

CHRIS REIMER: We want to welcome our 2017 FedExCup champion, five wins on the year, 12 top-10 finishes. Just talk about the season in general and then we'll get into today and this week.

JUSTIN THOMAS: It was an unbelievable season. I can't believe how fast it went by. I mean, done with my third season on the PGA TOUR already and I told Jimmy walking up 16 fairway, I hit a great shot in there and I had a chance to make a birdie and get a little closer to the lead, I said this is a lot of fun, this is why we play.

And how crazy it was we started the year with a 75 in Napa looking like I'm going to miss the cut and I end up shooting 66 to make the cut on the number. We've definitely come a long way since that 75. I owe him everything. I mean he's such a big help this year. This year is as much his as it is mine. Just to cap it off with a great day today and great week this week to win the FedExCup's awesome.

CHRIS REIMER: You mentioned a great day today. Just take us through kind of the emotions before the round and how it felt out there to where you are right now.

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, I was really nervous this morning. It was a different feeling, an odd feeling. It was something very similar that I felt at the U.S. Open on Sunday where I didn't play very well. It wasn't exactly a calming feeling coming out to the course and going out there to warm up knowing that it was the same feeling I had before I kind of not blew up but had a bad Sunday at the Open.

So I tried to just put that behind me. I told Jimmy, I'm like, Jimmy, I'm nervous today, I'm anxious, I'm jittery, I just need your help staying patient because it's way -- it's harder to stay calm and stay patient on days when you're anxious and nervous I feel than when you're calm, so he helped me a lot with that.

Once we got out there, got off to a good start on the first six being 2 under. We had a great par on 7, I don't know how that wedge didn't go in, I thought I made it. Parring 8 and 9 is great. Yeah, when I went par -- what did I do, par-par-birdie so getting to 3 under and I think I was maybe one or two back at that time. That's kind of when it really sunk in I've got a great chance to win this tournament, let's just go take care of it ourselves, don't worry about what other people are doing or what they have to do.

Just made a terrible bogey on 13, that was awful. I was excited to birdie 16 and 17, felt like I had a great chance to birdie 18 again and kind of post and get in the clubhouse and give Xander something to look at. But it just wasn't meant to be, wasn't my week this week in

terms of winning the golf tournament, but it definitely came with a nice consolation prize.

Q. Sort of where I was going to go with this, does it feel a little weird to be the big winner but you did not win the tournament?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Feels very weird. At first I'm sure people were kind of shocked at my reactions or my tone because I was -- I mean, I wasn't mad but my competitive nature, I mean I was upset. I felt like I had a great chance to win this tournament and I didn't. I wanted to win six times this year. Coming into this week and today I knew that just from looking at social media I think I would have been the only person other than Tiger to do it in the last however many years, and anytime you're in the same sentence or record books with Tiger, it's pretty impressive. So I wanted to win for that and I knew if I won this week I would win the FedExCup.

But yeah, I mean, I had a great chance, I made some great putts today, hit some great shots, I drove it poorly today. If I would have driven it better, I felt like I probably would have gotten it done, but those birdies on 16 and 17 were great just to give myself a chance. Xander played 18 perfectly. He played it how I was hoping to play it. If I post and get in there at 12, who knows what happens, or yeah, 12, who knows what happens. But yeah, like I said, it's odd getting something so tremendous, one of my best achievements in my career without winning a golf tournament, so it feels different but it's still great.

Q. Two things. First, how kind of aware were you of what you needed to do other than winning today to win the FedExCup going into today or out on the golf course?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I don't know who it was in the scoring trailer, scoring tent, whatever, yesterday that was going to give me an update and I interrupted, I said, "I don't care to know, don't tell me anything. You can tell Jimmy whatever you want but I don't want to know anything." Then he started and I just said, "I don't want to know anything, I'm good," and I walked out. Like I said, I was trying to win the golf tournament.

I knew if I won, finished second, maybe tied second I probably had a good chance depending on what Jordan did today, but I truly didn't know. So still going in today I don't know what the lowest I could have finished or tie or whatever. I knew when I finished and finished solo second that that was probably good enough.

It is weird just because I compared it earlier to Q-School because it's obviously a total different scenario and totally different rewards with both, but you almost get out there not trying to win, you're trying to finish a certain thing. Q-School, you're trying to finish top 45 and ties or whatever it is. If you told someone that going into a tournament, you're like yeah, I'm just trying to finish better than 45th and it's like why are you going, what's the point much even going.

