

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
July 31, 2019



COLLIN MORIKAWA

MAUREEN RADZAVICZ: We welcome Collin Morikawa into the media center here at the Wyndham Championship.

Collin, you earned your first PGA TOUR victory last week at the Barracuda Championship. Have you had a chance to process everything?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: No, not really. It's been a quick kind of three days, four days so far since it's happened. Yeah, I don't think I'll be able to kind of really appreciate everything that's happened in the past month and a half, two months since I've graduated until this full season's over now that I'm in the Playoffs. It's a great extra few weeks of me playing golf. Yeah, I don't think it's going to really happen until I get a few weeks off and be able to decompress, relax and just think through everything that's happened so far.

MAUREEN RADZAVICZ: So you're making your ninth PGA TOUR start this week. Between your win and three top-10s, you've already put yourself to 46th in the FedExCup Playoffs race. How much is it a goal to make it to the TOUR Championship?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: It's everything now. My goal for these last two weeks before the win was to make it -- and then win, obviously, and make it to the Playoffs. Now that I'm so far ahead of a lot of guys, it's definitely in reach to take it to the top 30, so that's obviously a really big goal.

For this week, it's just I've got to reset, I've got to focus on what I need to do to play well at this course. Thankfully, I've been here a few times for the AJGA Invitational they had out here. Yeah, it's all about just focusing on this week and I can't worry about the next couple of weeks for the Playoffs.

MAUREEN RADZAVICZ: You've had a chance to play here a couple times. Can you just give us your impressions of the course? Is there anything that suits your game in particular?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, there's a lot of par 4s out here, par 5s are reachable for everyone. It's a good approach shot, ball-striker's golf course and that's kind of been my game so far throughout the summer. You've just got to put yourself in the right spots. You put yourself above the pin on certain holes, you're going to be playing for bogey at best. I think out here it's just really got to keep it below the hole and just know when to take your kind of medicine and get out with par.

Q. Collin, on Twitter people crunched the numbers and realize that you would be No. 1 in several categories from tee to green. I think you're somewhere around 100 in

strokes gained putting. Is this typical for you? Is this kind of what you were like when you were at Cal?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: It's pretty close. You know, I don't know if it was that big of a dispersion, but this has been my game forever and that's what I spent four years in college to work and just get -- just to get my short game and my putting just to this point and I know there's a lot of work still left. But that's my game. I hit a lot of greens, I try and hit a lot of fairways, so I'm going to have a lot more chances.

It's tough. If I keep giving myself 15- and 20-footers, there's no one out there that's going to make every single one. So your strokes gained when you look at it from a bigger perspective, if I'm making a few of those but I'm giving myself a lot more of those chances, that's why the scores have been what they are and it looks like the strokes gained putting is worse than maybe it really is. I think for me, especially last week, what I focused on was speed and that's what I'm going to do this week is hone my speed, make sure I see my lines. That's really what I didn't do my first few weeks out here was focus on that speed and I think that help me last week make a few more putts than I'm used to. It's just little things that I need to focus on every single week and that's one of them.

Q. And then just a quick follow-up. With that said, if that is sort of your typical game, what happens when you have a hot putting streak? I mean, do you win by 10 or something? What's the most you've ever won by when that's happened?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Hopefully, we'll find out. The most I've ever won by. I really don't know. There's a high school event I shot 11 under and it was like a three-round event and I won by like 14, but that was a long time ago.

But yeah, I think when the putter gets hot, it could be really dangerous out there. And I just have to be patient. I know this is a work in progress and this is something I want to keep getting better. But I need to tell myself that I'm a good putter, that I believe in myself, because that's what I believe in every other part of my game. It is really good to look at the stats and see where I rank and everything, but if I just believe I can make this putt, if it goes in, it goes in and that's all I could really do.

Q. When you got started this summer, what were your expectations and have you exceeded them or were you bold enough to think this is what you were going to do?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, I think some of the expectations and goals I had were to earn the PGA TOUR card. Obviously things have kind of moved a little quicker than what I had seen really. I obviously wanted it and there are goals, but when I had dinner with Justin Thomas at RBC in Canada, you have to kind of separate what expectations are versus reality. I have to realize this is my first summer out here and I'm here to learn. And I'm still learning, I think that's never going to stop.

