

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
May 5, 2021

JUSTIN THOMAS



AMANDA HERRINGTON: We would like to welcome Justin Thomas, our FedExCup leader, World No. 2, to the virtual interview room here at the Wells Fargo Championship.

Justin, you're back here for the first time after a couple years, but a place that holds lots of fond memories for yourself. Just open up about what it's like to be back.

JUSTIN THOMAS: It's great to be back. I was very upset and disappointed I had to miss it in '19 from my wrist injury, but I can't believe it's been three years since I've been here. It's been almost four years since the PGA, so I have a lot of great memories. I'm glad that I somehow got to sneak in the Champions locker room area from the PGA, so I'm excited about that. But I love Charlotte, I love the fans here, I love the golf course. It's a fun atmosphere and it's a very good golf course, so it should be a good week.

Q. Justin, just curious your thoughts on the report yesterday that the Premier Golf League or whatever the name is is progressing to making offers to some PGA TOUR players. Have you been approached and what's your sense on sort of the state of that venture?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I didn't see that, so this is the first I've heard of it. I haven't heard anything personally, so again, I don't have much interest.

I love it out here on the PGA TOUR, and we're very fortunate to get to go to some unbelievable places and play for a lot of money and have an opportunity to grow our brands and grow the game of golf. I'm very content and very happy with everything how it's going here.

Again, I hadn't heard of anything. I don't really know what the article said or what the word was, but I haven't been told, so maybe I'm not of interest to them, I guess, which doesn't really make a difference to me.

Q. On a very separate note, I saw you putting in some good work on the putting green yesterday. Obviously a disappointing week for you putting at Valspar. What was the issue? Is it fixed?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, it wasn't -- it wasn't like something was really that off. I hit a lot of really, really good putts, a lot of quality putts. Everything fundamentally was pretty good, just the ball wasn't going in. You have weeks like that, but obviously it doesn't get that bad very often and hopefully not ever. But it was just one of those weeks where I felt like I was stroking it well, I felt good over the putter on Thursday and Friday and just nothing went in.

Then I was kind of getting into some of my old tendencies of opening the putting face too much going back and then I have a tendency to drag it a little bit or have a hard time timing it up right to get the clubface square, putter face square. That was something I was fighting a little bit maybe over the course of the week in terms of some misses, but overall as a whole I felt like they're very difficult greens to read. You have a lot of grain that kind of goes opposite of the slopes and a lot of subtle ridges. Clearly Sam Burns didn't feel that way, and many others, but I felt like I was putting the ball actually pretty well, just nothing was going in.

Q. Justin, at the PGA Championship they're going to allow range finders. Do you think that will have any major impact on how that tournament is played and how you specifically will deal with it?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I won't -- I don't think we'll use them. I think maybe if you hit one on another hole or you have some kind of crazy weird angle you have the opportunity to use it, that's one thing.

But I think I made my stance on it pretty clear. I don't really like them. I think it takes away an advantage of having a good caddie that maybe goes out there and does the work beforehand as opposed to someone, especially now between the yardage books, the greens books and range finders, you technically don't even really need to see the place or play a practice round. You can go out there and know exactly what the green does, you know exactly what certain things are on certain angles because you can just shoot it with the range finder. And I certainly don't think it's going to speed pace of play up at all unless you have a scenario where you do hit it on another hole or some kind of crazy angle where it would take you a long time to get a yardage.

At the end of the day it's not a -- Kiawah Island isn't some kind of course where the greens are going to be really soft and you just see pin, hit pin. It's going to be, okay, I have 193 hole, we have 174 front, I need to probably land this probably 180 to 182, a little wind off this way. So you're still going to need to get all that information, but then it's just going to add another element that's going to add time I think to the rounds in terms of shooting it with the range finder. I don't have any interest. I enjoy that process because it's all the things that I need, but if an opportunity arises where I hit it offline then yeah, I might use it.

Q. Have you been to Kiawah lately or recently?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Not since I was about 8, so it's been a minute. I'm hoping to go a day or so early.

Q. Young Squire, last year was kind of screwed up for a lot of reasons, so we're kind of in year two of this program, but have you noticed anything, what it's like to go from Masters to PGA without really having much time to breathe, and then you turn around and the U.S. Open's right on the heels, this move to May. What did you make out of it in '19 and are you feeling any differently this year, although you might have been hurt

in '19, weren't you?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I was. Thanks for bringing that up, Doug, I really appreciate that.

Q. Use your imagination. Come up with a really good answer.

JUSTIN THOMAS: I felt really rested, I felt great, my energy level was high as I was sitting on my couch watching the PGA.

But no, I'm looking forward to experiencing it for the first time this year.

Q. All right. Act like you're someone else. What do you think?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I definitely, I see it. It's tough because firsthand from a lot of either my friends or guys that like say live in Dallas, it's a lot of guys that live in Florida, you feel like you almost have to play those events because they're close to home and they're there and you know the golf courses. And it's kind of the same sort of thing with the guys say that live in that Dallas-Ft. Worth area, but this time it's around a major. So it's tough for them to where it's like they want to play all those events, but then they have a major in the middle and then they have a tournament like the Memorial or this on the other end. You just have to take off somewhere and it's really, really difficult. Because I know that I played Ft. Worth last year, I really liked it, the Colonial, and I'm going to be going three in a row with the PGA, Colonial and Memorial. Starting the week with a major and then going a couple more isn't usually something I would do, but they're just golf courses that I like and I don't want to take them off. Everyone goes through that. But I think it's really just about how you space it out and how everyone kind of feels like they go into majors. For me, taking next week off is something that I like to do going into a major, but there's guys that want to play, so it's like if they're going to play, then they've either got to take this week off or Valspar off. It's tough. I feel like that didn't really answer your question at all, but I think --

Q. You thought it was a bad question.

JUSTIN THOMAS: You said it, not me.

Q. I did. I own it. Secondly, have you had an offer from the Saudis to play in the Premier Golf League and where do you see that going?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Not -- I haven't that I know of. I don't know if that's purposely from my management team not telling me or I just haven't gotten one. I don't know.

I don't know where it's going to go because everybody feels differently and everybody's in different places in their career. For me, I personally am about being No. 1 in the world and winning as many majors as I can and winning as many tournaments as I can and doing historical things on the PGA TOUR. If I was to go do that, then all those things go down the drain and I can't do that. I feel like I have a great opportunity to make a huge name for

myself on the PGA TOUR and continue to grow my brand and grow the game over here.

Yeah, I love the international side and being able to travel, but I can do that away from PGA TOUR events. I don't feel the need to completely up and leave the PGA TOUR because not only have they been great to me and everybody else, but we have it pretty good here and I do understand that and respect it.

So I don't know. Everybody feels differently. And again, they're in different stages in their career, but I feel like the next 10 years of my career could really be my prime and I want to take advantage of it here.

Q. And lastly, and this is another question in the queue, do you expect or care if you have a clothing deal by the end of the year?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I think it's pretty self explanatory, the fact that I still don't have one. I'm focused on playing good golf and trying to get back in the best form I can. You know, whenever that's meant to be, it will happen. We've been fortunate to have a lot of opportunities and a lot of really cool opportunities with different brands, and I've been very thankful and grateful for that, but at the end of the day, I just -- you know, I'm not waking up in the morning wanting to do something right away and I'm just wanting to go play golf. You know, there will be one day when I'm ready for that time, whether it's in a week or a year, that's when it is.

Q. Great stuff. Thank you.

JUSTIN THOMAS: Thanks, Doug. You, too.

AMANDA HERRINGTON: That brings us to the end of our press conference. Justin, we thank you for your time and wish you the best of luck.

JUSTIN THOMAS: Thanks, Amanda. You, too.