

ROUND 2 INTERVIEW
February 16, 2019

JUSTIN THOMAS (-11)



Q. After such an exceptional Friday, do you feel like you carried some of that momentum into this morning?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Well, I didn't make any bogeys and I managed it pretty well for not being able to feel my toes and fingers there for a little bit. That was probably the coldest I've been on a golf course in a while. Obviously I didn't play last week, so I didn't experience that. I think it was like 43, 45 degrees or something like that when we were starting out, and before that sun came up in that shade, it was pretty chilly.

Yeah, I mean obviously could have made a couple birdies, but hitting 3-iron on one hole, hit another wood into a par 4 and hit a 5-iron and a 6-iron, so it's not like I had too many birdie chances.

Q. As you go through your bag, what do you feel like you're doing exceptionally well the last few days?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Well, I've just hit it well. I haven't driven it very well, which is pleasing, I would say, to score this well and really I feel like driving it poorly. But I'm not hitting it out of play, I'm just not hitting it solid and kind of hitting it in the rough, and there's usually not a lot of rough here where I can kind of get around the green and make par.

But I'm putting well. I've made a lot of those putts I need to and I've kind of made a couple of those longer range putts each day that can either help build momentum or kind of continue momentum. Yeah, I would say those two have been a big impact.

Q. It's going to be a disjointed weekend, a little unnatural for you on the PGA TOUR. Does that change your philosophy or strategy heading into the next two rounds?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Not really. I mean, tomorrow's going to be a marathon, it's going to be a long, long day. Hopefully the training and everything we do at home will come in handy on a day like tomorrow and stay energized in keeping the energy levels high. I'm just going to go get some rest and take it easy. I'll probably end up playing one or two holes today. The weather obviously looks pretty perfect now, so those guys aren't going to have to deal with any delays. Yeah, just go home and rest and see what we can do tomorrow.

Q. Justin, over the last couple days it's been all sorts of different things, delays. (Inaudible)

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, absolutely. I've hit the ball with my irons beautifully and putted

really well. I would say that's the biggest reason or the reason why I am where I am. I feel like I haven't driven it very well, which is quite -- I feel like gives me a bit of confidence, the fact that I've scored so well without driving it well. Just try to get that tidied up for I would say the weekend, but for tomorrow. Just kind of get ready for a long day.

Q. Possibly even later on this afternoon a little bit of golf. You played superbly in tough conditions late yesterday afternoon and then you had to come back this morning. It was quite cool out there?

JUSTIN THOMAS: It was. I couldn't feel my toes, and my fingers were cold. It just was -- it's tough to swing because you obviously can't have that many layers on and swing at the same time. I didn't play last week, so I didn't experience that cold. In that shade, it was really, really chilly.

Q. One birdie this morning, but undoubtedly the highlight was the predicament that you found yourself in on the 6th hole. Talk us through decisions that you had to make, the options you had.

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah. Just after a pretty God-awful tee shot there, I was trying to hit a little cut 6-iron and double crossed it. It was weird because there's so many different ways to play it. I felt like if I putted it kind of around the bunker, it was going to go left once it got around the bunker, and then if it got low -- I mean, I could have putted it to within about eight feet I would say every time. And then chipping on that slope I felt like wasn't the best choice because if I would have gotten it in basically like the size of a dinner plate is what I had to work with. A little bit right of that, it would have gone front of the green, and if it would have been left of that, would have just come back at me. So it would have had to have been perfect. I can only do that with the greens firm. They're so soft right now. It's like chipping into a bunker, it's going to pretty much just stick right where it lands. Sitting tied, the main thing is just get solid contact.

Q. (No microphone.)

JUSTIN THOMAS: Probably the last time I hit a bad shot and put myself in a predicament like that.

Q. So last year was a little different than this year playing with Tiger Woods.

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah.

Q. How are you playing this year after compared to last year?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I mean, I played fine last year, I'm just playing better this year. It's not -- it has nothing to do I feel like with how I handled it, or I don't feel any different. I'm just playing a little bit better this time than I was last year.

