

# Genesis Scottish Open

Wednesday, 6 July, 2022

North Berwick, Scotland

The Renaissance Club

## Collin Morikawa

### Press Conference

CLARE BODEL: We welcome Collin Morikawa to the Genesis Scottish Open, reigning Open Champion. I'm sure you never get tired of hearing that. You played in Scotland here last year before heading down to Royal St. George's, and you said at the time there then that playing here really helped that you week. Do you feel it can do the same heading to St Andrews?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, especially with what I've heard. Obviously I just showed up last night after the JP McManus Pro-Am, which is amazing.

What I've heard about this course is it's firm, fast, new bunkering and it's going to be a lot tougher test apparently from what I've heard. I think that only is going to prep me even more. I've made the right adjustments club-wise hopefully from last year's experience and hopefully put that aside and just get ready to be creative and get ready to play some golf out here.

CLARE BODEL: And this is obviously the first tournament co-sanctioned between the PGA TOUR and the DP World Tour. You're the reigning European No. 1 as well as being a PGA TOUR member. How does it feel to be here with the two tours together here in Scotland?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: It's amazing. It's cool to see the two tours come together and make this alliance, especially with what Jay and Keith Pelley have reiterated over the past few weeks, it's cool seeing me be able to play both the DP World Tour and PGA TOUR and see people behind the scenes come together and put everything together to make it hopefully one of the best weeks we see all year.

I think it's going to be one of the best fields we're going to see other than the majors aside. That's what we are here for, to play against the best players in the world. When you see 14 of the 15 best players in the world that's what gets us excited. I know the fans are going to be great. They were great last year even in freezing cold, so I'm excited for the next two weeks.

**Q. You just mentioned merging with both tours, PGA**



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**TOUR and European Tour. Are you able to plan your future event, for example, coming to Europe to play European Tour events, DP World Tour events like you plan to play on PGA TOUR, or is it difficult?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Well, you know, the past two years, I've been a DP World Tour member and I have been able to plan out some events to come over here.

So yeah, I don't think anything has changed. I think obviously with the future announcements of how the PGA TOUR might kind of roll out and our season turning into possibly a January through August season, it could give me some more opportunities to play some other events out here.

Like I have the past few years, you know, that's what I've been doing. I've been planning out my schedule to say I'm going to play this event, this event. Earlier this year, I came out and played Abu Dhabi and Dubai. I don't see that changing for my reason as of now.

**Q. Looking back at this last year, how important was it to winning The Open playing here first?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I mean, I seriously owe everything to this week. I think the event before this for me last year was I think the U.S. Open at Torrey and my game felt has good as it had the entire year. I came over here and it was a little windy but nothing crazy and I was hitting 9-irons to edges of the greens, and it just wasn't acceptable.

You know, sometimes I'm right and sometimes I'm wrong. I always like to think I'm right but that's never the case, and I just kept complaining to J.J. that like my irons felt (off), I couldn't explain why, I just couldn't hit the ball in the center of the face.

Without this extra week of just prep here at Renaissance and playing here at The Scottish Open, I would never have thought about changing irons. So if I had just shown up to The Open Championship last year, it probably just would have been a repeat of what I saw last year during this event was hitting maybe fairways and then missing every green, which you know, is not the case for trying to win

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major championships.

**Q. There was talk at Brookline about playing the draw and relying on that. Where are you at now? Are we still playing it or are you back to the fade?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Fades are back. I think -- I'd like to say the fades are back because I am able to hit the cut shot again but over the last couple days, playing in Ireland and playing at Adare Manor, I actually worked the ball a lot more than I have probably, ever.

And I'm not saying I'm hooking the ball and slicing the ball but I'm just playing the right shots and the only time I've watched a couple guys do that is J.T. and Tiger. The few times I played with him -- I played with J.T. at THE PLAYERS when it was super windy, right. And to watch him play that, I think he was bogey-free, he had full control of his golf ball. He worked it both ways. And then the few times I played with Tiger, even though this is the older side and end side of Tiger's career, he worked the ball when he needed to, right. He played the right shots.

I think past two days, like I got in that mindset of like I'm just going to play the right shot and play the percentage shot. So it's cool of having control of the ball and being able to work it both ways, because out here, I think you're going to need it.

**Q. You talked about your scheduling there. How important is The Scottish Open ranked in your calendar year outside of majors?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: After last year, really high up. Why change it? And why try and change it up from what happened last year? I think it gave me good prep. It got me out to Europe. Obviously with the time difference, that's a big thing for us, just getting used to it. But it's also the different type of grass and different green speeds.

