

**PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW**  
**April 30, 2019**

**JUSTIN ROSE**



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**JACK RYAN:** We'll go ahead and get started here with Justin Rose in the interview room at the Wells Fargo Championship. Justin's making his first start here since 2016 but has finished in the top-5 in each of his last two starts here.

Justin, if we can just get an opening comment on making your return here to Quail Hollow.

**JUSTIN ROSE:** Obviously exciting to be back. Obviously we played a PGA Championship here as well since I was last here in '16, but it's a golf course I like. It's a venue I like. It's a town that I really enjoy being in as well. So yeah, excited to sort of get the next stage of the season up and running.

**JACK RYAN:** And you're playing in the first two rounds with Rickie Fowler, a former winner here, and Webb Simpson, who lives on the course here. Do you think you can learn a little bit from those guys even though you haven't played since 2017?

**JUSTIN ROSE:** Yeah, I'm pretty familiar with both of those guys' games, and more importantly, they're both great guys to play with, easygoing guys out there on the course.

Yeah, Webb, hometown hero, so hopefully there will be a good energy and atmosphere on the golf course, and obviously he will have a lot of support. Should be a fun grouping. Yeah, Webb's a strategic player, I think. Rickie's sort of aggressive. So if I can be somewhere in between the two of them it should work out pretty well.

**Q. What did you identify as the struggles in the Masters and what have you been working on the last couple weeks?**

**JUSTIN ROSE:** Yeah, I think I got my preparation a little bit wrong, I guess, going into Augusta is what it felt like. I took a month off in February and that was designed to really freshen me up going into Augusta and for the rest of the season. I kind of came out of that month not playing as well as I would have hoped, and the Florida Swing became a bit of a struggle and a bit of a grind.

Even though I top-10ed it in THE PLAYERS Championship and then through the Match Play, I was always just sort of fighting my game a little bit, and then it's like you're sort of cramming for an exam. I started to practice harder than I would have liked in the days leading up to Augusta. I did something different this year, I went to Sage Valley and practiced there for three days, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Went and played nine holes at Augusta on Sunday evening. I think it all felt like it was a really long run-up. Yeah, I think by Tuesday I felt pretty good with my game and then by Thursday I tanked a little bit.

I think the flow of the run-up this year, the preparation didn't really click. And because of that, you know, ultimately kind of burned out a little bit too quick.

So yeah, some things obviously I've done right going into Augusta many, many times and sometimes circumstances change and other life things get in the way that you can't always just roll out the same process. But certainly a lot that I can learn from going into it again next year, but also stuff that I can apply for the next major championship. I think my preparation going into the PGA's changed because of the run-up into Augusta so you're always adapting and always learning and trying not to make the same mistakes.

**Q. You just answered like four questions. Next stage of the season, as long as you've been on this tour and used to what the schedule looks like, is it hard to get your hands around the idea that we've got a major in two weeks?**

**JUSTIN ROSE:** Yeah, it is different, different for sure. There was also a big focus on Augusta and then in some ways you had until U.S. Open so you could forget about major championship golf for at least a few weeks. I feel like now it's on your mind for sure.

Obviously everyone would have probably liked Tiger to play this week but with a major coming up so quick and especially after the win, there's not a lot of time to sort of compartmentalize everything or to go through that natural cycle of peaks and troughs and peaks and troughs. I think we all understand it's hard to keep a level of performance at the top. You're always trying to wave it and you're trying to peak at the right time. With everything coming so thick and fast at the moment, I think we're all trying to adjust on how to be our best on specific weeks.

**Q. Did you have this on your kind of radar screen post Augusta that you need one tournament to play before the PGA?**

**JUSTIN ROSE:** Yeah, I think so. Oh, yeah, this is a golf course I've enjoyed playing. It's a golf course that it's sort of major championship style golf course. Obviously it's hosted one. I felt like it's a good course off the back of Augusta, too. I feel like it's a draw golf course as well, it has some similar visuals at times. I just felt it was a good fit and it gave me the opportunity to then also play but then prepare for the PGA. I typically like a week off before the majors, so just the way the flow of the schedule worked seems to be the perfect fit.

