

**ROUND 4 INTERVIEW**  
**February 28, 2021**



**COLLIN MORIKAWA (-18)**

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**MICHAEL BALIKER:** Like to welcome Collin Morikawa, champion of the WGC-Workday Championship at The Concession.

Collin, your fourth PGA TOUR victory, first WGC victory. This is the first time you slept on a 54-hole lead and going on to win. Just kind of talk about how big that was to get that as a badge of honor, for you to get it done.

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** Oh, man. It's so huge. No matter what anyone says, sleeping on a lead has its pressure, has its nerves. But I was excited to get back in contention, to have a chance to win. It's something that I miss. Obviously I haven't had it for a while, but this is what we love to do, we love to win.

It's a tough thing out here, but this tournament means so much. With how good the field was, how good my game felt, to close it out like this, with such a stacked leaderboard coming after me, really means a lot.

**Q. Collin, congratulations on your big win. Walking with you on the back nine, that looked from the outside like one of the most comfortable victories I've ever seen out here. I'm sure you're going to correct me, but right down to your playing partner, who was so pleasant and nice the whole time, seemed like a pleasant walk through the afternoon. What was it like on the inside?**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** It's never comfortable. You want to get as comfortable as you can. But J.J. and I and my coach, Rick, we have this formula, just how to get ready, how to focus for these shots and these moments. There's a lot of pressure, a lot at stake heading into those last nine holes knowing where you sit.

If you look back at my third round, it wasn't the finish we wanted. I couldn't have had that today, I needed to stay focused, I needed to stay committed to these shots, and J.J. just kept me in the moment. We just kept going on shot after shot, giving myself some good looks at birdie. And overall we were just able to kind of wear out the field. Guys weren't making too many birdies coming down the stretch.

**Q. And you mentioned J.J. You seem to have a really perfect relationship with him. You like to talk, it seems like, and you guys have a good thing going there. You seem very much on the same wavelength, the same rhythms?**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** Yeah, you have to be. I got super lucky having him as a caddie, especially just starting off as a professional, to really get such a good guy. And he's

learning, he's getting better. We're doing it at the same pace, just trying to figure out how do we work well together and mesh well. You look at all the guys that win every single week, they have to work really well with their caddies. It's a tough thing to find, but I've been very, very lucky to have him on the bag.

**Q. Collin, congrats. You mentioned it was your first time in a while feeling the heat. Just curious, was there any sense of complacency after the PGA win, and if so, how did you get over it?**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** Yeah, there definitely was. It wasn't like, oh, man, I should be winning every single week, but it just almost in that kind of fall portion, it was like, oh, I should be playing good golf, or on my bad days I should still be contending. It's not the case. These guys are way too good. And I know that. When I sat down after my last event on the Tour, which was the Masters, or even right before the Masters, I sat down with Rick, my coach, and I said, you know -- I told him the honest truth, that this is just -- you know, I got complacent. I was getting lazy. I was getting a sense of where I didn't want to just be the best every single week. And that doesn't mean I wasn't practicing right or it doesn't mean all this, it was just a mental state of, you know, coming out, being ready to play great golf Thursday through Sunday.

So I kind of reset that before the Masters, I was able to work on that throughout December, a couple times on that European Tour. By the time this year started, my game felt really, really good, I just need to put four good rounds together.

**Q. What was the wake-up call?**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** Missing a couple cuts, missing the U.S. Open cut, missing Shriners cut. Even though I know the scores were really low, I don't want to miss cuts. It's just not fun. We like to play weekends, no matter what. You look at last week, right? I was grinding to make the cut, and that meant a lot. You could still backdoor top-10 making -- barely making it on the number some weeks. Yeah, I like playing four days, not two.