When you see a field like this, you want to be a part of it. I can't see why you wouldn't want to be a part of something like this. Any time you're playing a country's Open, I was playing with Bob MacIntyre last year, and the fans are crazy in a good way because they love the game but they appreciate just us coming out.

Any time you're able to be a part of that just enjoy the fans as much as they are enjoying you, you know it's going to be a good time. I knew I was playing this event early on, no matter this alliance or who was going to come; I was going to show up here. And yeah, you know, hopefully it's going to continue to keep getting better.

**Q. Before you had your bowl of cereal a fortnight ago,**

**put to bed rumours about LIV Golf. How frustrating was that at the time before you took that action and how important is that not to be a distraction leading into next week in particular?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, I mean, it's just funny that you can wake up one day and your life completely change. My life didn't change at all. I just woke up to people saying I was going somewhere when I obviously wasn't. So you had to shut it down.

I think we all listened to Billy Horschel and what he said yesterday. It is frustrating. Someone that's 25 years old, right, I've done this for three years. All I've dreamt about is the PGA TOUR, winning major, playing against the best in the world, being here together, yeah, it's annoying.

I'm at this point now -- and it's funny because we go back to my press conference at the U.S. Open, and simply because I reiterated what Brooks had said that it was frustrating, that made it seem as if I was going to LIV.

Now if someone says it's frustrating and they compare it to Billy Horschel, does that mean they are all staying on the PGA TOUR? It's funny because we all have our opinions, right, and we all have what we want to say but all want to do is focus on each week and focus on the tournaments. So that's why I said it at the U.S. Open because we are here at Brookline because there's a lot of history and I don't care about anything else.

Same thing this week. I have already shut it own. I shouldn't have to worry about it. You guys shouldn't have to worry about it. Let it go. You know, we are here with an amazing field, 14 of the 15 best players in the world; that should be a story line.

And then for next week, I could say a mouthful of me being defending champion, 150th Open, at St Andrews. Tiger Woods is playing again. I mean, does it get better than that? It's tough. It's tough to beat that.

**Q. Tiger mentioned at Adare Manor that he's curious to see guys play links golf in terms of trajectory and he doesn't feel like the way the modern ball goes, guys will try to flight the ball more. Is that something you are working on trying to get the ball down lower this week just with a day like today?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Absolutely. I think you have to flight the ball. If you think you can hit it like that and get away with 25-mile-per-hour winds from past experience, I don't think it's possible.

But you know what, I'm really happy today it's blowing 25,



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30 miles per hour because that's probably the most amount -- I'm not going to say -- that's on the top end of a lot of wind that we're going to probably see over the next two weeks which is good. That's the prep you want.

It sucks when you have zero wind in practise rounds and then you show up to the tournament and it's gusting. But it's only going to get you ready.

I think for me at this point, having been in Europe for a few days, a handful of days now, it's just to come over here and play golf. I think that's what I've learned and I think that's what Jordan said last year at The Open in his presser is you have to be creative. You have to forget about what angles and what trajectories, and all the numbers go out the window when you play out here when it's that windy. You have to learn how to play golf, hit different shots, high, low, left right.

So I'm really happy to go out there and play in the Pro-Am later this evening to kind of figure out what I need to work on to get the ball doing what I want. That's the biggest thing is kind of match what you're seeing.

**Q. On to more serious matter, Justin Thomas was talking about taking part in the Slime Cup when he was in earlier. You were, too. How did you enjoy that one?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Oh, hated lose to go J.T. in the Slime Cup. Look, it was so much fun to get a group of not just golfers but celebrities and other athletes do that. It was in a place that I actually grew up playing golf. We were there at Brookside Golf Course right at the Rose Bowl right where I grew up five minutes from my house. Never in a million years would I have thought that's where I would be playing golf in a Ninja Turtle outfit and getting slimed on.

But it was so much fun. I think we all had a great time. It was something that I heard a lot of parents that I've grown up with that have other younger kids that enjoyed it; those are the texts that we like to see. Those are the texts that -- the kids, maybe that's what gets them interested because we were wearing mitts and couldn't hit a golf ball because -- didn't look like golf. All the thoughts about what golf is can always be changed, and hopefully that's one way kid get introduced to the game.

**Q. We've heard a lot from LIV players, particularly, about growing the game. Do you see that as an entry-level --**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Are you talking about the Slime Cup?

