

Zurich Classic of New Orleans

Wednesday, April 21, 2021

Avondale, Louisiana, USA

TPC Louisiana

Marc Leishman

Cameron Smith

Press Conference



Cam will take the evens, so I think that should work pretty well for us and it will let Cam hit more drivers, I'll hit more iron shots and I feel like that will play into both of our strengths.

RACHEL NOBLE: We'll open it up for questions.

RACHEL NOBLE: We would like to welcome Marc Leishman and Cameron Smith to the virtual interview room here at the Zurich Classic of New Orleans. You guys were members of the 2019 Presidents Cup international team and I believe the plan was in place to partner up for this event in 2020 before the tournament was cancelled due to the pandemic. This year it's happening and Marc, it's the first time you are teammates at this event. You've played here before, but you'll be making your first start in the team format, so some comment what it's like to be playing back here in this format and partner with Cameron.

Q. Two questions. Just first the format of the event, I mean obviously you're both familiar with having played foursomes and four-balls plenty of times, but curious if you like the format, if you would suggest anything different or like anything different than that, maybe scotch foursomes or something where you both got to tee off as opposed to alternating holes. Does anything come to mind?

MARC LEISHMAN: It's great to be back. Matty was actually telling me I've had a decent record here, I had a couple of 20ths or something, I didn't realize that, so, yeah, first time I played in the team event, it's going to be a fun week to be out there all four days with Cam and hopefully we can play good, have some fun and enjoy ourselves.

CAMERON SMITH: No, I like it. I like the four-ball, it gives a bit of a, you know, it gives a relaxed feel, I guess, an aggressive feel. Then foursomes you just really got to grind it out. The course is in great condition this week, it's as firm and fast as I've seen it, so I'm sure it will be a good test for foursomes and then, yeah, four-ball we just free up and try and shoot as low as we can.

RACHEL NOBLE: Cam, you're making your fifth start here. You won the Zurich the first year it became a team event. Just some thoughts on heading into this week with Marc as your teammate this year and what the key to success will be.

Q. You guys have played in Presidents Cups and World Cup and so forth, so you're used to each other in terms of strategizing how you maybe go about it. Can you talk about that?

CAMERON SMITH: We have had some success together in the past I think we finished second in a World Cup probably two or three years ago now. And that week we just really enjoyed ourselves. Obviously we were at home, we were in Melbourne, we had the Aussie crowd rooting us on, but we just had a good week on and off the golf course and kept it pretty chilled out, so much more of that.

MARC LEISHMAN: I like the format, I think particularly with the foursomes on the Sunday or Friday and Sunday, if you don't play your best in the first round there's a lot, there can be a lot of movement in that second and fourth round. I think it adds a bit of pressure too. It's nice that if you've got a shot or two lead or you're a few back I feel like with foursomes there's more hope. Small stuff enters your head and I think that's a good thing. Especially with the finish here. There's a bit of water out there, there is some tough holes, but there's some gettable ones too. So, yeah, I like it.

RACHEL NOBLE: One last question, for either of you, but how do you guys decide which of you tees off on the even or odd holes.

Q. Cameron, do you guys have a good head-banging song for the first tee to get that hair flowing? (Laughing)?

MARC LEISHMAN: I think -- well we work with some, I work with some stats guys that help me out. They have pretty much told me what tees work for me, so Cam can tee off the other ones. So I'm going to tee off the 1st and



CAMERON SMITH: It's actually funny, Leish found this song or looked up a song and he's already entered it I didn't even get a choice. It's called The Mullet Song. So we're going to be rocking that going to the first tee. And maybe a few other surprises. So it will be good. No, it will be good fun.

Q. Tell me the back story of finding that song or choosing it.

MARC LEISHMAN: Back story was Google (laughing). Mullet songs. I can't remember who sings it. I should have looked that up. But, yeah, I don't know, it just sounded like a good you go song, it's pretty funny and very true, particularly in Cam's case. So, yeah, it's going to be -- I think that the walk up music is something different, I think it's fun, you got to try and make it fun and embrace it and I think we'll do that and yeah try and enjoy ourselves, get the day started off on the right foot and go from there.

Q. Which one of you actually asked the other to be partners and did anybody else approach either of you about playing this week?

MARC LEISHMAN: I think it was just a natural fit. We kind of just --

CAMERON SMITH: Just agreed.

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah. I don't know who asked who or if anyone did. Maybe Matty and Pinner who caddie for us I think they organized it and thought we should play and we said, Yeah, sounds good.

CAMERON SMITH: Yeah. I mean, we play, we play every week, it feels like in practice rounds and stuff. Yeah, so it's just a natural fit, I think.

Q. How do you think your games jell? What will make you guys good as a team this week?

CAMERON SMITH: I think the banter makes us a good team, I think. If one of us hits a bits of a crappy shot or stones get off to a good start or something like that, we're always in each other's ear just playing around and maybe saying some stuff that gets us fired up and gets us ready to go.

MARC LEISHMAN: I feel like Cam's short game takes a bit of pressure off. I feel like we both putt fairly well. So I think, I don't know, I think that's very important in that format is the short game and the putting, because you don't want to feel like you can't miss a green or you can't miss a fairway or feel like if we do we're still a good chance of getting up-and-down or doing something to get back into

position. So I think just having, not putting too much pressure on yourself, and having fun with it. I mean that's the most important thing I think. It's meant to be a fun event, a different event, and I think we're both looking forward to it.

