

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW
January 19, 2023



JUSTIN LEONARD (-6)

Q. Justin, bogey-free 66 to start the season, how good did that feel?

JUSTIN LEONARD: It felt really good. I've put a lot of work into trying to be ready for this week. Played at the PNC Championship and that was kind of what I was aiming for in October, November. But really the last five weeks or so I haven't taken much time off. I tell myself, well, take a day off here or there. Well, I took five years off, so I probably need to stay at it. It's nice to -- it is just one round, but it's nice to come out and play a really solid round and, you know, it feels good.

Q. Would you use the word "validation" for today?

JUSTIN LEONARD: Oh, I think it's a little early for validation, but I think it's a step towards that word. I think again just a lot of -- like kind of going out on some days I didn't really want to, but it's like no, I need to stay at this. To compete against these guys, you know, I've got to work really hard, harder than -- I don't know if I can work harder than everybody out here, but harder than a lot of them just because I feel like I've got some ground to make up.

But the nice thing is I'm rested, you know, and being able to do TV and watch the best players in the world, I was able to apply some of that today. I didn't hit it great at times and I missed a little short putt, but I just remind myself that those things happen even in some of the best rounds of golf that I've seen.

So it was nice to finish well. Just a fun day. Fun to finally get the week started. We got here Saturday night and practice rounds and pro-am and everything, it's nice for the bell to finally go off and then play well today.