

COLLIN MORIKAWA

Q. Collin, from a 3-over start to finishing 4 under, again, I know you just talked to Tom, but what was the main difference you saw out there after the first few holes?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I just knew there was a lot of holes. The double was just compounded by mistakes after mistakes. Unfortunately, I was up against a tree, took an unplayable. The three-putt on 4 was just, that stuff shouldn't happen but it did.

I just knew like I was still hitting my irons good, I just had to give myself opportunities. Just seeing good shots, seeing quality shots go forward, that's important. And I've seen that the past couple days even though yesterday was a bad score and I just, you know, kept my head down and kept grinding at it.

Q. How satisfying is it, though, to overcome something like that, a tough start? Some would think you may have shot yourself out of the tournament, here you are right back in it after that finish.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, I haven't had a round like that in a while. I think it just shows that my head's in the right space. When you're 3 over through four, all I was trying to do was get back to even par through nine. Even par at the end of the day, even if I shot even I would have been pleased because out here you can get yourself in trouble pretty quickly.

I'm very happy with how everything kind of came about, and obviously the nice little string of birdies was a nice momentum swing. The par putt on 17, the putt on 18, all these things are just kind of great little momentum things heading into tomorrow.

Q. And coming off that bogey on 12, how key was that shot on 13, hitting that close on the par 3 there --

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah.

Q. -- and really kind of starting the streak?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah. J.J. and I, I owe him a lot. We talked through a lot today. Thursday was kind of an easy day, it was just point and shoot and ball went where we wanted. Today it was a little bit back and forth, a little bit of 'tweeners of those clubs. And sometimes those days don't work out, but we were able to figure out the right numbers, figure out the right shots, and that was a nice shot to finally hit where I wanted and just kind of get that, everything starting from there.

Q. So nothing really in terms of your swing thoughts or anything that might have just clicked for you?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: No.

Q. Just really sticking to the process?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Nothing changed. I had the few birdies on the front nine, the little string of, what was it, 6, 7, 8. You know, all those felt good. Just I need to play out of the fairway. I still didn't do that enough. I don't know how many fairways I hit today, but it wasn't enough. I think if I do that tomorrow, I'll give myself a good chance come nine holes.

Q. Is it encouraging -- yeah, because you said yesterday you counted three fairways yesterday walking up 18. I think the computer said four today.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Sweet.

Q. But is it encouraging knowing that you're still giving yourself these birdie chances even though the driver might not be --

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I missed them in the right spot. The back nine, I got two birdies on the par 3s, had some par 5s that I was in the rough.

So, look, if I want to have full control of it, yeah, I've got to play out of the fairway. Is it possible? Yes, today shows that. Thankfully, I wasn't missing it that far off compared to yesterday.

But look, I want to figure it out because playing out of these fairways, you can hit some long drives with how firm the fairways are getting. Greens are getting a lot firmer, so it's going to be even more apparent to want to be in the fairway and be on those greens tomorrow.

Q. Just looking ahead to tomorrow, talked at the beginning of the week of just really trying to get back in the winner's circle, this being one of the last opportunities.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah.

Q. Does it help at all knowing that you will be chasing tomorrow and not really thinking about protecting anything, you're just going out trying to shoot a low score and seeing what happens?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah. Look, those first few holes, 1 and 2 are very gettable, 3 can be gettable. Then you get to 4 and 5 and you're like if I make par, if I make a four and a three there, you're going to be happy.

So my mindset tomorrow is just going to be let's start off hot out of the gates, right? On 1, 2,

3, let's get a birdie or two out of there and see what happens.

I think the game -- the putter feels really good, the irons feel really good. It's just getting myself to get those shots and that's going to -- we're going to need to figure that out in the next kind of hour or so.

Q. How about the question of winning in Japan? We talked about that the first day, but how important is that? Important at all, or is it a critical factor?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Like I said, my focus tomorrow is just to give myself a chance. I had to do that today. It's not going to change anything out there. I'm going to be three, four, possibly five shots behind heading into tomorrow, so we're going to see what happens.

But look, today was very crucial, gave myself an opportunity to do that. I'm going to prepare like I always do for final rounds and just kind of let it play out.

Q. Just one more. The frustration of yesterday, had that not happened you would be in much better shape. You're behind the eight-ball now. What about yesterday, the inability to handle that wind?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Well, I mean, look, hitting three fairways, you can't play golf like that. The double wasn't even because I missed the fairway, it was because I made five shots or whatever from literally 35 or 50 yards from the green.

So it wasn't an inability to handle the wind, it was just an inability to hit fairways. And that continued today, so it wasn't just the wind. There's no wind out there and I was missing fairways today.

Look, the irons still really good. It's not the irons, it's just can I manage from the middle of the fairway or not.

Q. On a lighter note, I want to ask you about Sungjae's birdie on 18. Did you see the up-and-down? What are your thoughts on that?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Pretty incredible. That is like how you script golf, is just taking 30 minutes or however long we took on that hole and just, you know, you see that all the time. But it was an awesome way to end. Good on him, yeah.