



TimberTech
CHAMPIONSHIP



WENDESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2023
JUSTIN LEONARD

MODERATOR: Justin, thank you for joining us at the TimberTech Championship, the second of three playoff events. Can you just start with how it feels to be here this week?

JUSTIN LEONARD: It feels good. It does. You know, solid golf course, yes, safe the first time. It's in beautiful shape and really a nice layout. Staying at home this week. So, you know, a little bit of a commute, but as long as everybody cooperates on I-95, you know, it is nice to play close to home or a new home for us.

00:38 So, you know, that and then just kind of the, you know, the culmination of a good year to be able to get here and, and, you know, looking forward to trying to finish out the year in a good way.

MODERATOR: And last week, you had a top 15 finish at the Dominion Energy Charity Classic.

JUSTIN: Feel good about your form coming into this week? Yeah, pretty good. A little disappointed with a couple things, but, you know, last week was able to work on that and, you know, yeah, I just feel like this whole year kind of building on, you know, a few things and, and, you know, trying to eliminate some of the little mistakes here and there.

And fortunately, the way I've kind of spaced my schedule out where I'm not playing two weeks in a row very often. I am, you know, a couple of times here at the end of the year, but, you know, nice to have last week to work on a few things and, and, you know, feel good for this week.

QUESTION: Just to do in the TV stuff, I'm assuming you obviously can play as much golf as you did when you were playing golf. So what, what did it take and how long did it take to, when you join this tour to, to get back to where you wanted to be, where you think you can now win some, some of that?

JUSTIN: I don't know that I'm, well, I feel like I'm where I want to be. I wouldn't say the results are quite there, but I think that just comes with, you know, relearning some things and getting used to the rhythm of a tournament week and those, those kind of things.

You know, fortunately, I've only worked one of the event this year. So, you know, really my focus has been on my own game and things like that. But yeah, it's, you know, there's a few things here and there that, that, you know, old habits that I creep into and things like that.

It's like, wait a second, that's not me anymore and those kind of things. So, it's been a fun process. I've really enjoyed putting in the work and kind of figure out the balance between, you know, golf and, and, you know, the other stuff that I've got going on and things with my family and this and that.

And, and like I was in Richmond again last weekend for, or this past weekend for lacrosse tournament. And didn't take clubs and it was so fun just to dive in and, and watch, you know, really high level lacrosse for a couple days.

So, you know, doing things like that and finding that balance has, has been a bit of a process, but, but I think I'm getting there.

QUESTION: What was your impression of this tour before you joined and what, maybe is there something, a thing or two that surprised you about it?

JUSTIN: You didn't know about it that now you're on it full time? Well, I think, you know, from the outside looking in, you think, oh, you know, it's just, it's a lot of fun and it's way more low -key and this and that.

And, and it is those things, but I worked the senior PGA a couple of times when I, with NBC. And I remember the first one I did, it was in Washington, DC. And I went out to, I've got in Tuesday kind of midday and I know there was some thunderstorms and stuff in the morning.

So I just went on out to the golf course at like, it was two or three o'clock. Got in my car, drove over the range, just trying to kind of get the lay of the land. There's 40 guys on the driving range at three o'clock on a Tuesday.

There's two or three groups waiting the tee off one and it's completely stacked up. And I'm like, are you kidding me? These guys are working as hard as they ever have. So the, yes, there's a little lower -key kind of vibe on this tour, but the competition is, is every bit as good for the most part guys work as hard as they ever have because those are habits that got them to where they were in the game of golf and those things don't go away so it's just it's a great mixture of really high -level competition and maybe a bit more camaraderie than there is on the regular tour which I really enjoyed.

QUESTION: Justin you had kind of a plan in place when you were turning 50 to prepare yourself. Just talk about the things that you had done to be ready when you did turn 50.

JUSTIN: Yeah well one was start practicing and playing a bit more.

I started that process kind of right before my 49th birthday and then you know a lot of things just like working out. I changed my workouts living in Colorado. I did a lot of biking a lot of hiking a lot of you know kind of uphill skiing and those things but really getting in the more golf specific exercises with golf forever and using our swing trainer and things like that and it's been really a fun process.

I mean I'm hitting hitting the ball further than I ever have and not just driver it's not all technology even my eight and nine iron I'm hitting further than I ever have so that process has been fun and and then you know the other side of that is just the mental side and you know finding ways to to not focus so much on the results but more the process and those things and and you know so kind of adding that piece to it kind of throughout this year has been fun.

I've seen you know great results at times and others you know I kind of forget and fall into some some mold habits and so just trying to be more consistent that way.

QUESTION: And you moved down here were you playing at I mean what what's your kind of routine down here in South Florida?

JUSTIN: Yeah so we're we're up in Tequesta just north of Jupiter and remember it to Cuesta Country Club and Bears Club and Bears has been shut down you know for about the last six seven months just starting to open back up so that'll be nice but you know there and I've been able to practice a little bit of Jupiter Hills so the club's down here great.

