

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW: JUSTIN ROSE
January 26, 2017



JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, I guess great start to the tournament. Love those new greens out there on the North Course. They're rolling really, really pure. Considering all the rain, they're firm and fast and I guess the key to the round for me was having four eagle putts. I hit all the par 5s in two so managed to convert two of those, so I played the par 5s 6 under, which I guess is the key to the round.

Q. So how about the way you ended that round with the eagle?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, obviously a very sweet way to finish. Had a great yardage. It was just a perfect 5-wood into the last hole. Because of discussion I had with my caddie, we realized that maybe missing to the right side of that green was better than the left so it kind of enabled me to be aggressive to that right pin.

Q. You talked about the greens being different on the North Course. Do you feel it's a more difficult course now?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, it's longer, for sure. I think it still offers the opportunity to go low. With the surfaces being so pure, you can maybe make more putts than you did in the past. I actually haven't seen a scoreboard or a leaderboard, I can't really gauge how the scoring is today but it didn't feel easy. There's enough wind out there today, it's playing slightly cool out so the ball's not really flying that far. Definitely the course had some teeth, especially holes 1, 2, 3, 4, they're playing really tough.

Q. Do you feel like you're carrying the momentum from Sony into this week? Do you feel like you're playing as well as you did there?

JUSTIN ROSE: I guess so. I mean scores are reflecting that, so obviously I've been making a few more putts so far this season and drove it well today and, like I said, capitalized on the par 5s. There's still elements in my game like at Sony that I'm not 100 percent happy with. I still feel my iron play could be sharper but you can't have it all. My short game's also been sharp when I needed it.

Q. How did the new North Course play compared to how it played in the past?

JUSTIN ROSE: It feels like a bigger golf course now. It hasn't changed, the routing of it hasn't changed. It still feel very familiar, but just the condition of it is incredible. The new greens are amazing. To see what's possible on the west coast with surfaces because obviously the poa creeps in pretty quick but it's really fun to play on surfaces that are so pure right now.

Q. The Olympic golf course, obviously you have a lot of fond memories of that place

and there are a lot of reports there about what happened to it, it run out of money?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, I heard that, but I had a friend of mine play it two weeks ago and he said it was in great shape, so I guess people can get carried away. Obviously I know there are funding issues with it, but hopefully they can just keep it going and they can resolve it. Obviously it's a shame to see something created and especially with Gil Hanse moving down there pretty much for the better part of two years and putting his life's work into it, it would be a shame to see it not pull through.

Q. Here with Justin Rose. We were wondering, Justin, what would reviews would be for the revamped North Course that Tom Weiskopf put together. I'm guessing you're going to give a positive review. 5 under in the last five holes, two eagles. How would you say you performed out there and what you say you leaned on most in your bag?

JUSTIN ROSE: I would say, well, obviously the score is fantastic. I think I leaned upon mostly my patience. I was 1 over through the first five or six holes and just kind of realized it was only the first five or six holes of the tournament and just stay with it. And then after that dialogue with myself I kind of went birdie-birdie, which is cool and then that got the round going.

But I drove the ball well today. With ball in hand and obviously with the rough being really thick and wet, it was kind of really important to drive it in the fairway. So on all the important holes I drove it in the fairway. I missed a couple of fairways here and there but those are normally when I had a wedge in my hand so I was able to get away with it there. But like I said, all the important holes, the par 5s for example, I drove it in play. Actually had four eagle putts today, so I hit all the par 5s in two and converted two of those. So play the par 5s in 6 under was the key to the round.

Q. Now you go from the North Course to what is traditionally a very big golf course, the South Course tomorrow. How do you mentally prepare for that golf course?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, I've got some in the bank now, so to speak, and you can kind of afford to be patient, which is what the South Course requires. My game plan won't really change but I'll just have that ability to be extra patient around there. Such a great golf course, really enjoy the South. It's one of my favorite golf courses on tour. I think visually every shot feels good to me. Every tee shot's framed well, every green is a great green complex and I look forward to getting out there. It's going to be breezy tomorrow, too, which should make it even more interesting.

Q. Justin, another brilliant ball-striking display. What happened there? I had you at 1-under par for your first six holes and then you played the last 12 holes 8 under?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, you never really know what's going to happen out there. I think the key was I stayed patient through those first six holes. I actually made some nice putts early, a couple of them for par, and I felt good on the greens and so I kind of stuck with it and

stayed patient and things worked out well.

Q. You really beat up the par 5s, you hit all four par 4 greens in two, you made two eagles. Cornerstone of your round or something else that you felt was really the strength behind it?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, you have to point it out, very rarely do you play the par 5s 6 under and I think that's kind of what that golf course requires. They haven't overly lengthened the par 5s but there were some tough holes out there, too. Holes 1, 2, 3, 4, as we made the turn, holes 1, 2, 3, which is our 10, 11, 12, 13, they played really tough and I think I played those holes in 1 under, which I think kind of set up that hot finish.

Q. The greens, they were the talk about Tom Weiskopf's redesign. When you put up a round like 65, you're probably going to love them, but what did you make of the greens?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, obviously the surfaces are amazing. It's cool to see how good greens can get in a year to rebuild them, reseed them and then go. Obviously we all know that poa creeps into this pretty quickly but right now they're a fantastic surface. With all the rain, it's amazing to see how firm they are. Still hardly any spike marks or heel prints out there, which I'm sure is a huge contrast to what the greens are like now on the South Course being so soft.

But yeah, design-wise, I think there's a couple great holes out there. I think always redesigning a golf course people have memories of how it was or how it should be and it's very difficult to keep everybody happy but I think he's done a good job.

Q. The South Course, that's where you're heading tomorrow and for the next three days. What's the vibe like around this property given your record on so many great golf courses around the world?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, I mean South is one of my favorites. Every tee shot I hit, every second shot I kind of at least understand what's needed on it. Executing is obviously always the issue, but every hole's framed well. And the great green complexes out there, you've got to hit to certain sections and it's a course you've got to be patient on. I think tomorrow's going to be a little bit breezy as well. Today there was some wind out there, and tomorrow a little bit more, so it could be quite an interesting test.