

U.S. Open Championship 2023

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Los Angeles, California, USA

The Los Angeles Country Club

Cam Smith

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Please join me in welcoming Cameron Smith. When did you get into town and what's your experience with this course so far.

CAM SMITH: Got into town yesterday afternoon from Jacksonville. Pretty cruisey flight over. Just played nine holes this morning, or actually seven holes this morning. Have just played the front nine.

The course looks a little bit different to I guess what we're used to in a U.S. Open venue, but nonetheless, pretty challenging, and yeah, should set up for a good week, I think.

THE MODERATOR: How is your preparation so far? Talk a little bit about where your golf is.

CAM SMITH: Yeah, I feel like it's been trending probably the last six or seven weeks. It's started to feel really good. Had a couple of weeks off at home. Feel really good. Had a couple weeks off at home. I've had a couple of boys, junior guys, come over from Australia, and I've been able to show them around, play a few rounds with them, and yeah, it's been good.

Q. You said the course is different than usual U.S. Opens. Could you elaborate on how it's different?

CAM SMITH: I guess we're used to that kind of really thick, juicy rough. It's a little bit different here. I think the Bermuda rough, I think you can get kind of lucky or unlucky. There's patches out there where they're actually quite thin and you can get away with kind of a bad shot and other patches where if you're in there it's no good at all. I think that's a little bit different.

I think the way you go through the hills there a few times, there's lots of shots where you almost have to work the ball into the hill. It's a really good challenge. But I think that Bermuda rough is definitely a little bit different. Typically we're playing in the northeast and get that really dense kind of wet rough.

Q. Obviously so much chat going on about where the

world of golf is at the moment and so many unanswered questions. Are you able to tell us whether you've had assurances that LIV will continue into 2024?

CAM SMITH: Yeah, I really know as much as you guys know, to be honest. I haven't been told much at all. I'm just taking it as it goes along.

I guess if anything comes up, I'll let you guys know, but for the moment it's just trying to play the best golf I can and trying to win a U.S. Open.

Q. We're dealing in hypotheticals here, but if LIV were to finish this year, would you want to return to the PGA TOUR next year?

CAM SMITH: Yeah, I mean, that's another pretty hypothetical question. I'm unable to answer that one.

Q. What was the reaction like with the other LIV players after the news broke, and talking with your teammates, what was your reaction when you first saw the news?

CAM SMITH: I guess the first reaction was I thought it was kind of a joke that had come out, and then H.E. gave me a call and kind of explained what was going on. He didn't really explain too much. I think there's still a lot of stuff to be worked out, and as time goes on, we'll get to know more and more.

But there's definitely a lot of curious players, I think, on both sides as to what the future is going to look like.

Q. You explained why it's going to be a different test with the golf course, but I'm curious, do you prefer that kind of test compared to a normal U.S. Open test or how do you think it's going to play out?

CAM SMITH: I'd like to think that I play my best golf around kind of tough golf courses. I know kind of my U.S. Open record isn't that great. For me, the driver has always been the one club where it gets me in trouble in the U.S. Open and probably the PGA, the U.S. PGA. You have to



drive the ball strong.

I think that's where a golf tournament can get away from me, but the driver is starting to feel really good, and I think there's a few opportunities around here to make birdies, so I think that falls into my hands a little bit.

Q. Can I get your thoughts on the par-3s on this golf course, specifically No. 15 and the dichotomy --

CAM SMITH: I played the front nine today, so I can't elaborate on anything on the back nine.

Q. Can ask I just you, any thoughts on a par-3 that could play as short as 90 yards or fewer?

CAM SMITH: On 15 it can play 90 yards? That's good. I typically love short par-3s. I think a lot of the greatest courses that we play around the world all have a short par-4 and a short par-3, and they can end up being kind of the trickiest, I guess, as well.

I'm looking forward to getting out there and seeing that. I think everyone's favorite par-3s are those 9-irons and wedges where you really have to dial it in and hit a good shot.

