

# Zurich Classic of New Orleans

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Avondale, Louisiana, USA

TPC Louisiana

## Marc Leishman

## Cam Smith

### Press Conference



RACHEL NOBEL: I'd like to welcome Marc Leishman and Cameron Smith, the winners of the 2021 Zurich Classic of New Orleans, to the interview room here. What a day it's been for you guys and a great week. So congratulations. First time playing together. Cameron, this is your third win on TOUR and, Marc, this is your sixth. Cam, you move to No. 3 in the FedExCup standings and, Marc, you move to No. 29. So great week for you guys. Just some comments on what this victory means for you both as a team.

CAM SMITH: The FedExCup points are great. I mean, it was just such a great week. We come in here quietly confident, I think, and we just knew we had to have a good time. We've played well before together in the same type of format. We just went out there and had fun and got it done in the end.

RACHEL NOBLE: Marc, what about you?

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, it was an awesome week, obviously. Cam played unbelievably well. I was saying to him when we finished if that had been an individual tournament, I think he would have won by a fair few shots. But I managed to not hold him back too much. But, no, it was a fun week. I mean, the course was unbelievable. I haven't been here for a few years and the greens were firm, fast, even after 11 inches of rain last week. But it was just all around a really good week, on and off the golf course. Obviously, New Orleans is a great city and we enjoyed our time here and looking forward to coming back next year I'm sure.

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

**Q. It was quite a back nine. There was so many momentum swings. I'm wondering if you guys can describe what goes through you internally both when you take momentum, as you guys did around that 9, 10, 11 stretch and then see it slip away as you did through 15.**

MARC LEISHMAN: I think that's great thing about the format, having alternate shot on Sunday. There's so much volatility. No lead is really safe, as we showed. I think we only got to 2-up, but it can turn really quickly and especially when the course is firm like it was. You don't even have to hit a bad shot to get put into a bad position. I think that was awesome. You had to really think your way around the golf course. I think we're both reasonably good at that normally. And, yeah, it was just a fun week.

**Q. The chip at 16. I mean, what was it like walking off that green given where you were walking up to the green?**

CAM SMITH: He called it.

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, I said to the boys, I said, Why don't we just chip this in. It wasn't the hardest chip in the world, but under the conditions -- well, I won't say it was a must make, but it was certainly very helpful that it went in. I actually forgot to get my ball out of the hole I was so excited. I went over and was high-fiving Cam, and Louis had to throw the ball to me. So yeah, it's just nice to be able to celebrate with friends. We're maybe me, Matty, Pinner, our caddies, we just had a great week. I'm really excited for them also. And, yeah, that chip-in was a lot of fun. It was nice to have crowds back out there too. The atmosphere was really good.

**Q. Two questions. Would you like to see this tournament as a 72-hole alternate shot event?**

CAM SMITH: No.

MARC LEISHMAN: No.

CAM SMITH: That would be too stressful.

MARC LEISHMAN: I would be too worn out by Sunday night, I think.

CAM SMITH: I think it's perfect the way it is. Four-ball frees us up. We have a lot of fun. And then alternate shot on those two pretty important days, in the cut day and the last day. So, no, definitely not 72 holes of alternate shot. I



think Leish and I wouldn't be friends at the end of that.

MARC LEISHMAN: I think the way it is, too, I don't think you want to do anything too drastic to the format as far as like scramble or anything like that goes because it gets a bit end-of-season-event-ish, I guess you would say. I mean, the Shark Shoot-out is an amazing event and we had a ball there last year, but I think this feels more like a PGA TOUR event and I think the format's pretty good. Really good.

**Q. A follow-up: Do you think there's a good chance you guys will play together in Presidents Cups for the foreseeable future?**

MARC LEISHMAN: Who knows. We'll see. Whatever's best for the team, but we would certainly have fun there if we did. We have given Trevor something to think about anyway.

CAM SMITH: Yeah. No, I would say we would like to play together, but Leish and I, we're team players. We did as Ernie asked, we played our best golf, and we'll do the same again in the future.

**Q. Two questions, one real quick, I know y'all addressed this yesterday. What does it mean to win on this day for you guys being from Australia? And two, here in America we tend to be fairly U.S. centric. What is it like to have to want to play at your highest level in your sport to have to go all over the world to do this? You guys are obviously a long way from home, but to try to play at the highest level you guys have to go everywhere to do that.**

MARC LEISHMAN: That's just how it is for us. We don't really think about it, to be honest. Whether it's playing the European Tour or the PGA TOUR, we have to travel to play golf tournaments. We have both got lives over here now. We have both got family back in Australia too. Probably the hardest thing about it has been last year, not being able to see family. I haven't seen my family for over a year. I think Cam's the same. Coaches, we haven't seen our coaches for over a year. Yeah, I mean, you don't really think about it because that's just what we have to do. You don't want to feel sorry for yourself thinking I've got to live in America, because America's a pretty cool spot. Yeah, it can be difficult, but you got to make the best of it.

**Q. Winning on Anzac Day?**

MARC LEISHMAN: Winning on Anzac Day. Do you want to take that one?

CAM SMITH: Yeah, that's pretty special. I was actually

speaking to my old man last night and he said it's a really good omen for us guys being up the top of the leaderboard on Anzac Day. I know my family went out to a dawn service yesterday morning and paid their respects, so maybe we have got a bit of good karma out there today because of that. But, yeah, really cool. Obviously we had three Aussies in our little crew and my caddie Pinner is a New Zealander, so the Anzac spirit definitely held up today.

