

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
January 21, 2020

JUSTIN ROSE



SHARON SHIN: I would like to welcome in the defending champion of the Farmers Insurance Open, Justin Rose.

Justin, you're making 11th start here at Torrey Pines. How does it feel to be back?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, it always feels good to be back here. It's one of my favorite venues on Tour, South Course, one of my favorite golf courses in the world. And I guess extra special I guess after playing so well last year, me being defending champion. This really in earnest it gets my PGA TOUR season up and running. I have played one event, the HSBC Champions in China, but like I said, this feels like the start of my year.

SHARON SHIN: I know we have a lot of golf left, but it's hard to believe it's already been four years since your Gold at the Rio Olympics. How much is that on your mind as we approach Tokyo?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, that's definitely sort of become a talking point. Last week I was in Singapore, that event was sponsored by a Japanese company and they had -- obviously with Tokyo coming around, they were keen on having the medalists there, so myself, Kuch and Henrik Stenson went down to play. So having the three of us together created a little bit of talk about it all.

Yeah, it's been a wonderful three and a half years to this point. It's been definitely one of the highlights of my career and something I'm very keen to try and defend. I think Tokyo's going to be a wonderful host city. Obviously Japan's a great golfing nation and I'm sure there's going to be a lot of excitement and from what I can tell, I think it's going to be well attended and well supported by the players.

Q. (No microphone.) What about Britain? I mean, Casey, Tommy...

JUSTIN ROSE: What Doug was actually saying is the U.S. team's an incredibly difficult team to make. I think Tiger would be the last guy in, I think, at seventh in the world I'm thinking, so that certainly is a really tough team to make. That's what Kuch was talking about last week in Singapore. He obviously would love to be back, but it's probably the hardest team in the world to make.

And myself included. Team GB is a really strong team. Right now I'm No. 8 I think, Tommy's right there at No. 9 or 10, Paul Casey's right outside the 15. For me, the 15 is the key cutoff mark. Obviously I'm trying to look at the world rankings and try to go up. I had a little sort of slip towards the end of last year, but having been No. 1 in the world, hopefully

I'm looking north, not south.

But 15 is the key number. If you're in the top-15, I feel from a Team GB point of view, you'd be unlucky to be in the top-15 and not go to Rio, I mean to Tokyo.

Yeah, you're right, Casey's right there, Fitzpatrick's knocking on the door. It would be fantastic if we could field four guys.

Q. I think you talked last year about maybe switching up the schedule a little bit based on the new PGA TOUR schedule. Are there any changes on the PGA TOUR schedule you would adjust?

JUSTIN ROSE: I think I've just accepted the fact that the majors do come around thick and fast and you've just got to be ready for that block of golf. I think it's very difficult to peak, valley, peak, valley, peak, valley, to try -- which is what I've tried to do for majors in the past. I think you now need to just try and give yourself the overall reserves that you can just push through major season and try to keep your game at a high level all weeks and hopefully you hit at the right time.

That now includes the Olympics. I was looking at the schedule, I'll probably be flying out to Tokyo the Wednesday/Thursday after The Open Championship, so really there's not much time to breathe, I suppose. You know, a couple of days at home and then you're off again.

Yeah, I made some changes. Some tournaments have to take a hit because of that and I'm just trying to -- this year the biggest change I'm making is how I operate at home. I'm trying to really make every day count at home. If I have a week off at home, let's just go with the flow and go with the wind, I'm trying to really structure my days at home to give myself, one, the appropriate amount of work that I need to get done to perform, but then two, enough quality family time as well. So I felt like last year was a bit of a tricky year where I've always felt like I was trying to play catch-up on the road and practice too much on Tour and try to fix things Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays. So this year I'm just trying to take care of my weeks off really so I can get to tournaments and actually have easier weeks on the road, which will hopefully keep me fresher.

Q. You mentioned a bit of a slip from last year. Last year when you were here, you came here as the No. 1 player in the world, you won. This year I think you're No. 8. What was different about last year (inaudible) when you shot to the top?

JUSTIN ROSE: I got into bad habits last year. I swung the club poorly. I took a month off after this tournament and that was essentially my offseason. Didn't do a ton of work because it was my offseason. I felt like the decision behind that was to be fresh for the majors. It just didn't play out very well, it didn't work out very well. So I was kind of learning on the fly last year about how to approach the new schedule and it just didn't work, and kind of paid for it a little bit I felt like all season long.