**Q. As comebacks go, Tiger's was pretty big, but every guy out here has a comeback of some sort, including yourself. How challenging is that to find your game again to come back as you did?**

**JUSTIN ROSE:** Yeah. We're always, if it's a big monumental comeback or it's a mini comeback, there's always that narrative in your head for sure.

Obviously Tiger's comeback, just to talk about it for a minute, I think was amazing. There

was so many times maybe, I don't know when but I doubted that it could be done, but then in the last year or so I didn't doubt it could be done. He's looked so good I think every time he has played for about a year or so. And I always thought the major championships are almost as easy for him to win as any other tournament. His experience really sort of hits home. You could see it down the stretch. I've never seen him look so calm.

And driving the ball, the tee shot he hit on 17 I think was everything for me. That's just a tee shot that you can't hide from, it's straightaway, it's like you either hit it straight or you're in the trees. With a two-shot lead, 17 was the only hole that could have really made it difficult for him. So that was cool to see that.

And then I've had a lot of conversations with Tiger about his motivation of wanting his kids to see him at his best. The moment on 18 was awesome. I think you kind of -- it was a very human moment, right, to see him enjoy that with his kids. It was kind of unfortunate to be on the couch. I've never seen a Masters Sunday on the couch before. Well, not for many years anyway, but if there was a good one to watch, it was that.

For me? I don't know, I've had a few comebacks, I guess. I had a comeback before I ever even made it, missing my first 21 cuts. I mean, I don't know how you come back from starting at the bottom, but I did.

And then, there's been challenges throughout the years and obviously I've had my injury blips along the way. I think most guys, it comes down to fitness as well. If you can't do what you used to be able to do, you've got to find a new way to do things and that's not always easy.

**Q. Going back to Fergie's question about how this year's schedule is so much different, will you prepare for the majors a little bit differently going forward after the experience at the Masters?**

**JUSTIN ROSE:** Yeah, I was looking at the majors this year as 10-day blocks. I was going to go and try and do my preparation on the weekend, take sort of a Monday off and then get into the week. But I just felt that that's not really how I've done it in the past, but it was almost because of their location and because of the way just everything fitted together, I just felt like that was the best way for me to do it.

But I am going to switch that up. I'll probably do my preparation for next week much earlier than the weekend and go back home and digest, I think, what I've learned or what I think the strategy's going to be and come back and be fresh mentally. I feel like if I'm in the environment for too long, if I'm in the environment of being around the major for 10 days, it's a long time to keep it together or to stay sharp.

**Q. Your career has pretty much been out here, you've been pretty much out here since all of Tiger's stuff way back, so you've lived through that and seen it. I was just curious, do you ever chuckle at all when you hear some of the younger guys who**

weren't there for that, saying, gosh, I sure wish Tiger could be back to that level again, sort of a careful-what-you-wish-for-type of a thing? Did you ever think that like maybe you don't really want that?

**JUSTIN ROSE:** Right. There's definitely been guys out here whose careers would have looked a lot different had Tiger not been on the scene. Guys like Ernie Els maybe or players like that who maybe finished second to him a number of times in their career. I felt like maybe I was still learning my trade a little bit when he was at his best so he never really took chances away from me, per se, but I think there's always a satisfaction of winning a tournament when he's in the field.

Yeah, I think the dominant Tiger of 2000, winning eight, 10 times, I'm still not sure that's possible. It hasn't been possible for anybody else since. It is a tough level to get to. Like I said, I think he's now right there with the best players in the world every single week who has a great chance to win. I think him getting back to that level is unbelievable from where he was. Chipping yips, stuff like that, stuff that he had to deal with that aren't just injury based. It's amazing to be where he is. I think the excitement to go up against him down the stretch and to come out on top validates, especially now, if that was to happen in a major championship, it would be even bigger.

**Q. You mentioned that this is a draw golf course, visually pleasing to your eye, but the changes between '16 and the PGA Championship, your last time here for this and then the major, how does this golf course really suit your game to make you -- because you had success here in the past, but now with the changes, how does this layout for you now?**

**JUSTIN ROSE:** I mean, I think it should lay out just as well. Obviously the first few holes are shuffled around a little bit. I would say I'm still really learning them, I suppose. I think that I've only really played it in the PGA with the changes, right? So that wasn't a particularly great week for me.