I thought about that out there on the course today. It's like why am I'm going to try for finish third. If I had to guess I would have guessed probably third or better today would have

probably gotten it done for me. Why am I going to try to finish third or better when I can go out and try to win this thing? And if I don't win like I did, I'll be around second or third and probably end up getting it done.

Q. Going back to that 75 in the first round of the year, you had success pretty quickly after that but you had a little bit of a lull in the middle of the year. If there's a turning point or a moment where it sort of flipped for you, I guess, what would that be, if there is one?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Man, the year's a blur, I've got to think about that for a second.

CHRIS REIMER: So many wins. (Laughs.)

JUSTIN THOMAS: No, I didn't mean it like that. You know, it was probably, let's see, I'm trying to think of what tournaments I played in what. The U.S. Open was kind of in the middle of that where I was struggling or my results weren't showing. I felt like I wasn't playing as bad as my scores were showing. I obviously wasn't playing great or else I would have been winning or around the lead. I just couldn't -- things weren't going my way.

I was playing fine. A bounce here or there or lip-out here or there over the course of four days, that adds up, five to 10 shots and there's the difference of maybe a missed cut or an 8th to a 40th. So that was a big week for me because it was the first time I was in contention in a major. It got me in a new scenario for me in that final group, which was one of my goals for this year was to get in the final group of a major on Sunday and I just feel like that gave me a lot of confidence because I felt calm on Sunday. Although I was anxious a little bit, when I was out there I felt comfortable. I just couldn't execute as well so I felt that was kind of a big turnaround for me.

Q. Winning the FedExCup is an amazing accomplishment. I wonder what was the greatest challenge you had to overcome during the course of the 2017 season?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Probably the expectations, the reminders of why weren't you playing better, or not that as much but just like you got off to such a great start for the season, what's happening now or why are you not winning now or this or that, or why have you missed two cuts in a row sort of thing.

So that's hard for me because I take some stuff personally sometimes when I shouldn't. I've gotten better at not reading social media just because the things that people say are borderline idiotic, it really is. For some reason people feel the need or want to put people down and I wasn't in an instance to be put down I felt like.

I had been having a great year. Yeah, I wasn't playing my best but it just -- I just kept having to remind myself I've had a great year, I've done a lot of great things, I have a great chance to win the FedExCup, I have a great chance to do some special things, so I just had to keep reminding myself that.

Q. I'm sure you're not aware, but there was a point today where you and Jordan were actually tied --

JUSTIN THOMAS: I saw that.

Q. You saw that on the board?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I did.

Q. Is there something apropos after the seasons you guys have had that it would come down to you two possibly in a playoff for that?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I think I laughed when I saw it. I thought honestly, this probably will happen and the golf world will completely blow up and lose its mind if Jordan and I were in a playoff for the FedExCup. I don't think anybody would have known what to do with themselves.

You know, that was at a time, I think I was -- when was that? I was on -- I think I was on 15 when that -- or maybe -- I was on 15 or 16 and that's when I was walking up and realized I knew I had 16, 17, if I put the ball in the fairway, wedges, great birdie chances and then 18 being a par 5 same thing if I put the ball in play. But that is again I wasn't trying to win the FedExCup, I was trying to within the tournament.

Making those two birdies, if you would have said did you think you won the FedExCup then, I would have said yeah but I was focused on that. But it would have been fitting. He had an unbelievable season, I mean every bit as good as mine. I just, I had a couple things go my way at the end of a round when he didn't and that's a difference of three and five wins. DJ's putt doesn't lip in, there's four and he makes a couple putts on that back nine and I don't make a couple in Boston, he wins. So there's a difference of five to four right there and he's probably the one sitting up here and he won Player of the Year. It's a crazy game we play, it's a hard game we play, but I think it's a great time in the sport and everybody just needs to appreciate what years we had. DJ and Hideki, everyone played awesome. I think that to me means more winning this in a year that those guys had such great years.

Q. Multiple times this year you were asked specifics about your goals and whether you had met them, exceeded them or whatever, and you kept saying I'll tell you at the end of the year.

JUSTIN THOMAS: Do you want to know?

Q. Yeah, what were those goals and have you exceeded them?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Here we go. '16-'17 goals: TOUR Championship, made that one.

My grandpa's calling me. Can I --

CHRIS REIMER: Yeah, say hello.