Like I said, I just didn't like the way I was swinging the club. Actually, I think it was a brilliant year the way I look back at it. My statistics ball-striking-wise dropped off, but I putted great. I competed well. I felt like I had a chance to win the U.S. Open, I was in the second-to-last group in The Open Championship. Without having much game, I really felt like I competed well. So yeah, which I have done, I'm beginning to feel really comfortable with my game again. So if I can kind of keep that level of competitiveness going and just up a couple areas of my game, I should have another great year.

Q. Just continuing on that topic, when during the year do you kind of sit down with your team and look back at what went on? And then just more specifically, what are the things -- you mentioned ball-striking, but what are the stats, what are the things you really value in your assessment of a season?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, I think if I look back at it, I think it goes back to 2016 when I had a pretty bad back injury and we changed some mechanics in my swing to alleviate some of the back issues, and then the cure became the cancer in a way. I just overdid certain things and all of a sudden I found myself trying to do the same feels that worked there for a while.

But then I kind of went back through my iPhone and I timestamped -- well, I looked back when I thought I hit it the best and when I liked my swing the best and it was about six months to a year into the process of making the changes, and then you could start to see the overreaction to the changes with six to eight months after that.

So I kind of, you know, December '17 is where I settled on, that's kind of where I think I was at my best and where I want to get back to. So that was -- and it was really an interesting scenario because I was doing it independently to Sean. Sean was spending the offseason going through all of his videos and just trying to figure it all out and we kind of came to a pretty same similar conclusion, which was great.

I think getting the ball in play off the tee, that's definitely swing related, for sure. That dropped off a few percent, but everything's so close. Still pretty good approach to the green. My short game dropped off a little bit last year, but that's what I'm talking about doing my work at home because I felt like I was pushing so much workload on Tour that bunker play and chipping is always the last thing to get done. If you're working on your game, you know you have to putt, but if you're working on your game as hard as we are at tournaments, chipping, putting can often get forgotten about. So I saw a dropoff in that for that reason. Just trying to make those minor adjustments this year.

Q. It's been a little while now where Tiger's been working as his own coach or coaching himself. How do you think that decision has contributed to his success the last couple years?

JUSTIN ROSE: Tiger, you say?

Q. Yeah, in coaching himself as opposed to going with another coach.

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, I think it's fantastic when you have ownership of your golf swing. He's had a few coaches through the years and he's reinvented his swing a couple of times. I think right now he's accepted where he's at and what he's capable of, I mean, physically, and I think he's playing within himself.

He's got a set of moves that work really well. I don't quite know what he works on, but you can tell the backswing is kind of like that slightly inside feel and then he feels like the club comes slightly -- works slightly out on the way down. I don't know what he feels with that, but he looks the same every week. And when he actually makes the swing with an iron, it's the purest swing. I think his swing looks as good as he ever has and he definitely is clear on what he's trying to do.

No matter who you are and whether you're working with a coach or not, clarity is really, really important. So, but yeah, I think I've learned so much through the years. I love having Sean around as a sounding board and we work so well together and that's how we work at our best. I teach him as much as he teaches me in the way we work together. It just is a good sounding board and a great relationship.

Q. Justin, just to follow up to that with Tiger, the wear-and-tear factor, you talked about your own back injury. When you stood out there last year and saw what he did to reinvent himself after those four major back surgeries and not able to stand up and walk, how amazed at the guy with what he accomplished?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, I think the resiliency that he's shown is incredible and remarkable and a huge testament to him.

I've been through a pretty bad back injury that's not all that well documented, but I knew how hard it is to come back from and I know how debilitating it can feel and be, so to have that multiple times in your career is quite something. Not only did it lead to physically not being able to play, but I think mentally as well, like the short game disappeared. We've all had problems that just have manifested with injury, and that's happened to a lot of players. A lot of times a player gets injured, physically you go and then the mental side goes with it for a lot of people.

So I think it even happened to him for a short period of time there, and to come back from there, all the credit. I think everyone was willing and wanting it to happen and maybe not many thought it would happen, but now he's back to where he is, he looks very comfortable, he looks in control and it looks like it's certainly here to stay. It's great.

Q. Justin, you've been out here for a good part of his career, can you wrap your arms around the idea of 83 wins? I mean, we expect him to get that at some point, but just the enormity of it, is it almost underrated at how impressive it is?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, you know, I mean, you would have to think the depth on Tour is

getting stronger and stronger and stronger as well, you know. So maybe it's harder to rack up seven, eight, nine, 10 a year, but still 8.3 is pretty good. Yeah, it's a number I can't quite get my head around. I was pretty excited to get to double digits. You know, it's a long way north of that. Yeah, it's impressive.