So I think the next couple of days for me are quite important in terms of just understanding how the course flows, especially the start; the start is very different. Trying to understand where to attack and where to defend a little bit on this golf course.

But No. 1's now a fade hole, so there's probably a few more shots required than there used to be. I don't know if there's been tweaks since the PGA. The par-3 4th hole, I'm not sure if that's been tweaked a little bit. Yeah, I would say try to learn what's been changed a little bit more still for me.

**Q. So you're on the couch Sunday of Augusta. Are you rooting for Tiger?**

**JUSTIN ROSE:** Yeah, absolutely. Francesco Molinari is a good friend of mine and I've always been so impressed with how he's resurrected his career. Not so much resurrected it; how he made a conscious decision to try to get the best out of himself. The dedication and

discipline that he goes about with every single part of his job these days has been very impressive, so I was half-rooting for him, too.

But when it became apparent that he was going to be out of it towards the end, absolutely 100 percent rooting for Tiger, along with 99 percent of everyone else.

**Q. Where do you feel like your game stands right now, what parts are you happy with, what parts are you working on?**

**JUSTIN ROSE:** I've got no idea where my game is this week, to be honest with you, which is kind of -- I was just chatting to Doug just coming in here. I feel like this is a really good time in the season for me, I feel like I can square away pretty much everything that's gone this season, and now I feel like it's almost square away the last 18 month actually. I've been on a very consistent run that's gotten me to No. 1 in the world at times. Winning this year is great, but I feel like there's a bit of a refocus and rededication and remotivation that I found in the last week or two post Augusta. And I'm excited about what I can rebuild going forward for the rest of the season. Where my game is, I don't know, but I like where it's going to go, if you know what I mean.

**Q. Will you see Bethpage ahead of time?**

**JUSTIN ROSE:** Yeah, I will, yeah.

**Q. When did you plan to go up there?**

**JUSTIN ROSE:** I think sometime this week, probably mid week. A bit like I did for Merion probably back in 2013. I went up there for a few days mid week, really tried to get my head around the golf course. Then came home for the weekend and tried to digest it, rest, spend some time with the family and head back up there early in the week next week.

**Q. Justin, you mentioned shot shape, some different things. I was looking at the numbers, the driving accuracy numbers here, really difficult; proximity numbers, incredibly hard. What do you think in terms of your assets benefit you on this, as you said, championship-style course?**

**JUSTIN ROSE:** I think probably the strategy, to be honest with you, sort of learning -- I think like you say -- that's interesting that you say that the approach distances are difficult here because I think you have to respect so many pins, short siding yourself at times here is not a good option where some golf courses you can kind of have a go at the pin because the up and down is still on, still manageable. That's why proximity is probably easier in other venues.

But you have to respect a lot of pin placements here, you've got to keep it under the hole. So I think you're playing a more defensive style of golf at times. I think that suits me. Obviously good ball-striking to get the ball in position, but also very patient golf and being

able to sort of plot your way around the course.

**Q. Of the various training aides you might use, whether it's a phone for video, TrackMan, putting, whatever it might be, if you were only allowed one, what's the one training aide you cannot live without?**

**JUSTIN ROSE:** Sean and I have done a lot of talking the last couple weeks. He's sent me a whole ton of videos and he's documented really my last two years of sort of when we made conscious decisions to change certain things in my swing and really single good spell and good video that I have has the training aide ball between my hands, which really kind of, for me, sorts my backswing out so much, and my wrist and hand position. So whether it be a tennis ball between my wrists or a slightly bigger ball between my forearms, that's probably the one thing for me because it deals with the clubface, but it also makes me not be able to lift my arms to the top, I have to really pivot and turn to the top. So it does three or four really good things for me.

**Q. When's the last time you used it?**

**JUSTIN ROSE:** Yesterday.

**Q. Had you gone spells without using it?**

**JUSTIN ROSE:** I think I've not realized how important it had been for me at times, so yeah, I think I probably had gone off using it as much. I was using it religiously, I suppose, and in the last few months not as much.

**JACK RYAN:** Any more questions for Justin?

Well, thank you for the time, Justin. Best of luck this week.