**Q. Yeah, stuff like that. Stuff that's a lot more fun that**

**kids would be drawn to.**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Look, as a kid, I didn't like watching golf. I mean, you know, see a couple shots and it just is whatever. But if you see us getting slimed and running down the fairways and popping the golf cart, driving around cones and seeing pizza, it goes on, right. I think Jon Rahm was in a SpongeBob outfit. Me and Terry Cruz were in a Ninja Turtle costume.

That's what draws kids, as an eight-year-old or say, five-year-old, like that's what would draw me in to be like, oh, this is a cartoon, kind of, what are they doing, right, what's that. And their parents might tell them, oh, that's golf.

So maybe they bring them to the driving range or maybe they hit a couple balls and try to do what we did, not in a costume hopefully, but try to hit the ball as far as they can. I think that's what's cool and how you can get them involved and give them opportunities and give them another outlet rather than say hey, here is our junior camp, rather than go play this when it's a hundred degrees when they would rather be with friends. It's a different visual and that's the biggest thing is that that was so different for a lot of people and a lot of kids and a lot of parents and families that I think it was amazing for everyone to go out and watch.

**Q. How bad a look is it for the game that someone like Ian Poulter, Ryder Cup hero, playing here, and the comments from Billy yesterday?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Like I said earlier, there's 14 of the best 15 players. You guys write the stories, every one of you guys here, right, and you guys can write the stories about anyone else. We hear a lot of stories about players that are here that come to these press conferences but you guys maybe don't write stories about other people that are interesting.

Every single player out here, like Billy said, every single player, every single member on the PGA TOUR and every single member on the DP World Tour has a story and sometimes guys don't want to share their story but sometimes they do. I think it's your guys' job to go out and find these stories that are interesting that might bring in -- obviously we are in Scotland so you guys might write about Scottish players. But when we're at other events, find things guys might have ties to.

When it comes to talking about Ian Poulter, I think we have many other stories we can talk about, right. There's a handful of players that are coming from LIV that are playing this week, but I don't think that should be our focus.

I mean, I'm sure Robert MacIntyre is going to be a very big story this week. But there are a lot of other guys, not just ourselves, like yes we get a lot of the attention, sitting up here playing well in the world but who knows a guy, number 30 in the world might not be one of the best stories we've never heard of because he hasn't shared that or had that opportunity to share. Yeah, there's that.

**Q. When Keith Pelley and Jay Monahan announced the strategic alliance between the two tours, I don't know how much you know about this, but can you tell me what you see as a benefit for a PGA TOUR member about to this new alliance?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I think I can talk to this as a dual member, right. I think we always talk about opportunities, right. And the more opportunities, the better. I think if you look at the past and you look at previous players playing on The European Tour, there was no really direct way to get to the PGA TOUR.

And if you look at what the DP Tour represents, I mean, I get it. We grew up in the US, and you sometimes think in a bubble and this is everything, right. This is what we have right here in the United States, and you get a few international players.

When I first was coming over here and playing what was then The European Tour, you see the quality of golf and you see the quality of players. And I mean, I'm not saying, you know, might not be the depth of what we have on the PGA TOUR, but some of the guys up there, you say, yeah, these guys could definitely play on the PGA TOUR. But they have kind of been stuck maybe on this one little route on the DP World Tour that they just couldn't get out of, right. And the only other way was to keep winning multiple times, get to the Top-50 and get to the WGCs, which are really no longer a thing other than the Match Play event and I guess China, and then playing in the majors and having to play well there, right.

When you look at this alliance, it gives opportunities around the world, and I think as the PGA TOUR, that's what we want to do. We want to have the best players around the world, not just the best players out of the United States.

**Q. So just to follow up, basically from a PGA TOUR standpoint, only, the fact that you'll be able to have better players coming into the Tour from all over the world is the benefit, or is there another benefit that you can see?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I mean, I haven't really given it

enough thought. I mean, you know, I can't speak on -- I'm not a -- I guess we are the PGA TOUR, what Billy said, "I am the PGA TOUR."

Look, I haven't given it enough thought. That's my first initial thought of, like, we all keep talking about, we do want to play against the best players in the world, and when you have a field that is able to be put together of the best players in the world, we love being there, right. So if it gives a couple more guys an opportunity to create their name and create their story on going up the World Rankings so be it, right.

One, I think it reallocates everything. At the end of the day, I just want to see the best players in the world. That's where I want to be.