**Q. Collin, well done there today. Such a big par putt on 11. I'm just curious, you mentioned a stacked leaderboard coming after you, what kind of sense you had of it. Because the birdie putt on 12 was so big, and I wonder if you can talk about that stretch. And also what was it about the shot on 12 that made you go with a fairway metal instead of anything else?**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** Yeah, huge putts on 11 and 12. Those were ones that really gave me slight separation. I knew there were two par 5s for like Brooks, I think I saw Viktor and Scottie Scheffler up there. I knew 17 you could definitely make eagle. But the par putt on 11 was huge. And I kind of talked back and forth with J.J. about what the play was. At first I wanted to hit a wedge, and we've been practicing this 5-wood kind of bump and run, almost this putt, forever. Ever since I put in a hybrid in 2020 at Phoenix, I've worked on this shot. And I hadn't used it all week, and this was a perfect time to use it. Hit it a little hard, but that

putt -- at that point I knew I could make a lot of putts out here if I just kept giving myself chances.

Twelve was kind of perfect. He mentioned bringing up an iron, and I never saw laying up. I always thought it was going to be driver. If we got a little more wind, it was going to be 3-wood. But talk about another perfect just somewhat drivable par 4 for me to hit a nice little cut. This one was not as good obviously. I pretty much heeled it with the club. Was able to make that putt. And from there on, just keep putting the pressure on. Yes, I wanted two more birdies coming down the stretch, but guys weren't really making birdies, so it wasn't forcing me to keep up with their pace as well.

**Q. I'm sorry to hear about your grandfather. You've always talked so much about how close your family is. Which side was your grandfather, and what's his name, if you don't mind?**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** It's my dad's side. His name was Toshio, T-O-S-H-I-O. He's been living with my parents for quite a while now. He lives in our back guesthouse. He would always come over to see us and have dinner with us every night when we were home. We were close. We weren't the closest, but he still means a lot.

**Q. Collin, just to make sure, did you have clothing being shipped in? And what were you going to wear?**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** Yeah. So Adidas was supposed to send -- or they did send red shirts. They're not at fault. With all the weather stuff and everything, I think it got stuck in Memphis. I was literally -- we got the tracking number, I was checking it last night, I was checking it this morning. J.J. even went down to the distribution center, because actually before all this stuff happened with Tiger, I was going to wear yesterday's outfit for today. But after we found out some guys wanted to wear red, I wanted to wear red, I had these black pants, worked out perfect. You know, my agent said even though the shirt wasn't there, go out and play like Tiger would with the lead. I think I did.

**Q. Yesterday you called -- yesterday you called the 13th hole stupidity at its finest, as you played it. You had a little bit of an adventure there on that hole today, but how would you term it then, today as opposed to yesterday?**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** Yeah, today was just a bad putt. The reason I said that yesterday was because I psyched myself out before I even played the hole. And that's what I think I did really well today with hole 7. You look at that pin location on 7, very similar with bowled off greens running away from you all around, except one little entry point. I didn't want to do that again. And that was a mistake. That's something I learned from yesterday. With that pin where it was, I hit a great 5-iron and just hit my putt way too hard. Like sometimes you're going to have bad speed and it happened to be that putt. But thankfully that was an eagle putt and I had a birdie putt. Still hit a good birdie putt, just missed. I knew we had the lead still, I still had to hit quality shots, and especially 14, 15, 16. They're not easy holes. So

I just wanted to keep hitting good shots where we were aiming.

**Q. Collin, the week before Riviera when you were practicing at home, where was your concern level with your putting at that point?**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** I'm always concerned about my putting, I'll be honest. I think I always have. But that's because I've never felt comfortable. I've never felt comfortable. And you guys have all seen it. We all know, just to be able to stroke the putter.

So this happened the Thursday right before I left for Riviera, and I left on a Saturday to go to my parents' house, work with Rick for a few days, but this happened on Thursday. I played a round with some guys on Thursday, and just out of the blue I heard about Mark O'Meara using this saw grip about two days before. And out of the blue for 18 holes at TPC Summerlin, I was like, let's give it a shot. And I made nothing. Like I made zero putts. But for some reason, I couldn't sleep. And that's never happened to me. I've never thought about putting or golf this much in my life, because it felt so good. It just felt so different on how I was putting that I knew I was heading down the right path.