JUSTIN THOMAS: Hey, Grandpa, can I call you back? I'm in the middle of a press conference. All right, I'll call you back, Grandpa. See you.

Win at least once. Be in the final two groups of a major on Sunday. Win a major. Make the Presidents Cup. Plus .25 or better strokes gained putting. Above 1 strokes gained tee to green, so it's driving and approach. Top-10 in all-around stats. Under par on par 3s, 4s and 5s. Top-30 in scrambling. Top-10 in half my starts, which I missed by one I realized. Under 70 scoring average, and then less short sides for the year.

Q. Impressive because you pretty much knocked all of those off. It's early now, but how much different will that list be when we start again in a week's time?

JUSTIN THOMAS: It's going to be really hard, it is, because I'm going to spend a lot -- probably not next week won't be the appropriate time but probably the week prior when I'm in Jupiter I'm going to try to spend a lot of time with Tiger and then definitely call and talk to Jordan because they're the two people I'm closest to that have done something close to this and they've both achieved way more than this.

I need to understand how to reevaluate my goals, how to reset my goals, how to deal with everything. I mean, I'm going to have a lot more obligations, I'm going to have a lot more people wanting my time. I'm going to have a lot higher expectations from you guys, from the fans, from everything. So I'm going to need to understand and get better at handling all of it. I'm going to rely on guys like them and other guys a lot just to help me out to get a good idea and game plan. And then, you know, after the Presidents Cup I get a couple days off and reset the goals. My dad, Jimmy and myself and then will we go off to Malaysia again.

Q. Was there a moment late last season or early in this season, maybe a practice session, maybe one of those early Sundays where something happened and you thought this could be a special season?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Probably nothing in particular. I mean, after both events in Hawaii -- I mean Malaysia was great and to win, that was a new and a different win for me coming from four back like that. It was an awesome, it was a great week, huge achievement. But one win into the season that early, I couldn't have told you oh, yeah, I'm definitely going to win the FedExCup this year. But after Hawaii, kind of the ways that I got that done, it was big for me because they were so different. Kapalua was kind of -- you know, I was right there, right there, right there. I got off to a good start and I was pretty far ahead and kind of fell back and Hideki was really pushing me and then I had to hit some great shots coming down the stretch to end up winning by a couple so that was new for me.

And then Sony was a situation I've never been a part of or experienced besides like junior

golf where I had such a big lead that I just had to try to keep building it as opposed to maintaining it. It's like football when defenses start playing prevent and stop and try to not lose as opposed to win. I hate when my football team is trying to do that because it never works. It's like why are we doing something differently than what we did to get us here.

And we did such a great job that week, Jimmy and I, of sticking with our game plan and just trying to increase our lead and I felt like I was extremely nervous before that round, probably more uneasy than I was any round this entire year because all I kept hearing was nobody's ever blown a 7-shot lead in the history of the PGA TOUR and that's what every single person started their question with. So that was pretty much going through my head and I felt like after that I learned a lot to where I could kind of ride that momentum out for the year.

Q. Justin, can you talk about Jimmy? You touched on him just now and how significant he's been this year? And also on No. 4, it was early in the round and you managed to get a par and it was quite a difficult situation. I know you used a utility wood or something like that out of the deep rough?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, Jimmy's been a huge impact in my career really. I have all six wins with him. I have FedExCup now, major championship, my first international team, hopefully Player of the Year. I mean it's exciting because you don't know what the rest holds, you don't know what the rest of my career holds. As long as he continues to caddie, caddie for me, you don't know what we could do or what we can do. But he's been such a positive influence on me because he keeps me calm. He's been in these situations, whereas before I maybe wasn't as comfortable because I hadn't been there and he had been so he knew what to say to keep me calm and keep me going. Like I said earlier, this win is his just as much as it is mine. It's ours, it really is.

In terms of No. 4, that was just a God-awful lie. I hadn't seen anybody get a lie like that all week and it's frustrating sometimes because I land the ball in the first cut and I miss the fairway by three yards or two yards or whatever it was. I couldn't hit it any farther than I did.

Our thinking was I just played a 5-wood open, I'll hit that shot sometimes just kind of like a little chop-cut, just kind of lay the face open. But with the iron the farthest I was going to hit it was probably 50 yards, 40 yards. We felt like the worst that was going to happen with that wood, because there's no hosel for the rough to turn over, was what happened.