Q. (No microphone.)

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, for sure. Ryder Cup enters the radar and provided you're on course to make the team and you're having a decent year and you're not chasing points, it only really hits the radar post FedExCup. I think there's now two or three weeks between East Lake and the Ryder Cup, which I think is a huge advantage for the U.S. team from years past actually because coming right off the back -- obviously there's quite a few European guys who do play the FedExCup as well. But a lot of guys retire that time of year, so that two- or three-week break might freshen up everybody going into the Ryder Cup.

Q. There's ways now to measure things that used to be impossible, like force plates or 3D motion capture. Do you use any of those things and kind of what role do they serve in your training and practice?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, well, Sean Foley's lost his TrackMan about a month ago and I think he's not missing it at all, which is kind of cool. I think he feels a lot of the things that he believed when he was 24 are coming back into play for him. I think you can get very distracted sometimes with so much of the theory.

Saying that, 3D has been pivotal in terms of measuring things for me in terms of how my joints move when it comes to trying to work around an injury or understand why an injury has happened. When you see things measured three dimensionally with the data that comes out of it, it doesn't translate to what you see through an iPhone when you're filming your swing.

So I think 3D is the one thing that I will implement in my game. I think force plates and TrackMan and Swing Path, all of that stuff I'm less inclined to be using at the moment.

Q. Is there an example, a specific example of something that 3D revealed that you wouldn't have otherwise seen or been able to change?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, in terms of how much the relationship with my pelvis basically. I feel like I need to get my left side feeling high through the ball where I get a little bit of a low pelvis, and when I get a low pelvis my ribs tend to go too far forward and then the reaction to that is a very quick move, which compresses disks and things like that.

Yeah, when you turn into a stickman and you see basically the relationship between the spine and the pelvis, it was really interesting to me how much I had to feel something to make the correct move.

And there's bio feedback as well. You can have it where if you do it correctly, sound comes on, that's a very helpful learning tool.

Q. Two kind of Ryder Cup related questions. A, do you even pay attention to the Presidents Cup as a member of Team Europe?

JUSTIN ROSE: Not normally.

Q. Did you this year?

JUSTIN ROSE: I did this year, yeah.

Q. Why?

JUSTIN ROSE: I thought it was quite compelling actually. I think that, one, I enjoy watching Royal Melbourne. I think it's such an incredible golf course and every shot you could tell the guys had to be on point. And I thought Tiger was amazing from that point of view as well in terms of being a tactician on a golf course. I really enjoyed watching how he went about playing Royal Melbourne.

And it's good to see the Internationals give you guys a run for your money, yeah. I enjoyed watching that.

Q. I didn't play that week, but I know what you mean.

Do you watch with your Ryder Cup hat on, like do you look at the U.S. team and think --

JUSTIN ROSE: I know the guys so well, I'll watch as a competitor. I'll watch as it's interesting who makes the putts down the stretch, who makes the putts under pressure.

It's like watching golf, the only time I watch golf is maybe the last four holes of a Sunday because that's where I can learn something about the guys that I go up against. In match play I think there's always the added element that each hole, each putt is a putt that wins a tournament. It's binary, it's in or it's not, you win or you lose. That's not just at the end of a tournament, that's hole by hole.

So it's kind of cool to see how guys handle pressure, for sure. And with one eye you're looking at pairings and who's comfortable together and what you may see in the future, for sure.

Q. (No microphone.) What do you attribute your ability to do that, gain speed, and not have it hurt the rest of your game?

JUSTIN ROSE: Well, I think, yeah, I definitely had a Project 300 in play since 2015, 2016, and although it didn't help my game, maybe it did help my body. I think I paid for it actually

in 2016. The back wasn't that great, so I've had to learn to go about it a slightly different way.

I look at it now in terms of, I look at Roger Federer. There's guys that serve at 135, but he serves at 121 in the corners. He's at the back end of his career, so it's incredibly effective.

So yeah, I'm not going to be a 185 ball speed guy and if I chase that, it is going to hurt me and it's going to hurt my swing and body because you've got to reabsorb that force. But I can serve it 121 in the corners is kind of where I'm at. And for me, that's like 172, 175 ball speed. I carry the ball 300. If I can carry the ball 300 in the air, I can compete on any golf course against any player. So that's kind of my benchmark.

SHARON SHIN: Thank you for your time and good luck this week.

JUSTIN ROSE: Thank you.