

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
July 31, 2018

HIDEKI MATSUYAMA



DOUG MILNE: I would like to welcome Hideki Matsuyama, defending champion of the World Golf Championships-Bridgestone Invitational, to the interview room. Thanks for joining us for a few minutes. Hideki, if we can just take you back to last year's final round, an incredible 9-under 61 with birdies on the last three holes to get the job done, if you can just reflect on the final round from last year.

HIDEKI MATSUYAMA: Yeah, last year, a lot of good memories, especially that last round, 9-under 61 and tied the course record, I think. For me, it was a perfect round of golf and happy to be back and looking forward to defending.

DOUG MILNE: And if we can just fast forward to this season, so far you're coming into the week with top-20 finishes in three of your last four starts. If you could just comment on what's going well with your game right now.

HIDEKI MATSUYAMA: Yeah, I started out the new season and I really haven't played that well. I've been grinding and practicing hard. Hopefully, this will be a week that I can catch the magic again and play well.

Q. Just was wondering how much you're looking at your FedExCup number and how much you're thinking about the Playoffs because we're getting very close to that time.

HIDEKI MATSUYAMA: Yeah, I have been watching my place in the FedEx and I have some work to do. I've never been in this position before and so I'm going to have to be -- I'll have to get on my game and play well these last couple of weeks. Hopefully, carry through to the TOUR Championship. But again, I've got a lot of work to do.

Q. When you break down your game, do you feel like you're putting better the last -- Doug mentioned that you played a little bit better lately. Are you putting better lately, or where are you with your game from tee to green?

HIDEKI MATSUYAMA: My game has always been hit quality shots, and if I'm putting well, then I score well. This year's been a struggle. My tee to green hasn't been as good as it has been, but I've been working hard on all aspects of my game, including putting. Kind of that's where I'm at right now is working hard, especially tee to green.

Q. How superstitious are you? Some players, if they've won the previous year, will stay in the same hotel, they will eat at the same restaurants, they will practice at the same time. Are you trying to do everything the same as last year?

HIDEKI MATSUYAMA: I'm probably like everybody else. When you have success, you try to do the same things, it's just who we are. Putting, I used a different putter last year. I'm not sure if I'm going to use that same putter again or not. Restaurants, there's a few restaurants that we always go to, so I'm usually in the same pattern anyway when I come to Akron.

Q. I was struck to see that in your previous five appearances here, your win last year was your only top-10 in this event. What is it about this layout that made it so tough heading into last year?

HIDEKI MATSUYAMA: Probably the most difficult part of the golf course is it's a long course and you have to put your drive and tee shot in the fairway. If you're in the rough, it's difficult to hit the greens, to hold the greens. And so the combination of the two, for me it makes it a difficult course to play.

Q. Is there a moment from last year that you maybe think about often or use to motivate yourself or anything like that?

HIDEKI MATSUYAMA: Anytime you win, there's a lot of good memories and the confidence builds, and I haven't been able to win since last year. So I'm hoping those good memories, those good feelings will return and be able to play well this week and hopefully defend well.

DOUG MILNE: Guys, thank you for coming in. Best of luck to you this week.

HIDEKI MATSUYAMA: Thank you.