

PRESIDENTS CUP CONFERENCE CALL
16 October 2019

JUSTIN THOMAS

CHUAH CHOO CHIANG: Thank you. Good afternoon, everyone. This is Chuah with the PGA TOUR communications team and thank you all for joining this call with Justin Thomas, who's on the line with us.

Justin, thanks for your time in joining us this afternoon. Just want to have a quick chat with you about your second appearance in the Presidents Cup coming up at Royal Melbourne. How excited are you to be going down there with the rest of the team?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, I'm very excited. I mean, the Presidents Cup, anytime you can represent your country and play on a team is a tremendous honor, first, but it's also a lot of fun the time you get to spend with the guys on the team and just kind of the bonding and the camaraderie that you create.

But I've never been to Australia before, so I'm very excited for that, especially playing the Presidents Cup is just going to make it even sweeter. Hopefully we'll be able to have a good time and play some good golf over there.

CHUAH CHOO CHIANG: Thanks, Justin, and we'll now take some questions.

Q. Justin, there have been a couple of USA teams even in your younger days as well, how do you think Tiger will be different as a captain from what you've experienced in the past.

JUSTIN THOMAS: I don't know, to be honest. I don't know if I've played in necessarily enough teams to really make that call. I know that I'm very excited to play for him. I mean, if you would have told me when I was a kid that I could play on a Presidents Cup team with Tiger Woods as my captain, I probably would have fainted or something like that. It's kind of surreal and I sometimes have to kind of step back and realize what's happening.

I know he takes it very, very seriously and his one and only mission is to get the best team that we possibly can and make sure we put the best partnerships together to make sure that we win any and every point that we possibly can. It's going to be a lot of fun and I know, at least I think he's enjoyed the process from what he's told me and what it seems he has.

Q. With that in mind, would you pick him and why?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, that's not my decision. I think if he's healthy and playing well, I mean, I'll take him, you know, 100 times out of 100. I think he knows his body and knows himself well enough to make that decision. He's asked me about it and I've told him that

exact same thing. For him, it's all about health, and for anybody. They need to make sure their game is ready and their body is ready because it's not just something that you do just to do. If he's going to pick himself, he's only going to do it if he's ready and he's playing well. So I guess we'll just have to wait and see.

Q. Justin, you mentioned before you've never played in Australia. What have you heard about Royal Melbourne and the Sandbelt area?

JUSTIN THOMAS: All I've heard is how much I'm going to love it. You know, from Tiger and Freddie especially, they keep saying how much I'm going to love the course and love just everything about it. I mean, like I said, I'm just excited to go to Australia let alone play golf in Australia. It's going to be a great experience. I'm probably going to have to bring it in a couple days into it and remember that I'm playing in a Presidents Cup, I'm not on vacation and trying to enjoy everything.

You know, it is what it is. I've seen it on TV, but obviously it's a lot different when you go see it in person and play it. So I'm excited to check it out and kind of see using the contours and being able to put the ball in the ground and kind of get creative out there because that's some of my favorite golf in the world.

Q. You talked a second ago about Tiger as a captain's pick. Can you talk a little bit about the other players, because there's still a number of players who have been regulars in Ryder Cup and Presidents Cup teams over the years that aren't yet on the team and want a captain's pick. Could you talk a bit about that? Has Tiger reached out to you at all for your thoughts?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, that's the part of the process. He's reached out to all of us on the team and what we think and what we want or stuff like that. It is kind of a different year, but I think that being said, it's not a bad thing, it's a good thing. It shows how deep our team is and how many great players we truly have with the chance and the possibility of having on the team playing.

You know, he's going to make the right decisions. It's going to be tough. We have this next month or so or I guess the next couple weeks to sit aside and kind of finalize that team. He's going to do -- like I said, he's going to do what's best for the team, not what's best for him or what's best for one individual person. The strict and only reason of being a captain is to pick the best players on the team that we can win, try to go win the Presidents Cup.

Q. My question is, before the Ryder Cup last two years, you made a trip to France to play at Le Golf National in Paris and it translated into a really good personal Ryder Cup performance. I guess I'm asking how important is home advantage in golf? Is it overrated or do you feel it's just like a course you turn up and do your best? Can you give us a bit of a balance on that?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, I think it really just depends where you are. You go to a place

like Augusta and the more times you play it, the better. But you play a handful of courses on Tour that are just kind of right in front of you and really nothing special, then there's not really like any kind of home course advantage.

It's always going to help the more times you play, but there's a lot of courses that have just a lot of little nuances and just things that you need to know in order to get around. That being said, I don't know if Royal Melbourne has that, but luckily we have guys, captains, vice captains on our team that have been there that will be able to kind of fulfill that knowledge for me, because I'm obviously going over there and I've never played there. So I'm going to use the practice rounds and them as much as I can to try to get as much knowledge of the course as I can.

Q. Obviously the Ryder Cup carries a lot of global prestige and Presidents Cup's an exciting event for Australian fans, Japanese fans and South African fans, all the others. I'm just wondering where Presidents Cup ranks for you in terms of against the Ryder Cup.

JUSTIN THOMAS: I feel like it's not really a fair question. I mean, I understand, but they're both very intense and they're both very important and they're both essentially the same thing where you're playing for your country and trying to bring a cup back for your entire country. They're both bigger -- both tournaments are bigger than you yourself, they're bigger than one other person on the team or a couple people. It's you 12 playing together for your country and doing everything that you can to try to bring that cup back or retain -- or get the cup back and be able to claim it for two years. I mean, they both definitely have their differences and their similarities, and because of that, that's what makes them both great.

I know Australia's going to be pretty crazy. I'm sure there's going to be a huge, huge following in galleries, so I'm excited for that. Yeah, you can compare and contrast both of them forever, but at the end of the day they're both huge deals and I will gladly play in any of them that I can.

Q. Just a quick follow-up on that. Obviously the U.S. has been very dominant for years in the Presidents Cup and you've got such a superstar lineup. Is there any sort of danger of complacency within the team that individuals could rely on other superstars to sort of get the job done?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, I don't know if it's complacency just as much as the time of year is obviously different. I mean, it is for everybody, not just for us. You're definitely not as much in the groove, in the competitive mode as you are, say, in September. But everybody has to deal with that and everybody has to find their ways to get through it.

I know it's going to be nice for me in particular playing the week before in Tiger's event. I feel like that will be a big help for me to kind of get back into that zone and that mind frame. Hopefully all the guys that are on the team that are playing in Tiger's event will do the same.

Q. You said you've never been to Australia. Is there a reason for that? I assume they've tried to get you down here before. Is there a reason you've actually never been here?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I would say the biggest reason, that it's a pretty tough place to get to. If it was as easy just to come quickly, I would 100 percent have taken a trip. Now the timing in terms of like golf for like the Aussie Masters or The Open, it's always around that Thanksgiving time and that's the time I spend -- I'm off. I don't like to go play more golf that time of year usually. I like spending the time with my family and friends, so that's the reason I haven't gone in the past.

I've thought about it before and I've wanted to go for so long, but it just hasn't made sense in terms of making sure I'm rested for the next season. So yeah, I think if it was closer, I definitely would have gone just for fun, but it's kind of like Asia, it's not exactly a quick trip that you can make and get there and back in a weekend.

Q. I think you won your first time, you beat Adam Scott to win your first PGA TOUR event. I think that's right, isn't it?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yes, yeah.

Q. I just wonder what you've made of his year on the PGA TOUR this year, Adam's year, and whether you're close to any of the Aussie guys? Are there any Aussie guys you're particularly close to?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, I mean, Adam is I feel like the epitome of what every probably PGA TOUR player wants to be like. He's the nicest guy in the world, he probably has the most perfect golf swing you could draw up, he's unbelievably nice to not only the other guys but the fans, he has a great name for himself in terms of just globally. He kind of is a great example and role model for all kids and other people.

So I probably know him the best in terms of the Aussies. Leish and Cam Smith and J-Day I know and play some with, but I've been around Adam a couple times and this and that. He's someone where whenever I'm around, I probably just kind of sit back and listen to whatever he has to say because I feel like I have the opportunity to learn something from it.

Q. I'm hogging it, but I wanted to know how much harder do you think the team play would be for you if your partner didn't understand your language?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Wow, that's a great question. I think it would be a lot harder because for me in particular, I kind of feed off of being able to boost my partner up and especially when things aren't going well, you know, kind of say things to try to motivate him or kind of get together and try to motivate us or get the good momentum going.

I don't know how I would do that. I've never thought of that before and that is a really, really

good question. I would think that is very, very difficult, especially on a tough day. On a good day it's easy because you just stay out of each other's way and keep making birdies, but when stuff's going tough, I would have to imagine that's very difficult.

Q. Because obviously a couple of the Internationals may have that issue.

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, yeah, absolutely.

Q. Is there something that you would put a target on in the team that they've got? I know you guys like to take out the top dog. Have you figured out who that is yet?

JUSTIN THOMAS: No, I've never really been a person to be -- at least whatever, I've only played on two teams, but I've never -- I haven't been like that. I just want to absolutely demolish whoever I'm playing, doesn't matter who it is.

CHUAH CHOO CHIANG: All right, everyone. Thanks for your time in Australia. We appreciate you being on the call and we appreciate all your support for the Presidents Cup.

Thank you, Justin, for being on the call this afternoon and good luck at THE CJ CUP in Korea.

JUSTIN THOMAS: Thanks, guys. Appreciate it.