I had to choose.

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

Hopefully the mental freshness of the little bit of a break is what we're all enjoying this time of year and knowing what's on the line now the next few weeks.

Q. Last season, TPC Southwind was second on TOUR in terms of rough penalty behind only Oakmont. Is that surprising to you? It sounds like from your earlier comments maybe things are a bit different.

JUSTIN ROSE: What was the stat? Second on TOUR in?

Q. Rough, like missed fairway penalty.

JUSTIN ROSE: Well, it doesn't surprise me. That's exactly what this golf course is all about. I think the Bermuda rough is always notoriously tricky. There's a lot of little -- like occasionally on this golf course, there's little angles, little doglegs as well you've got to kind of navigate. Also the fairways here are so good. Here you're in the fairway, you always have such a perfect lie too. The gnarly Bermuda rough is of such contrast to the perfect fairways, so it's a little bit of both.

No, that's why I've changed my bag setup this week to have the mini-driver in there, just to feel like I'm not giving up too much distance but maybe can gain a bit of control there. I think all players are seeing it that way this week.

Q. For you, when it gets to this time of year on TOUR, when it's not a Ryder Cup year versus when it is a Ryder Cup year like last year, is there a different mentality about where you're wanting your game and kind of how you're approaching things?

JUSTIN ROSE: I think -- there's a bit more scrutiny on you. Obviously the International players will be feeling that this time of year. The American players get it every single year. Yeah, if it's a Ryder Cup year, you feel like there's a little more scrutiny on your form.

If you're one of six picks remaining and you're trying to vie and try to impress the captain in the back of your mind, yes, that is a big part of your motivation. But I think non-Ryder Cup year, ultimately it's very clean. Mentally it's the FedExCup and that's all you're playing for.

In a Ryder Cup year, I think you're always trying to tell yourself it's just -- not just the FedExCup, but you're obviously only trying to focus on what you can control. You're never trying to make it bigger than it needs to be, but in reality, you always know the captain's going to be looking.

Yeah, you want to kind of keep your game looking sharp

and keep vying for the opportunity to play in the Ryder Cup. Yeah, this year I'm more than happy to have the freedom to just be focusing on what's important right now, which is these next three tournaments.

Q. Being a former champion here with the news that recently was released last week that this tournament is going to take a different shape in 2028, knowing the fact that you also love this charity and the giving of St. Jude, what are your thoughts on what the future of this tournament looks like?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, I'm coming to this news a little bit late. I feel like I've been on vacation mode. It's obviously a big shakeup on TOUR. We don't really know how that's going to feel in reality. There's obviously a lot of competition for the Champions Series and the Challenger Series.

This venue, this tournament obviously has grown in stature through the years. It used to be played in June around the U.S. Open time. Now it's obviously part of the FedExCup Playoffs. Given FedEx's huge support in the game of golf and for the game of golf, I think this tournament has found the stature that it deserves and the stature that FedEx deserves for this tournament as well.

Obviously the hospital and the kids that you meet this week is so heartwarming, there is definitely something special. It has a special feel. That's one of the golf courses I truly love on TOUR. It's one of those courses that the whole membership can play well on. I think East Lake is one and I think TPC Sawgrass is another one where it's a good venue for a big championship because it doesn't necessarily limit the amount of players that can win.

I'll always be a huge fan of it. Hopefully it can continue to have the support from the community and continue to do great things for the hospital. That's probably the most important thing that the support for the hospital remains and us players can continue to support that endeavor.

Q. Lastly, you've been a pro for many, many years now. I'm curious to know what is a must have you like to have in your bag for a tournament?

JUSTIN ROSE: For a tournament? Any must have? I try to stay away from superstitions. I tend to lose everything. So if I have a lucky ball marker, I'm like, oh, if it's that lucky, I'm going to lose it and freak out. So I try to keep it pretty chill.

That's a great question, man. Maybe I've been around too long. I've forgotten all the cool and special things that are in my golf bag. It all feels routine now. Listen, you need a

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putter that's in your golf bag and you believe in and you can trust. You need a club that you can rely on.

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