I mean there's so much great golf. I don't play a lot. I more practice right I'll play by myself or with my son those kind of things but it's it's just a great place. Weather wise and my wife born and raised down here so now we've got her family nearby so it's really been a great transition for us.

QUESTION: So was part of that plan moving here you said getting back into golf playing more golf was that it was a part of it?

JUSTIN: Yeah it's a part of it. The travel down here is so much easier and yeah wanting to be able to play and practice and work on my game year -round get back to you know Amanda's kind of roots and be near her family you know a lot of reasons and it's been great for you know we've got two daughters in college a son in high school and then another one in middle school and I think everybody loves it down here and I know one of my daughters I was talking to yesterday she was talking about spring break and she thinks she's coming home and I lit up I'm like that's great because you never know if they're gonna go to friends places or what they may do and and she goes I think I'm gonna have about eight friends come with me I was like oh boy okay so we're gonna be chaperoning that week in other words so yeah it's fun but yeah their their friends like to come down here too.

QUESTION: So do you see any do you practice with that you said you play by yourself but do you practice with them any other as you know Jupiter is the epicenter of professional golf yeah as many do you see the guys around regular tour players tour champions players you know how do you run into them do you practice with them?

JUSTIN: I run into them you know I see Daniel Berger and Eric Cole a lot Lucas Glover at the Cuesta Country Club and then you know Bears Club there's like 30 guys there and so I I don't schedule a practice time but there's somebody always around and you know you pick up little things on on you know how they use their launch monitor and and you know what kind of of dad it provides and how to rely on it those kind of things I've picked you know Jessica Korda's brain and Shane Lowry's brain and Patrick Cantley. I mean so to have to be around those kind of people and see them working and how they work I saw it a lot when I was doing TV but but really it was for you know trying to provide some value to you know our broadcast and now I'm just trying to provide value to myself and and my high school son who plays golf so yeah it's it's it's nice to be around such high -level athletes and you know certainly fine little things to take away from them here and there.

MODERATOR: Brief pause David Toms has something for you.

TOMS: Hey, I have a note from Captain Furyk. Furyk invites Justin Leonard to represent as a member of Team USA.

JUSTIN: Yes!

TOMS: Welcome to the team.

JUSTIN: Thank you very much. Yeah, look forward to spending the week with you. Yeah, that'll be a lot of fun.

TOMS: Sounds good. Back to you to your other important...

JUSTIN: Thank you very much. I appreciate it, David. I'm coming up with a series of... Yeah, that's cool. That's a good session. Nice. Alright, that's pretty cool. Yeah.

QUESTION: We'll get to that in a second. So, Amanda, where was she born and grew up? She grew up in Palm Beach County?

JUSTIN: Yeah, North Palm Beach. She went to the Benjamin School. That's where our boys are. And, you know, it's amazing the number of faculty that is still there.

QUESTION: -something years later. So, your son plays golf at Benjamin with Charlie Woods? Yep. Yeah, they're teammates. That's pretty cool. Yeah, it's fun. That is pretty cool. What was in Richmond? So, you went to a lacrosse tournament?

JUSTIN: Yeah, our middle schooler plays on a state team and they took the team to Virginia and played up there. Okay. Yeah, so, it was fun. So, what was the event? Yes, I was reading something about, you know, kind of...

QUESTION: You guys have been involved in Ryder cups and Presidents cups and all that. Do you see this as something similar to, you know, to get the juices flowing, something similar to that? But I know there's three teams in these events. Right. So, what are you looking forward to the most playing in that?

JUSTIN: You know, it's always fun to represent, you know, your country or, you know, the team that you've played on, whether it's the international team or Presidents cup or the European team or Ryder cup.

And, you know, some of the teams that I've played with, you know, are really good. Some of those habits die hard, which is a good thing. It's fun. I mean, it certainly won't have the combativeness of, say, a rider cup or presence cup.

Not just literally the players, but really more the fans that are there. But it's always fun to be at an event, especially in golf, where you've got a side to root for because it's such an individual sport.

And the passion that comes out from the players and from the fans when they have a rooting interest, rather than just like this week 50, whatever, two individuals that are here playing, makes for a lot of fun. And then you throw the, for us, the American flag on a shirt, a golf bag and those kind of things, makes it a little more important. So it'll be fun. I'm excited to be a part of this.

QUESTION: Did you know this was coming? Is this the first time?

JUSTIN: I did. Yeah, it was actually announced a couple of weeks ago online, but, you know, nice to get the formal invite. Yeah, that's good.

QUESTION: Do you still have the shirt from 99?

JUSTIN: I do.

QUESTION: Yeah. Where is it?

JUSTIN: It's, you know, it's wadded up in the corner of a closet. Tommy Roy at NBC made me pull it out a couple of times for, you know, a couple of different telecasts. And I told him before the Ryder Cup in Rome that I lost it in one of the moves that I couldn't bring it with us to Italy, only because I didn't want to do it again.