Q. Curious, I know the Presidents Cup's still a long ways away, but did Trevor Immelman suggest to you guys that this would be a good event for people who could be on the team to play in? Because it seems like a lot of you guys that could play together are playing this week and are paired together.

MARC LEISHMAN: He didn't. I think next year he will suggest it.

CAMERON SMITH: Yeah.

MARC LEISHMAN: But, yeah, I think probably Quail Hollow in a few weeks is probably more important playing that course, as it's going to be there the following year. But, no, I think that you got to do what you feel is right for you and this is our job and what we have to do it well to try and get as high as we can on the FedExCup. So I feel like he's not going to interfere with that, but, yeah, this is, yeah, he didn't recommend anything.

Q. The Mullet Song by the way is sung by Jay Powell is the performer. Anyway, the question, curious, Cam, I'll start with you, your thoughts on the TOUR's Player Impact Program, details of that obviously sort of filtered out yesterday. If you like the program, dislike it, just general thoughts about it.

CAMERON SMITH: Yeah, I think probably the main thing for us as professionals is just to keep doing our job and let the rest, the external stuff just really take care of itself. By no means do I feel pressure or anything, I feel like I have to do anything else to try and be up there, it's just another bonus for playing good golf, I think. Yeah, just go out there, do your stuff and yeah, let the rest take care of itself.

Q. Leish, same sort of question. Obviously neither one of you guys is super active on social media, for example. Is it something that would incentivize you to do more of that stuff or I'm not sure how you feel about it in general.

MARC LEISHMAN: I think it is. I mean if you're 11th on the, in the FedExCup points or 9th or 10th or wherever you are and if you're not active on social media and that costs you, it sounds like it could be quite a lot of money. So I think, yeah, definitely it's something that I've looked at and I heard about it a couple of months ago, I'm trying to become more active, just in case you do get a hot hand

and start pushing that edge. But I think it's a good thing, especially for the players -- some guys sell a lot of tickets and I think those guys it gives them some incentive to maybe play extra events or something. But, yeah, I mean I don't know enough about it to say too much, but I think it's a good thing certainly for the players.

Q. Cam, how long are you going to let the mullet go for? What's the plan?

CAMERON SMITH: I don't know, I told the missus that I would cut it if I won, but I don't know, it's been, I mean everyone loves it. I've got a lot of attention, I guess, a lot of support out on the golf course with it, so I don't know, might hang around for longer than I anticipated, but I don't know, I think it's a good thing, just something different. Everyone has a laugh. I know Leish has a laugh at it and he picks on me sometimes about it, but no, it's good. I love it.

Q. You play a lot of practice rounds together, do you go out to dinner a lot too and will you change that at all up this week?

MARC LEISHMAN: I mean, hopefully soon we'll be able to go out for dinner. We have been obviously a little restricted with all the COVID stuff. But, no, we're staying together this week. Yeah, nothing's going to change, I don't think. Unless I play real bad or Cam plays real bad I might not talk to him for a few hours.

CAMERON SMITH: I'll have to get a hotel for the night (laughing).

Q. Cam, can you talk to how your win at that course with Jonas may help you with Leish this week?

CAMERON SMITH: I really don't know, to be honest. When Jonas and I won, I actually teed off the odd holes, just set up better for that team. Leish said before that I'm going to be taking the even holes, Leish will be taking the odd, so he'll have a few more approaches in. I think knowing each other's games, Leish is probably the better striker into the greens, so I'm sure I'll have a lot of putts at birdie, hopefully I can drain a couple of those and we can get out with a hot start.

Q. Does the fact that Smitty has a pretty decent short game -- you do too, Leish -- but does it give you freedom knowing that he's there to back you up?

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, I was actually saying that before. It's nice to know that you don't have to hit every green. Obviously you want to and you I want to give Cam a makeable birdie putt on every hole, but it's also nice knowing that if I do get a little too aggressive or not hit a

great shot, he's probably going to chip it up there close and give me a chance to make a putt. So, yeah, it takes a bit of pressure off.

Q. Or if you leave one in a bunker he can just hole that out for you, right?

MARC LEISHMAN: Exactly. Hopefully I won't do that this week.

Q. Cam, what do you remember most from, it was your first PGA TOUR victory in 2017. What's your favorite memory and what really worked for you that week?

CAMERON SMITH: I think just the chemistry that Jonas and I had. Obviously we're still really good friends. Leish and I are really good friends. We had a lot of fun out on the course and we just played good golf. We played aggressively, and I mean, yeah, we just had fun on and off the golf course. I mean it was just a great week. Obviously the memory of sinking the putt to win was probably the highlight, that was my first TOUR win, so, yeah, I loved it and it got me on a bit of a hot streak from there so it definitely gave me a lot of confidence for the rest of the year and going forward.

Q. What sort of fun did you have off the course that week?

CAMERON SMITH: I mean, it's New Orleans, you just, I mean we just enjoyed ourselves, we stayed in the same hotel, went out for dinner every night, tried a lot of different food. Maybe a couple beers here and there and, no, it was good.

RACHEL NOBLE: Appreciate the time and good luck this week.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports