



JUSTIN THOMAS (-8)

Q. Justin, good playing today, 6-under 66. What was working so well for you out there today?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, I just feel like I played solid. It was a bit of a crapshoot with the mud on the ball, so you just kind of had to really pick your spots a little bit. I had a couple times where you have scoring clubs in your hand but just given the situation and the amount of wind and what would happen, you just kind of had to make the most of it. I felt like, same as yesterday, I was very patient, very focused and I just kind of plodded my way around. Definitely left some out there, but obviously very pleased with 6 under.

Q. Justin, you joined Tiger Woods and Rory for the TGL. Could you in a few words explain like what it is about, because some people are asking what is it about it?

JUSTIN THOMAS: It's exciting. As a golfer, you know, all I and we want to do is open up the game of golf to as many people as possible, not just your kids that are golf fans or regular people that are golf fans, we want to bring it to a global stage and just a lot more publicity and it's just a different side of golf. So I think it's going to be something that's exciting, entertaining and hopefully people will get some good enjoyment out of it.

Q. Justin, the Tour's reasoning and why they wanted to play the ball down, they said the majority of the golf course would not produce mud balls or excessive lies. Do you agree with their stance on that?

JUSTIN THOMAS: I don't, no. And the thing is, it's 20 people, it is what it is. I don't know what -- I was joking with Tiger and I said to Billy today, too, like I wish we could play it up after our tee shot and down around the green because I think playing it up is a huge advantage around the greens. You're able to just put it on a tee. The lies that you have, the shots that you have to create just doesn't take as much creativity and skill I think, to be perfectly honest, as when you have to play the ball down and you have to obviously play it where it is. Yeah, you're pretty much getting mud on every single drive, you just have to hope you don't get a lot.

Q. Did you get creative with anything today? In other words, did you have mud on your ball in such a way that caused to you play a shot completely differently than you ordinarily would have?

JUSTIN THOMAS: For sure. I mean, on 3 today I had -- most scenarios there I would be trying to hit a 4-iron or a 5-wood on the green and trying to make three. I had a lot of mud on the front of the ball but it wasn't really in enough of one side to have any idea where it was



going to go, to be honest. With the big crosswind, I couldn't -- I thought there was a little more on the left, but I couldn't aim it left of the green because if it does and it goes -- so I just tried to kind of punch a 5-wood and it didn't work out for me.

Same with 10, I had a mud ball there. I had 150, maybe 165 yards and I hit a 6-iron. I just tried to hit it head high and just get it on the ground because mud was on the right and with it being into the wind, it was going to, you know, exaggerate the curve. Again, you don't want to say scared, that's not right, but fear, it's the same thing. It's really --

Q. Brave uncertainty I think is the word.

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, massive uncertainty. Just trying to get it on the ground as quick as I can to where if it does do something crazy, at least it's not going to get in a spot where I can make big number.

Q. Do you ever find yourself, after a drive in the short grass, in the last 20 yards walking to the ball kind of getting a little bit nervous about seeing whether you have a clean ball or a dirty ball? Did you ever get into that routine of thinking what am I going to get now?

JUSTIN THOMAS: Yeah, I think different scenarios. I think coming down -- if we play it down again tomorrow, which I'm sure we will, I'm coming down the last couple holes and have a chance to win the tournament, I'm sure I'd be pretty nervous, I know I have been in the past. To me, it's like everyone has to deal with it, it's not like I'm the only person that's getting them. If anything, it just adds a little bit more imagination and creativity of just trying to make the best out of the situation you have.

Q. You're not the only one who's kind of mentioned this and I'm just curious, when was the last time you can remember a scenario that seems like it was just egregious, where it's obvious you should have been playing the ball up?

JUSTIN THOMAS: A hundred percent will never forget. I sent Doug the picture, it was the worst mud ball I ever had in my life. The last round we played before COVID at THE PLAYERS, other than a handful of U.S. Opens because the USGA just will not play the ball down, or play it up.

I just remember at THE PLAYERS that day was so muddy and I got so many mud balls. I got a mud ball so bad I took my phone out of my bag and took a picture because I'm like I can't even describe this to people how bad it is, they have to see it. I remember talking to you after and I sent you a picture and I hit this shot that literally went 10 feet off the ground and hooked like a hundred yards into like a bush. Clearly, I remember that, that was a really bad one.

Q. So this wasn't bad, at least we can say that?



JUSTIN THOMAS: No, no. It wasn't great, for sure, but it wasn't that bad.

Q. JT, we talked to Jon about the same thing in regards to making a decision to play preferred lies or not. He said or suggested that maybe the Tour should consult with players. Do you agree with that or should these things be separate?

JUSTIN THOMAS: No, I'd like to think and hope that, I mean, this is what the Tour does or the people that set the golf course up, they know what they're doing. And they're not going to be right all the time. I'm not saying today was wrong, but they definitely could have played it up. I think I don't know if it makes it right being a 20-person field, but I think it definitely makes Scribz' life easier, only 20 people coming in and complaining versus 120. I think that's probably a little easier day on him.

But it is what it is. It's unfortunate. And you can get some really, really unlucky breaks and unfortunate situations, but like I said, everybody has to deal with it and the more you let it get to you, probably the worse off you are.