Obviously I would have liked for it to be in the fairway but I just aimed way left and just opened it up to make sure it got over the left to make sure it didn't go five feet in front of me. But making par on that hole was huge, that was like a birdie basically and it gave me a lot of momentum the rest of the day.

Q. The money here obviously is or can be life changing, but just wondering early on your rookie year, maybe last year, was there a point where you had to learn to not think about the money, that you have the potential to win when you're in the hunt and were you able to -- has that been a help to you at all?

JUSTIN THOMAS: You guys probably won't believe me, but I don't know why I've never thought about money once. Yeah, if you miss a putt on the last hole, you realize what you didn't make versus what you could make sort of thing. But I've never once in my career had a putt and thought, oh, I need this for a lot of money on the last hole. I wasn't like on that last hole, oh, I make this putt it's a difference of one and whatever million versus whatever I made.

It's like I'm going to be fine financially for my life. I plan on winning a lot of golf tournaments in my career, and if you play out here for the money, I don't think you play for the right reasons and that's not -- I've never done it in my career. I've never wanted to do anything in my career for that reason. It's a tremendous bonus and it's just a nice, trying to think of the right word -- I guess a nice cushion you could say. It's fun to have because yeah, obviously who doesn't like it, but I work hard and I put all this preparation in and I'm competitive because I like winning and I like trophies and I like being in the history books and I like having my name on trophies that not many people's are on. It's not the money. The money is just a nice bonus that comes with it.

Q. Justin, with an offseason that is only a few days, how or when do you savor this season? Even Nick Saban gets a few months between the end of one season and the start of another.

JUSTIN THOMAS: I'm so excited for offseason, you guys can't understand. I'm very, very excited for next week and it's probably going to be hard to get myself motivated and ready to go for Malaysia and Korea, at least thinking about it right now, but I'm sure I will. Once I get there, my competitive nature will kick in.

When I get home to Florida that Monday after Korea, I'm excited to not know where my clubs are for two weeks and just put them somewhere in my house and just let them sit there. I'm excited to share this and the PGA Championship trophy, the Wanamaker with my friends at home, my family, go to Tuscaloosa, take it to the guys at Alabama, take it to some of my favorite restaurants and bars. That's something that for me, that's really cool.

I don't know if it's sad or what it says about me but that's something I think about when I win a cool trophy is man, I get to take this to a place that I love and they get to fill it up with whatever I want all night and I get to enjoy it with them because those are people that have been great to me and people that I enjoy spending time with and people that I want to enjoy these moments with. I think that's something that's underrated, but really fun part of the process that we have and the things that we do is getting to enjoy moments like this and getting to enjoy trophies and major championships and whatever it may be with our closest friends and the people we love the most. So I'm excited to do nothing and celebrate a little bit.

Q. You talked about the weird feelings you had of standing there, the disappointment of losing the tournament but winning the big prize. Kind of how did you sort of cope

with that in your mind as you're standing there kind of going through the festivities, and after you finish that, as a follow up, I guess everybody this week has asked would they like to do it a little differently. This worked out pretty well for you, maybe not a winner-take-all, but is there anything you would like to see in the way the system is done to change it at all?

JUSTIN THOMAS: No, I think it's easy for me to say that it's great, but you look at the guys that have won it, I don't think anybody would argue that they're not deserving. They've had great years and extremely deserving and they earned it, which is most important.

I think it's easy to go back to like NFL or NBA or baseball playoffs. I mean look at the Patriots, go undefeated, they lose in the Super Bowl. Obviously it's a different sport and totally different. But I think the changes that they made a couple years ago was before I got on Tour are for the better and I'm sure the Tour, Jay's doing such a great job in communicating with us and wanting to better the Tour. So I don't know if changes will be made or how soon or whatever it may be, but I know they're going to be for the better and we're all going to be on board. But yeah, I'm perfectly content with how they are right now, that's for sure. I'm sorry, what was the first part of your question?

Q. Can you talk about --

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, I'm still not over it, I'm still mad my putt didn't go in on 18. I hit a great putt and I really, really wanted it and I thought it was going to go in.

I just think kind of the more stops I made and the more texts I got, calls, I just would see I haven't really gotten a chance to answer any. It's setting in a little bit, but like the PGA, everything's just so kind of bang bang and then I have the Presidents Cup next week that, come tomorrow I'll do nothing, kind of hang out and rest and then it's get ready for that. So I don't know if it will set in.

CHRIS REIMER: Well, congratulations on a great day and a great season. Justin Thomas, 2017 FedExCup Cup champion.