Q. We didn't get a chance to talk to you yesterday. Considering the conditions, how do you rank 14 birdies over those two and a half rounds?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Up there, especially since with past results I haven't played the best in those kind of conditions. So that gives me a little confidence going into The Open this year because I haven't exactly had the best record there.

It was hard, man. It was cold, it just was -- it was never consistent I think is what the hard part was. It would just rain and then it would kind of stop, and then it would mist and then it would rain, and then it would get warm and then get cold. So it's like you just had to play -- you had to approach the greens differently because when they were wet, they were skidding, and then when it would stop raining, they were sponges again. So it just was really a lot of adjusting and we did a great job. I mean, emotionally and mentally I stayed just very, very even keeled. It helps that I was playing well obviously, but it was a very long, gruelling day and I slept pretty well last night.

Q. Talk about the inconsistencies with how the greens were receiving the balls with yardages yesterday toward the end of the round, drivers were carrying like 250, 260. How much of that is a guessing game or how do you go about doing the math, trying to figure out your yardages?

JUSTIN THOMAS: It's definitely a lot of guessing, especially how I've really driven it pretty poorly these two rounds. It's just, it is a bit of a guess. You kind of have an idea, it goes quite a bit shorter. Fortunately out here I feel like it's either long iron or really short iron. You don't have a lot of 8-irons or 7-irons. It's kind of like a 5-iron, try to hit the green, or you have a wedge and you're trying to make birdie.

I feel good over the ball, I've been hitting it well and feel like we had a good rhythm. We know when it's cold it's not going to go as far. When we're into the wind, it's really, really going to go short. And when it's cold and it's downwind, it about evens out. At that point it's just about hitting your number and trying to judge the spin.

Q. Conditions will be completely different for your third round. Will your game plan change completely?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Well, not for my third round, I don't get to play today. These guys are going to have a nice day for their second round, but I'll probably get a couple holes in and then just prepare for a long day tomorrow.

Q. Going back to yesterday with the shot on 9, I think it was a hybrid?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, it was my third wood into a par 4. I can't tell you the last -- I was probably 11 the last time I did that.

Q. Your dad used to ask you how many?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, exactly. I hit three 5-woods into par 4s in the second round.

Q. (No microphone.)

JUSTIN THOMAS: This morning?

Q. No, yesterday. I think you hit 5-wood --

JUSTIN THOMAS: Oh, on 2 you mean? Yeah, that was ridiculous. That was probably when it was raining the hardest so I couldn't really see. Tiger and I were joking about that this morning, that's not a green for a wood. It's meant for -- I think it's a par 5 for normal -- I don't know. I couldn't see it, so I just kind of hit it and I ran under the umbrella. We kind of heard some clapping and he was like, where is it? I was like, I don't know but they're clapping, so just give me the umbrella and we'll go up there and see where it was. That was basically like an eagle, that was a steal.

Q. Knowing you'll only play a couple holes this afternoon, will you go through a full warm-up or shorten it a little bit?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, I'm just going to go get some rest and more importantly just kind of relax. Watch some TV, go get some food, probably get a workout in. Yeah, whenever it's my time to play I will go through (inaudible).

Q. The shot on 6, you said you were pretty even keeled out there and your reaction was pretty (inaudible.) Is that because it was so cold, because that shot looked pretty extraordinary, the chip shot?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, there's a lot of different ways to play it. I think the conditions that the course is in right now made that -- it was still a difficult shot. I mean, if the greens were normal, I never could have taken -- or I wouldn't have been able to take that route as easily. I would have had to hit it perfect with a lot more spin. But the greens are so soft right now and that's why I think you're going to see some pretty low scores today with no wind and perfect sunshine and soft greens. It's all about controlling your spin and hitting your numbers. Yeah, I never thought that I would miss it to that back left tier to that. That was quite a bizarre shot. Yeah, to walk out of there with par, it was pretty nice.

Q. Have you ever been on the wrong side of the bunker before?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I have. I've hit it down there right to the back left, which I think -- I would think happens more frequently than the other way around. That was a pretty bad shot.