

**PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW**  
**12 October 2022**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA**



---

**LAURA VESCOVI:** We would to welcome Collin Morikawa to the media center for the 2022 ZOZO Championship.

Collin, this is your fourth experience in the ZOZO Championship highlighted by a T-7 finish in 2021. Can you just share some opening thoughts about returning to this event?

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** Yeah, it's always good to be back. I love coming out to the country of Japan and I love playing in front of the Japanese fans. They're some of the best people to have cheer on for you. I think they line the fairways and there's nothing like the first hole out here at the ZOZO Championship.

I look forward to starting off my year and this season on a good note hopefully, just kind of get things rolling, but it's always nice to be back in Japan and I feel pretty comfortable with this place.

**LAURA VESCOVI:** Like you said, this is your season debut after a great season last year and winning the Presidents Cup. Can you just share a few thoughts of what you did with your time off and maybe some expectations for your season going into '23?

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** Yeah. I actually had a couple weddings the past few weeks, so I've been going to a lot of weddings, hanging out with a lot of friends, which is always nice. Definitely took a few weeks off and just to be able to take a deep breath and kind of reflect on last season, obviously look forward to this season.

I'd say really the biggest thing is to get back in the winner's circle and get back out on top. It's been a while, and it's obviously very tough to win out here, but I feel like the game has been trending in the right direction. I saw a little bit through the Playoffs, Presidents Cup felt really nice and hopefully we can kind of start putting together four good rounds and giving ourselves a chance come Sunday on the back nine and see how things play out.

**LAURA VESCOVI:** What would it do for your confidence to win your season debut and at the ZOZO Championship, at an international event?

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** It would be huge. I think there's a lot to talk about when you talk about the ZOZO Championship. You look at the two times it was played in Japan, you obviously had Tiger who won in '19, Hideki that won last year, it's provided great winners and it shows that this course kind of makes great players hopefully rise to the top. Hopefully we're on this week and figuring some things out.



You know, winning outside the U.S., winning at a strong field, a great event to start off the fall, there's a lot that kind of tops on that you can look at that, but you can't really look at that until it happens and we've got a lot of work in front of us.

**LAURA VESCOVI:** You've had a chance to play the golf course this week already, you've played it in a number of different conditions, last year was a little different than 2019 when you had the storm. Just give us a few remarks about the course conditions this week.

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** Yeah, the course is in really good condition. I think we're all a little worried about the weather, what's going to happen tomorrow with a lot of rain, some wind, some bad weather, but overall so far the course is in pretty good shape. Greens are definitely a little softer than what we're used to, but with such small greens, I think that's going to test your ability to control spin. That's what the best golfers in the world do is knowing what the ball's going to leave off their face and kind of go from there.

**LAURA VESCOVI:** You've been to Japan a number of times, I believe this is your sixth time here. You were here for the Olympics, you've been to this course two times. Just give some thoughts about the culture and the heritage you have on your father's side being in Japan, things of that nature.

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** Yeah, obviously having the last name Japanese, it kind of relates. Little kids out here that hopefully are rooting me on, it relates because you kind of look like them. Even though I don't speak Japanese and I haven't learned and I probably should now, I've come here so often, it's nice to see little kids kind of just relate in that way, right? Someone that kind of hopefully looks up to you. I think it is really -- it's an honor. I feel very warm inside my heart when I think about those things, but Japan's always going to be special. Obviously playing in my first Olympics, having a lot of memories out here, loving the people, loving the culture, I think everything that goes on out here, I just enjoy the week. I wish I could stay longer, but obviously we've got more tournaments and things going on.

**LAURA VESCOVI:** Before I turn it over to questions from the media, can you just share a few fun items of food, things you've gotten to explore, especially now that the country's opened up a bit more and we've been able to explore?

