

November 2, 2007

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An Interview With:

JUSTIN ROSE

GORDON SIMPSON: Justin, if anything was designed to put some colour back in your cheeks, it's putting up the best round of the day by two and having a four-shot lead and playing again with Pdraig tomorrow. It's all set up beautifully for the weekend I think.

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, no doubt about it. I was really, really, really happy with that round of golf. You know, once again I thought I played very, very well and just my short game was a little sharper today which I think was the reason why I managed to just keep the round going and keep the momentum going.

GORDON SIMPSON: And did you realise how low that score was compared to the rest of the field today before you signed your card?

JUSTIN ROSE: No, that's news. When you said it's the lowest by two, that's the first I've known of that. Any time you have the low score of the day, you know it's an achievement. Yeah, it's pleasing.

Q. Can you just update us on your health, and, you know, were there any repercussions last night, or did you sleep well or not sleep at all, whatever?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, when I got back to my room last night I was still feeling a little fragile, without going into details, but I had a really good night sleep. And today I feel so much better. Obviously feel back to normal today, really do. Had a good dinner and a good breakfast, and, you know, I feel good, so that was nice.

Q. Pdraig was just in and he was saying that he imagines that you've got the bit in your mouth more so than anybody because you've had such a great year without capping it off with a win. Is that true? Is there something that's burning deep inside you?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, there's no doubt about it. It would be nice to cap off a year with a bit of silverware at the end of the year, there's no doubt that's hopefully in the plans.

At the same time, this week I'm just focusing on what I've got to do, not get ahead of myself, not adding any extra pressure, which is what that may be. You know, I'm very focused right now, and I'm staying in the moment and that's why I'm playing so well. So that's ultimately mind-set I've got to keep.

Q. If you had to choose to win this one or being No. 1 Order of Merit, what would you go for?

JUSTIN ROSE: Well, they go hand in hand. (Laughter) I win this week, I am No. 1 on the Order of Merit. So I'll choose winning this week then (winking).

Q. Do you like the fact it's head-to-head with Pdraig again tomorrow?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, I think -- well, yeah, it's great. I think it's exciting for everybody involved. It's always nice, you know, when you're a pro golfer, part of the job is putting on a show or whatever and entertaining to a certain extent, and that's largely what tomorrow will be for you guys.

But at the end of the day, still for me it doesn't really matter who I'm playing with. We're nowhere near the finish line, so still very much just going about my business, and same old boring stuff, one shot at a time and all that.

Q. Four-shot lead on a very dangerous golf course, and very tricky conditions. Is your strategy likely to be defending or going out there and attacking, or just as you say, the old boring stuff, one shot at a time?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, this golf course really lends itself to boring play. And I think middle of the green is never a bad thing, because the greens are so small that actually quite an aggressive strategy is to hit it into the middle of the

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green. You don't even have 15, 20 feet.

So it's the kind of course that does lend itself to playing the percentages, which obviously I'll keep doing; what I have been doing, I'll keep doing. I felt like I started to putt a little better the back nine, which for me that's a really encouraging sign because for the first 27 holes I feel like I played poorly. So that was exciting.

Q. How close to another ace were you on three, and did you say, "Go in"?

JUSTIN ROSE: No, it was probably a better shot even. I was more in-between clubs. I was in between a 5-iron and 6-iron and I chose to hold up with a 5-iron into a right-to-left wind and held it to a foot. That's the interesting thing about the hole-in-ones. I would say it's a better shot than the hole-in-one that went in, but always a slice of luck when the ball disappears.

Q. When you've got a four-shot lead, does that ever play tricks in the mind a bit? Does it ever tempt you that you're winning --

JUSTIN ROSE: Maybe in the past I would tempt myself to think I'm close to winning with the tournament where I'm actually not. It sits a lot more comfortably with me now than it would have done in the past. You know, the big difference in between leading by four Friday night and Saturday night by four; at the end of the day, it's a halfway point.

Q. When did you last have a four-shot lead?

JUSTIN ROSE: I think I led in Japan by four once going into the last round.

GORDON SIMPSON: Is that the year you won in 2002?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah. I was leading by two going into the last round at Huntingdale this time last year.

Q. You seemed to be having a long debate, perhaps a little indecision over your second shot on the 17th. What was going through your mind then?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, I felt like I hit a good tee shot. I was actually expecting it to be in the fairway and I was in the rough but it was sitting really well in the rough.

But I felt like my only option would have been to clear the water and hit it over the back of the green. And I was just kind of talking to my caddie about how easy a chip shot or how hard a chip shot it would be over the back of the green

whether that was worth the risk of going for it in two.

But we chose to lay it up and obviously it turned out to be the right decision. But no matter which way you play that hole, you've still got to get over the water with it in two or in three.

So it's kind of like the decision was, is it going to be an easy chip shot or relatively easy pitch shot over the back. I don't think I could ever have stopped it on the green in the rough downwind; or even on the fairway downwind you have to land it two yards from the front edge, which is dancing with death really.

Q. How long?

JUSTIN ROSE: That was about 25 feet with five feet of break, four feet of break. Easy. (Laughter).

Q. I think it's six birdies and a four-stroke lead and all the rest of it, it all looks very impressive. Are there any aspects of it that you would like to have been a little bit sharper about? And if I may modestly suggest, the holes I saw you, your driving wasn't quite as being as the next.

JUSTIN ROSE: No, that wouldn't have even come into my mind to be honest with you. I'm happy with the way I'm hitting the ball, swinging the club.

To me, it's a tremendous test this week and I don't think you can expect perfection on the golf course. They are the most narrow fairways we play on all year, and with the crosswinds that there are out there, I feel like I really only missed tee shots when the wind was off the left and I had driver, which is an extremely difficult shot, anyway.

Q. Just that shot on the 17th again, do you think the Justin Rose of not so long ago would have gone for it, and would you have gone for it at this time last year?

JUSTIN ROSE: Maybe. Obviously I think I've got a very experienced caddie on the bag, and it does come down to situations like that where it's a 50/50 play there and all you need is a voice of reason in that situation or somebody to say, well, we can still make four laying it up.

And then you go, you know what, we can, so you do it. Where it's just something very simple thing that you can say in a situation like that which can sway the decision-making process.

Q. So he told you to lay up?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, I was ready to go for it. If he would have given me the green light to go for it would I have gone for it but he said just know what, I like just laying it up. I could have gone either way on that shot and he called a lay up and we laid up.

GORDON SIMPSON: What club would it have been if you had to go for it?

JUSTIN ROSE: 5-iron. But it was a 5-iron hoping it was going to come out with a touch of a flyer. That was the slight risk, yeah. But it seems weird to chip a wedge down the fairway and then chip another wedge on the green.

GORDON SIMPSON: It's all set up for the weekend, very well played again and good luck tomorrow.

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