Q. How do you distinguish between the USGA and the R&A in your mind?

CAM SMITH: Geez, that's a good question. Actually, I guess, the USGA is in the U.S. and the R&A is in the UK. (Laughter.)

I think they both have the same, I guess, thought process in regards to the future of golf and the game of golf, though, yeah.

Q. For the national championships, (indiscernible.)

CAM SMITH: Yeah, the courses are definitely set up a little bit different for sure. I think for a long time, the USGA had in mind that par was going to be the winning score, and it's definitely a bit of a brutal test.

For me personally, I love a golf course that sets up really difficult, but you can still go out there and shoot 5- or 6-under par and the winning score 10- to 15-under I think is a really good number.

But that's just me, and it's not really up to me to set up the golf course.

Q. Could you talk about the preparation for the two majors previously this year and leading into this one,

given that in previous seasons you had had a chance to have TOUR events under your belt? Is the preparation different?

CAM SMITH: I don't think -- maybe the first one, the Masters. I think I played maybe a couple of tournaments less than I would have. I think the last few months, though, we've played a lot of golf. We've played all around the world and seen a lot of different courses, a lot of different tests, and I think it's actually been really good for the game.

Like I said, the last six or seven weeks the game has started to feel like it's really flipped a switch and has started to be in the right direction. These couple of weeks have been nice, though.

I think it was kind of a really busy, stressful time traveling a lot, as well, different continents and stuff like that. Two weeks at home, rest the body and rest the mind was really nice.

Q. You spoke about playing the seven holes this morning, and I know you mentioned the rough, but was there any other details about those seven holes? Maybe you had thoughts going in as to what to expect, and once you started playing, whether it be the bunkering, the greens, was there some other aspects that opened your eyes or were different from what you had anticipated?

CAM SMITH: Yeah, I think probably not different. I think I was probably anticipating that kind of firm and fast, but as the week goes on, I don't think we got any rain in the forecast. I expect it will get really firm and fast, and you might have to be probably a little bit creative from the fairways to get to some pins and just be really accurate with your landing distances and knowing how far the ball is running out.

Q. What makes you nervous?

CAM SMITH: Not much, to be honest.

Q. That's part of the reason for the question.

CAM SMITH: Being offshore in a boat and the motor goes out makes me nervous. On the golf course, I think once I get past that first tee, I definitely have a little bit of a nervy feeling on the first tee every tournament, and then the last day with a lead probably makes me a little bit nervous, as well.

Q. The PGA, as I'm sure you know, has been under criticism for discouraging players from joining LIV and then merging. Did you feel any confirmation that you

had made the right decision by going to LIV upon the announcement of the merger?

CAM SMITH: I think I've made the right decision anyway. I'm very happy with where I'm at. I obviously made that decision for a few different reasons.

It's too early to say, I think, with what's going to go on here. Like I said, I know as much as everyone else, and it's going to be interesting to see how the next few months, maybe even year, kind of plays out.

Q. Phil Mickelson can complete the Career Grand Slam here this week. Have you gotten to know him, and what's he like?

CAM SMITH: Yeah, I've got to know him a little bit more. Phil, I think, likes to keep to himself a little bit. He's kind of had a lot of -- I guess he's had a long career and a lot of people that have been on his back for a long time, as well.

It would be awesome to see him do it this week. I think the golf course as far as I've seen sets up for a straighter hitter, so maybe not. But we'll see how it goes.

Q. Was Yasir's call to you before the announcement or after, did you know about it when he called, and when you did speak to him, did you have any questions for him?

CAM SMITH: It was just before it went on CNBC. It was probably 10 minutes before he said you can watch the interview if you'd like. I think he was probably calling a few different players, so the call was kind of short and sweet.

But yeah, he kind of, I guess, didn't really explain much, but just kind of explained what was going to happen on that day, and there was still a lot of stuff to work out.

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