

U.S. Open Championship 2021

Tuesday, June 15, 2021

San Diego, California, USA

Torrey Pines Golf Course

Justin Thomas

Flash Interview



THE MODERATOR: Good morning, everyone. We are here with World No. 2 Justin Thomas. Justin, talk a little about the state of your game heading into a major week.

JUSTIN THOMAS: It's improving. I've been working harder than I ever have. Really just been trying to just equate some results with how I feel like I've been close to playing. I clearly haven't been playing well and consistent, but I definitely have been playing better than the results have shown, and I think a lot of that is just fighting some things here and there in my golf swing and in my putting that are coming up time to time, but a lot of it is just mental, as well, and being a little bit nicer and easier on myself.

That's something I definitely have worked on and will need to execute at a week like here in a U.S. Open.

Q. You guys see this course every year. How is it looking this week in obviously a very different time of year?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, I don't play in the Farmers just because of scheduling. It doesn't really work out well. I'd love to. I even said yesterday that I don't know why I don't come play this event because I do love the South Course, but it is, it's so different. It's very similar to Pebble, what, a couple years ago that you can't come play it in February and then compare it to how it is in the summer. It's a totally different golf course.

It's all right in front of you. Nothing's hidden. You just have to go out and play well and really manage your game, and like any U.S. Open or any major, you need to make those par putts and saves to kind of keep the momentum going.

Q. Tiger has said of U.S. Open preparation, how do you prepare to get punched in the face? You just don't. When you're as feisty a competitor as you are, how do you make sure that inner fire fuels you rather than burns you in a championship that can be this grueling?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I think a lot of it is in these preparation days. I try to make them as easy on myself as possible.

There's clearly things that I want to work on in my game. I want to make sure everything's perfect, but something I've learned is that it doesn't matter what kind of state my game is in; if I'm not mentally there or mentally fresh and ready, it really doesn't matter.

Like a day like yesterday, I came out and played 18 holes, and I played well; everything felt good, my swing was good, and putting and chipping felt good, so I just left when I got done. Whereas if I need to do a little bit of work, I may just try to turn a 45-minute session into 25 or 30, and same with a range session or putting session, and just minimizing the hours spent out here and maximizing the hours spent at home resting and getting my mind where it needs to be, to when I tee it up on Thursday, it's something that I just have tried to implement over the years.

Q. What do you make of Tiger's win here at Torrey in 2008 after facing such adversity?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, I watched it. It was on last week. I still, I don't know how he won. He had no business winning that tournament. Rocco played better than he did. He just hit some key drives when he needed to or just little things here and there, but just kept making those putts. That's what you do to win U.S. Opens.

I think it was something that I did not remember. I remembered a majority, if not all, the shots that I was watching, but I just didn't remember the amount of four- and five-footers he made that really seemed to be irrelevant in the telecast, like they weren't really talking about that much, but he made one on 16 on Sunday that he chipped past the hole, and it was about five feet, and he made it. That's one, if he misses that, the tournament's over. Then same thing with 15 on Monday and then 16 on Monday. It just was so many little putts.

Everyone always talks about the one on 13 and 18 on Saturday and the one on 18 on Sunday, but that was something that stuck out to me.

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