

**ROUND 1 INTERVIEW: JUSTIN LEONARD**  
**Thursday, November 12, 2015**



**Q. Justin, congratulations on a great opening round. We hear the description of this golf course and it sounds to me like a Justin Leonard golf course. Does it sound to you like a Justin Leonard golf course?**

**JUSTIN LEONARD:** I like this golf course. The fairways are fairly narrow. It's not a lot of rough but you've got a corridor you've got to play through. It wasn't windy this morning so it wasn't as hard to keep it in the corridor. I know the guys that when they played the tournament back in the spring, they talked about how firm and fast it was. That really sounds up my alley but, this is the only way I've played it here in the fall when it's a little bit softer. I enjoy the golf course. The greens are receiving shots, and when you can get it in the right spot you can make some putts. The rest of the course is in great shape. And we're in Cancun, Playa del Carmen, wherever we are, it's hard not to have a good time.

**Q. Not a bad gig, is it? We spoke to D.J. Trahan just moments ago. He was talking a little bit about the rough around the greens can get sticky, whatnot. You were a hundred percent in scrambling today. Just find it comfortable or are you not finding it as sticky as maybe some of the guys?**

**JUSTIN LEONARD:** I hit a couple really good chips when I didn't have very good lies, but if you're in the fairway around the greens, a lot of times you're thinking about making it. Yeah, when you get in the rough, sometimes the ball sits up and other times when it sits down a little bit or it gets a little bit sandy, there's some guesswork going on. I had a couple of those today and I guessed correctly.

**Q. Game plan the same tomorrow? Seems to be short grasses, the answer for everybody, keep it in the corridor as you mentioned. Does it matter if you're above or below the hole? These greens speeds are not usually what you guys are used to.**

**JUSTIN LEONARD:** Not really. There's a couple greens that are a little quicker on the back nine to where you just have to be careful and know where you are. But for the most part you've got to put a little more pace on the ball; they're not as quick as we normally play. But they're in good shape and they're pretty true. My game plan hasn't changed in 21 years so it's certainly not going to change between today and tomorrow.

**Q. Bogey-free opening round for Justin Leonard. You're able to get to 6-under par. How were you able to take it so well?**

**JUSTIN LEONARD:** I just hit a lot of goods shots, kept the ball in play, hit a lot of fairways and kept it in the corridor that you've got to play from here. I made a long putt at 14, but other than that I made a couple 15-footers and then made a few putts inside that. I missed maybe three or four greens and hit a couple really nice chips when I needed to. Just stayed

pretty steady and consistent all day.

**Q. You had a tough stretch last spring into the summer as far as missed cuts. You've made four in a row now, you're playing well so far in Mexico. What's the comfort level at with your game?**

**JUSTIN LEONARD:** It's fun. Back in the spring I wasn't enjoying it very much. Just finally was able to kind of loosen up and it served me well. Played a couple times this fall, or this is my second tournament this year and then I know I've got a couple months off after this. So I'm just enjoying being out here, enjoying putting in the work. It's nice to see it come together on the scorecard on Thursday. We don't always get that kind of reinforcement for what we're doing. It was nice to get it today.

**Q. The mindset behind that, I mean 12 events?**

**JUSTIN LEONARD:** I've just been out here 21 or 22 years and my kids are growing up and I get to do a lot of things but I miss a lot of things, too. You know, you basically lead the same life if not more so. But we just moved up to Colorado in August and I want to just play the tournaments that I'm excited to go play and see what I can do.

**Q. Where in Colorado did you guys move?**

**JUSTIN LEONARD:** Aspen. I've got to get my ski days in. This golf is getting --

**Q. Justin, good playing. So are you playing this year off a top 50 career money?**

**JUSTIN LEONARD:** Yeah.

**Q. And you used the top 25?**

**JUSTIN LEONARD:** Yeah.

**Q. What's your game plan the next couple years? Are you going to play a Stricker-like schedule, 12 events for past champion and things like that?**

**JUSTIN LEONARD:** Well, I'm going to play 12 events this year and if I'm able to make it into the FedExCup playoffs and everything, then I'll play maybe a similar or maybe even less schedule next year. I don't know. It just feels right to me to slow down and spend more time at home and spend more time with my wife and my kids. So many decisions I've made over the last 25 years have been about golf and it's decisions within our family and those kinds of things. So when we started talking about moving, I said let's just take golf out of it, where are we going to be the happiest and the most excited when we get on an airplane to go home, where are we going to be the most excited to go to, and we're there.

**Q. Is it weird being -- as a guy who won at a young age on the PGA TOUR, now you**

have guys basically half your age winning out here.

**JUSTIN LEONARD:** Yeah.

**Q. That's got to be a little bit of a strange feeling as one who was in their shoes?**

**JUSTIN LEONARD:** It is, but it hasn't happened all of a sudden. Yeah, but you're right, first I was five years older than those guys, then I was 10 or 15, and now it's, you know, yeah, these guys are half my age. Oh, I just felt another gray hair pop in. But as much as that is a reality, there's also a reality that look at the way Jim Furyk has played the last couple years. And I know Steve Stricker, who you were talking about earlier, was hurt last year and look at what he did in a very limited schedule in his mid 40s. Davis Love won a golf tournament at 51. I'm not saying that I'm those guys, but it's also inspiring to me. Whether I'm meant to play another four or five or 10 years or whether this is my last, I'm perfectly okay with that.