**Q. When you were playing college golf, the dream was always to get on the PGA TOUR and win titles and hopefully a bit of money, too. I'm not going to ask you why some others have done that, but if you had been in college right now, and this kind of a thing came, because it wasn't too far back, what would you have done? Would you have sacrificed the PGA TOUR dream, something that you grew up with as a kid and through college, and say, okay, I'm getting tons of money there, but I'll get to a major. I know it a hypothetical question. If you were faced with such a dilemma, what would you have done?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Oh, man, I love hypotheticals (laughter). Don't we all. What if this, what if that.

I would have stayed on the PGA TOUR. Look, I can't give you a certain answer but that's my gut answer and that's what I just said right now.

I went to school for four years and I got my degree, not because my parents forced me but because academics were important, right. I went to U.C. Berkeley, one of the best colleges around the world, public Universities, especially, and grinded it out. Wasn't easy. Got my business degree. I lost in a Korn Ferry playoff between my freshman and sophomore year. Felt I was good enough after my freshman, sophomore year. Maybe I wasn't Tiger, Jordan Spieth, these guys that made waves but I feel like my game was good enough and consistent enough to come out here.

From a very early age, because some person did this or some person did that, didn't mean I was going to do it. Like college, I had my sights set on the PGA TOUR. I had my sights set on my degree and getting it and accomplishing it for myself.

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At the end of the day, I wanted to go out there and I was preparing in college to play on the PGA TOUR. I get it. Things can change and I get there are other, we'll call it opportunities or other influences out there in the world that give you some other route to go.

But I think where I was at in college, I was going to be financially okay with where I was going to be. And shoot, I just wanted to win whatever that first tournament was going to be, which happened to be, you know, RBC Canadian Open that summer, so yeah.

**Q. Do you feel more complete?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: You're asking me a hypothetical?

**Q. Now it's a reality. Are you feeling more complete now that you've done what you wanted to?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I've only checked off a little skim of what I wanted to do. We're only three years in.

**Q. Just on the back of Alex's question with your sort of special theme going at the moment, how special would it be for a rank-and-file European Tour player to be presented with their PGA TOUR card Sunday night?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: When I won my first event, even though I earned my card for the next year, the emotions are amazing.

I think, maybe I've read it, maybe I've heard it, I don't know what everyone's goals are in life, right. Maybe for some European Tour players, it's to make it to the PGA TOUR. The United States is a long ways away. I know that from five days ago when sleeping is hard. Eight-hour time difference is not the easiest thing, and I get it, people have families.

So for some, he know a lot of the younger guys, I think would be ecstatic about it. Some of the other guys, maybe they would want to, maybe it's a trial period to see what they want to do. Everyone's got different goals in life. Everyone's got different priorities.

I think at the end of the day the PGA TOUR is the pinnacle of golf and it always has been. And to know that you have at least gotten there, maybe, for a DP World Tour player to get there, knowing that, you know, at the end of the day when they tell their grand kids, I had my card, it would be a really cool little piece of history to tell that. So I think for anyone, it would be very special.

**Q. The No. 1 question, about being the No. 1, that is, you came so close to it, a few holes away being the**

**world No. 1. How frustrating was it that you couldn't do that, and how much motivation does that give you now?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, I think that might have played a factor in how I was performing beginning of the year. All I cared about -- not all I cared about, that's a lie. What I cared about was trying to get to No. 1 in the world.

I've heard players talk about this and I've paid attention to it, and where I'm at now, Scottie has built a gap between us and I just want to get back in the winner's circle. That's what it was like since I've turned pro and it hasn't changed but when you know you're on the grass or when you're on the cusp of something and you're so close to that, sometimes that kind of jumps precedent to what you really need to focus on, right. And I was so focused on hitting that perfect cut and hitting these perfect shots that I knew could get me to No. 1 in the world that it kind of took over rather than me just playing golf.

Unfortunately it didn't hit me until, you know, a few weeks ago at the U.S. Open where I said, screw it, let's just go play golf. That's what I did. The amount of college, like, swing videos I watched were endless and I think it didn't just show me, you know, how I swung it back in college because, yeah, maybe I want to swing it like that.

But it made me get back to that mentality of like, I want to be here and I want to compete against these guys and I want to beat every single one. Doesn't matter what I'm ranked in the world. When I was 1,000 in the world coming out here, I still believed that I could be No. 1 and I still believed that I could beat all these guys. I think when I put my head to that and put my mindset to that point, I'm like, okay, we're just here to play golf. We're here to enjoy it and we're here to win.

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