

Q. What are your impressions of playing on this tour in the early going? How are you enjoying it?

JUSTIN LEONARD: It's a lot of fun. I knew how competitive it was from covering the Senior PGA a couple times with NBC, and it's been fun like pouring myself back into my own game rather than 150 other players' games, as I did with television. It's been fun. I've enjoyed putting the work in and trying to be competitive against these guys and playing on some golf courses like this week that I have a sense of history on. I played here five times in amateur golf, a bunch of Houston Opens here, so it's nice to be back.

Q. What do you remember about this course from when you played it on the regular tour?

JUSTIN LEONARD: I just remember it having a really good variety, shaping the ball both ways, some longer holes, some shorter holes. I haven't played the course yet, so I'm not sure exactly where we'll be playing from, but I would assume the yardage would be similar to what I remember playing here 20 years ago with the Houston Open. Just a fun golf course. I always loved coming down here.

Q. Who are some of your big buddies on this tour that you're glad to see again?

JUSTIN LEONARD: Well, there's a lot. I don't want to sit here and name them because I'll forget somebody or won't list somebody. But it's fun being back with guys that I've known for 30 years and some players even longer. I would say it's a little more of a social tour than the regular tour, not just amongst the players but between the players and the fans and the sponsors and all those things, two days' worth of pro-ams and pro-am dinner that most of the players do each week. I like that aspect of it. But certainly just getting to play with a bunch of guys that I've known for so long, and again, once the bell rings on Friday, it gets pretty darned competitive.

Q. Were you thinking about this tour like the last three or four years thinking about it, or did you not think you were going to play it, or did you always want to play it?

JUSTIN LEONARD: I didn't really have any plans until maybe about a year and a half ago, like right before I turned 49. I thought, well, I think I would want to play a few events. So that's when I kind of started working on my game a bit more. Living in Colorado, I didn't have a lot of options for six to eight months out of the year. But started working on it a bit before I turned 49, and then we moved to Florida last summer right after I turned 50. This winter being able to go at it full-time, I just enjoyed putting the work in.



But it wasn't something like four or five years ago that I was really looking at. I was really just focusing on the work that I was doing with NBC and Golf Channel.

Q. I know a lot of people enjoy you being on TV and a lot of the insights and everything. How much are you actually doing now on television?

JUSTIN LEONARD: I think the only he event I'm going to do this year is the Ryder Cup. I kind of made the decision last fall. Not that I played great in the events that I played, but I felt like I did well enough or showed enough good things where if I could put all my energy into playing that I could be competitive. So kind of stepped away from my work with TV. Again, I'll work the Ryder Cup this year because I enjoy being a part of that event. Those are, especially Friday and Saturday, a couple of really long days for the crew. It'll be fun to be a part of that and step back in that world for a little bit, but it's been nice just focusing my energy in one place, whereas last year, certainly at least there for two or three months, I was trying to do both.

Q. I know you put in a lot of time being on TV. Like you said, you've got to know about every golfer on the TOUR and everything. Was it kind of tough to leave that, because that was a pretty good gig.

JUSTIN LEONARD: It is, it's a good gig. It's great people, and that's what I miss. It's a real team atmosphere when you're doing television. It's not just the people and the voices you hear on air. It's the people behind the cameras, the people that are giving us information and those things, production standpoint, the camera guys. Like fortunately I get to see a few of them here and there out here because they do -- those guys work a lot.

But yeah, I miss that aspect of it, and there's also kind of a consistency to it that I enjoy as far as knowing what the week looks like and those things.

But there is, there's a lot of work that goes into it, and not that I gave it a huge effort in trying to do both, but the little glimpse I had, I realized trying to do both wasn't going to be my cup of tea.

Q. Just talk a little bit about Langer and his longevity, and the guy can still play stellar golf, just a remarkable golfer.

JUSTIN LEONARD: Yeah, it is incredible. I was in the fitness van earlier and the other person in there was Bernhard. I feel like if I do what he's doing, I'm doing the right things because he always seems to be doing the right things.

But yeah, the longevity, and not just physical but mentally to stay in it as much as he is, to be so committed to playing and playing so well, it's pretty remarkable.

Q. You're a Texas guy, UT guy. Is there something special about playing in your home state?

JUSTIN LEONARD: Yeah, it's always fun playing in my home state. There's plenty of Longhorns down here and guys that I went to college with and people that I've met over the years. You know, last week playing in Las Colinas, I stayed at my parents' house. Not the house where I grew up, but just staying with my parents and having dinner with them every night, because I don't live there anymore.



Playing here, I played the course up in Frisco where we'll play the Senior PGA at the end of May. So nice to be, A, near home, and B, also in like familiar areas. I started coming to the Woodlands in junior golf when I was like 14 years old, and it's amazing how it's grown and changed over the years, but there's still a familiarity there. So yeah, it's certainly nice to play near where I grew up and places that I've been.

Q. You completed the trifecta of professional golf, a player on the PGA TOUR, a broadcaster on the PGA TOUR, and now a member of the Champions Tour. I imagine in your head all three of those are completely different.

JUSTIN LEONARD: They are. I would say the first and the last are a bit more similar. But yes, getting into broadcasting, there's not a whole lot that can prepare you for that outside of going to school and studying journalism, which I did not. So that's the reason I was so awful my first couple of years trying to do it.

It's something that fortunately the people at NBC and Golf Channel poured into me and helped me get better over time, gave me a lot of reps, and I learned a lot along the way. I think that some of watching the best players in the world, how they prepare, how they practice, playing practice rounds, and then watching them in competition, I think those are things that now I'm able to kind of apply to what I'm trying to do to get ready.

It's been a fun process. I would say that the transition going from being a player in 2015 and '16 to doing TV was not easy. It's a little easier transitioning back into this because at least I've done this before, but it's been a while. I didn't really play tournament golf for about six years, and there for about four years of that or so, I played very little golf.

Getting back into it has been fun. It's been a challenge, but it's one that I've really enjoyed.

Q. It's the middle of the night, you wake up, and you have a golf thought. Is it going to be the Ryder Cup, or is it going to be the Open Championship?

JUSTIN LEONARD: Oh, it usually goes towards the Ryder Cup, just because so many people had kind of a vested interest in the outcome of a Ryder Cup. It doesn't all go to '99; I think about '97, I think about 2008 in Kentucky. Some great memories, and those events are when people are watching and they have a rooting interest.

I hear a little bit about the Open on occasion, but by and large, the comments that I get are about Ryder Cups because people had a rooting interest.