So I saw Mark on Friday, I believe, at Summit, where I practice in Vegas, and just asked him for 10 minutes. And we were talking for maybe an hour. He wasn't giving me tips on how to do it, I was just asking him what he does and why he switched. I was still very hesitant.

Yes, the putting stats were pretty bad at Riviera, but it's because my chipping was also really bad and I was giving myself 6- to 8-footers. And I think I missed like 10 putts from inside 10 feet. And those are all pretty much 6- to 10-footers. But talk about rolling it online and feeling comfortable, downhill, uphill, side hill, I knew I was heading down the right path. That's why I'm so excited about this, because, yes, I'm going to have bad putting weeks here and there, but overall I feel way more confident especially like on a putt like on 18, just to really roll the putter and get it rolling down the line.

**Q. I think at the PGA you were first in putting and first approaching the greens. Why do you feel more confident I guess that this is the solution that you should take moving forward?**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** Well, because yes, I've played well, I've putted well in tournaments, and I've won, but it wasn't as consistent as I wanted. Some weeks were really good and then some weeks were just awful. And now I feel confident I can take the stroke out of play and I can just really focus on speed, I can focus on the line, how do I get that ball to fall in the hole where I want it. Where before I even noticed now how I'm aiming, before it was almost like a left to right putt. I would aim a little farther left. And I caught myself last week trying to aim farther left because I'd almost shove it, and I would jab at it. But if I look at all my putts I've hit over the past two weeks, I don't think I've had one of those. And that's what's really exciting for me.

**Q. Collin, on the mention of Tiger, he was always so brilliant on Sunday having the**

**lead and basically not doing anything that brought him back, everyone had to come catch him. The way you were especially in control of your driver today, but mostly your iron play, do you feel confident you can pull that off in those situations because of your game?**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** Yeah. I mean, I wouldn't be here if I don't. But yeah, absolutely for the future, I think my iron play saved me a lot. It's what got me out here, it's what I'm going to keep getting better at, keep working on, because that's the foundation of my game; hitting tight iron shots, sticking them at the pins, going right at flags when I'm feeling good and I have a good number. That's what kind of keeps it there. And I don't feel anything -- I don't feel weird here or there if it's late on a Sunday or early on a Thursday, I just feel as confident as I ever would. Yeah, I do feel confident. And this really solidifies and makes me a little more comfortable after sleeping on the lead knowing that guys were ready to go low today.

**Q. Collin, I kind of wanted to ask about the putting and Mark O'Meara as well, but do you remember, did you have a relationship with Mark O'Meara prior to this? Because he was kind of the big brother to Tiger when Tiger first came out on Tour.**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** Yeah, no, not a great relationship, but I saw him a bunch at Summit in Vegas and we've been able to talk a lot here and there, small talk, just talking about little things. It was never about golf, it was really never about golf.

So when I saw him do that and then I went to go try it, you know, it's just like everyone else how they're trying to hit the ball farther or hit the ball straighter, they're trying new things on how to get better and that's what I needed to do. I needed a full reset, I needed to figure out what was going to be a solution and it just feels awesome.

**Q. And what do you remember from the first time you met Tiger?**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** First time I met Tiger was in the locker room at ZOZO in Japan. We have the same agency, Mark Steinberg was there and I met him for the quickest like 20 seconds just to say hi.

Then I obviously got to play with him at Torrey Pines, but I remember -- we have these TaylorMade shoot days where we get all the media stuff and that's where I really just got to meet him, talk to him, like just get to know him for a person.

Yes, he's Tiger Woods, but to just talk about anything other than golf, those were some of the coolest moments at those TaylorMade shoots that I've done the past two years now.

**MICHAEL BALIKER:** Collin, congratulations and we'll see you down the road at THE PLAYERS.

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** Awesome. Thank you, guys.