But yeah, I mean, I think it's gone a lot faster than what I kind of saw. The goal was just to

get that PGA TOUR card for next year, but after I secured that and I had a few more starts, it was to win. You know, now it's to make it to that TOUR Championship.

So it's not going to stop, it's just going to keep going. When this year's over, I'm going to be able to really look at it all, kind of put this whole season together. Obviously it's going to be a lot of positives, but there are still going to be things I'm going to nitpick and just keep getting better and focus on what I need to do for next year.

Q. When you had the chance at 3M, you didn't win, but did you walk away like, okay, I can do this now, more encouraged than disappointed?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Definitely. It was just a lot of confidence. I think I already proved to myself that I can do it, especially when I first stepped out there in Canada. It wasn't -- I didn't feel out of the norm. I felt ready and I felt like this was the right spot to be. But being able to put four good rounds together at 3M obviously made it more appealing to me that I can do it. Yeah, I think I knew I had a good chance last week and put another four good rounds together.

Q. I'm sure the last 48 hours have been kind of a blur, but can you talk about any messages you might have gotten or things guys might have said to you on the range that were particularly memorable?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, there's just a lot of congratulations from guys. Some that stand out was like Gary Woodland, Justin Thomas, Jon Rahm. These guys out here that I've watched and kind of grown up watching and see their names all the time, it's kind of cool to finally put, you know, a little more personal interaction with them.

So just getting to know these guys. Every single guy out here kind of sort of knows who I am now maybe, hopefully. But yeah, it helps getting to know all these guys because these guys love the game just as much as I do. They've got families, they've got a bunch of friends.

I knew only a small handful of guys from whether it be Cal or the young guys, Cameron Champ, Sam Burns, that were already out here, but just to know more of these guys makes every single week a lot more comfortable for me and that just helps my golf game as well.

Q. What was your AJGA experience like, particularly here, and what did that do for you?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: AJGA in general?

Q. In general and in particular here.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: When it was the FootJoy Invitational here, it was actually my first invitational ever, so I have really good memories and I finished T-9th. That actually

propelled me to win the next week at the Western Junior and that kind of set forth my entire junior career. I mean, so I have good memories. And the next year I did miss the cut, but yeah, I love the area out here. I love North Carolina.

I think in general what AJGA did for me was just really set up a path, and that's what college was able to do for me. That's what I've kind of had in my vision and my dreams of what's the plan to get to this point. So what's next? I obviously had a plan to hopefully win. Plan to keep going up on the FedExCup, keep going up in the world ranking. There's paths, but AJGA sets up a path for all juniors to succeed and excel and there are opportunities a lot of golfers can take. It's a special tour that I think we're going to create a lot of friendships. What's cool is there's a girls and boys division, so you rarely see them in college, but you get to meet a lot of friends that are going to be lifetime friends.

Q. Talking to Webb Simpson, he was a really good college player, but said when he got out here there was a learning curve, and he thought he could win, but he realized it was going to take a while. With you, with Matthew, Viktor Hovland, seems like there is no learning curve, you've stepped right in. What's different about you guys or what did you learn in college that's helped you get to this point?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I think there's still a learning curve for us every single week. This is the first course I've showed up to that I've played before other than Pebble Beach. For us, every single week we've got to learn the ropes, we've got to figure out where everything is. It's brand new.

But I think for us is we believe in ourselves. I said it since we all sat down together at Travelers, we ourselves believe that we can do it.

I think what's helped also, especially for me, is being able to at least play in, get an opportunity as an amateur to play in a professional event. I took my missed cut -- even though I made the cut at the Arnold Palmer Invitational last year, I took my missed cut in 2017 at the Safeway Open and I learned from those two days more than I could have ever, and I think that's what we've kind of done.

Obviously Viktor played really well as an amateur in a lot of events. Matt had his one event in Waste, but had quite a hype, had that going for him. I think we've just all been able to take those experiences and just be as prepared as we can for now when we get out here.

I used my senior season at Cal just to figure out what I'm going to do out here. Make sure I know what I'm going to do when I wake up, get to the course. You know, I spent all day when I was at Arnold Palmer Invitational just standing out watching people putting for no reason. I can't do that out here or else I will get burned out four or five weeks in a row.

MAUREEN RADZAVICZ: I think we're good. Thank you. Good luck this week.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Awesome. Thank you, guys.