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** Yeah, I think I've only been here for about 30 hours since we landed yesterday morning, so it's been a full ride of trying to stay up, drinking a lot of coffee. I really haven't had that much. I mean, I've had sushi. The food in the clubhouse has kind of provided me everything from breakfast and lunch. We had a good dinner yesterday, we had some Japanese barbecue. And man, is it tough to eat when you're really hungry but also you're really tired. You want to end up just -- you want to eat but you want to fall asleep, but it was a really good dinner last night.

**Q. Collin, you've obviously traveled around the world a lot, but does anything change in your prep for this week and does it take a little bit longer to get in game shape, so to speak, with the time change and all that?**



**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** Normally it does take longer, but you've got to figure out a routine. When you show up on a Tuesday morning and you're teeing it up on Thursday, you've got to figure it out. I think traveling so much, especially traveling to Dubai a handful of times now over the past couple years, just learning how your body reacts to long plane flights, to jetlag, all that stuff. It's doing small things behind the scenes that kind of add up to hopefully what becomes a good week.

It's tough, it's not easy, but there's small little things that week kind of pay attention to that we kind of can maintain. It's huge on our routines.

**Q. What are some of those small things?**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** Just really sleep's the biggest, I think. Can you get on a normal sleeping schedule, making sure you hydrate, making sure all the stretches and all the kind of body movement work I'm doing, I'm doing just that extra little bit. When you're stuck on a plane, even though you might be laying down, you're stuck in one spot for 10 to 12 hours. It's rare that you're just stuck in a confined space like that. It's just making sure you're going through your routines, not skipping over anything and giving it that kind of additional little prep work sometimes that I've kind of been doing over the past day and probably will continue to do throughout this week and into next week as well.

**Q. Collin, we heard you talk about the culture and food in Japan. I just want to get your thoughts about the local challengers this week, T.here's obviously 15 players from the Japan Golf Tour. Obviously great to challenge you for your title. Just want to get your thoughts on the Japanese challenge this week.**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** Yeah, I think you look at Japanese golf, it's getting very, very strong. You look at -- I've gotten to know a little bit about Keita Nakajima and obviously him, I think he was holding the record for world No. 1 amateur, right, for the longest period of time. That just, that shows that golf is becoming a great sport out here and obviously a lot of people love it, but not just only loving it, they're excelling in it. I think that has a lot to do with what Hideki has done, past Japanese players and just inspiring a new generation of golfers.

You look at their games, they're just as good as anyone else and they've shown it. Keita has shown that he's been able to play out here on the PGA Tour, he's had a couple decent finishes, I believe. It's just about opportunities and I think when you're able to give an opportunity to -- you said 15, right -- 15 players that are from Japan, it makes that week just a little more special and hopefully they can embrace everything and find a way to play really well.

**LAURA VESCOVI:** Any other questions? All right. We'll let you go. Thank you, good luck this week. Oh, there is one more.

**Q. I think you know Kaito Onishi for a long time from the college and he's here this**



**week. Can you give us a little bit brief about friendship with Onishi and what was it like your impression in times of golf?**

**COLLIN MORIKAWA:** I've actually known Kaito for a long time, we played a few junior tournaments out in southern California. Obviously he went to college in the same conference and I got to see him here and there. I'll be honest, I've been out of college for three years now and I haven't actually seen him play golf since then, but just because I haven't seen him doesn't mean what he's doing is not right.

I think he's been a professional for about a year now, maybe just over a year and for him to be in the top-5 I believe of the Japan Golf Tour and working his way up, obviously he's got opportunities to play in the Q-School, I believe, on the Korn Ferry Tour coming up in a month for final stage. It just means what he's doing is on the right path.

I think for all of us, anyone that's young like himself is just going to keep getting better.

Kaito and I, we were never like that close in college, we just went to different colleges. You only see each other maybe five times a year through tournaments, so I can't speak on that behalf, but obviously him still being a nice friend and seeing his success, you know, that's always nice to see someone that you kind of grew up with play well.

**LAURA VESCOVI:** We'll let you go. Thanks, Collin, good luck.