MARC LEISHMAN: I need more Australian holidays. I won on Australia Day and now Anzac Day. It's nice.

**Q. On 16 yesterday in best ball you laid up. Today you go for the green. Just take me through the strategy and the philosophy yesterday versus today.**

CAM SMITH: I think today with that close pin I don't think we could get close with a wedge. Even though Leish spins the ball a lot into the green, it's going to be downwind and the greens were just too firm, so we decided to give it a crack. I mean, it kind of paid off. The shot that I hit in there I thought was better than how it ended up, and then for Leish to hole the chip shot there was pretty cool experience.

**Q. Before the tournament started Cameron, you said that you had a deal with your girlfriend that when you won you would cut the mullet. What's the status of the mullet?**

CAM SMITH: I would have to apologize to my girlfriend, it's not going away. I mean, it's -- I feel like it's part of me now.

MARC LEISHMAN: He's got a cult following now. You should hear the fans out there. They're all over it. It's awesome.

CAM SMITH: Yeah, it's really cool. It gives the fans something to get behind. Lots of people love it and it's good fun as well. It makes people laugh. I love it.

**Q. Leish, you obviously had that period where you were sort of down on energy. You said you liked the crowds out there again today. Is this that final real kick in the guts or kick in the butt to force you to get things rolling your way again?**

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, it's so much fun to have them back and have their support. They were really on our side today, weren't they.

CAM SMITH: Yes.



MARC LEISHMAN: It was like, it almost felt like a home crowd.

CAM SMITH: Yeah. It's amazing.

MARC LEISHMAN: Obviously they love Cam. They love Cam's hair. Yeah, it was good to be back. I mean, there at the end of last year I felt so bad over the golf ball and getting pretty down and you wonder if you're going to win again. Golf's like that. And then you know that eventually hopefully you'll play well again. You never know if you're going to win again. So to get this after a really tough time last year, I put a lot of work in. I mean, commitment from my coach for coming over here and doing that hotel quarantine. Denis, I mean, yeah, it's amazing just to feel that energy again and have the rewards and then to be able to do it with a mate and win with a really good mate and to enjoy it together is really special and something as a golfer you don't really ever get to do unless you win a Presidents Cup or a Ryder Cup.

**Q. Cam, you mentioned to me earlier in the week that you guys were quietly confident and you figured you could do this. But what's it like to, I guess, turn that into actually a result, because I know you guys were confident, but it's one thing to be confident, it's another to step up and do it.**

CAM SMITH: I think that we obviously were playing pretty good golf coming into the week. Leish coming off a Top-5 at the Masters. I played really well last week in Hilton Head. I mean, the conditions definitely favored the Aussies, I think, this week. It was windy for three out of the four days. The greens were firm and fast, exactly how we like it. Reminds us so much of home. And just everything just kind of fell into place. Yeah, I mean, it was just, it was so cool. It was, like Leish said, the crowd felt like a home crowd. It felt like we were playing on a home course. So, yeah, it was a really cool week.

**Q. Leish, did you talk to Harvey yet?**

MARC LEISHMAN: Not yet. He's actually playing a golf tournament at the moment.

**Q. Do you know the result?**

MARC LEISHMAN: I have no idea. Audrey said she wasn't going to tell.

**Q. Do you want to know the result?**

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah. How did he go?

**Q. He was second.**

MARC LEISHMAN: Oh, he took second. That's good. (Laughing).

**Q. Olympics. Are you guys thinking you can get the game back together for Tokyo or where are you guys at with regards to the Olympics?**

MARC LEISHMAN: Yes, I'm all in.

CAM SMITH: Me too.

**Q. The prospect of a gold medal, what would that mean? You've mentioned Australia Day and now Anzac Day. How about a gold medal for the Olympics?**

MARC LEISHMAN: It would be huge. I would love to contend for any medal, to be honest. Obviously you want to go for gold. But something I never ever thought I would do would be have a chance to win an Olympic medal. And obviously I've got to get on the team first. But, yeah, I'm excited about the chance of being there and contending for that and really excited.

**Q. Cam, your thoughts on representing your country at that level?**

CAM SMITH: Yeah, I mean, any chance I can get to put on the green and gold or a team shirt I'm all in. I'm a hundred percent. So, yeah, I was kind of bummed I didn't get in the team four years ago. It was really a goal of mine. And I'll be thrilled if I'm there and contending on the weekend for a gold medal.

**Q. Did you guys do anything this morning sort of with regards to Anzac Day? Was it discussed or amongst the four of you?**

MARC LEISHMAN: We spoke about it last night, yeah, being Anzac Day in Australia, definitely. I mean, it's a, without their sacrifice, and obviously we all know what, all the Australians and New Zealanders know what happened there at Anzac Cove and what a sad day it was, sad years, they were. We appreciate their sacrifice and we wouldn't be here without what they gave.

**Q. Is there only one trophy and who is going to get to hold onto it?**

MARC LEISHMAN: We got the belts.

CAM SMITH: Yeah, I got a belt on. These get you one free beer at the pub.

MARC LEISHMAN: I don't think there's a trophy, is there?



CAM SMITH: There's just one. We might have to share it.

**Q. You obviously play a lot of practice rounds together week-to-week on TOUR. Just curious what you get out of that as it relates, if anything, if it related to this week and this weekend.**

CAM SMITH: I think Leish and I play a lot of practice rounds together, one, because we're good mates, but we play a very similar game, I think. The way that we think around the golf course is very similar. We like to hit shots and shapes into the greens. I think we both get something out of watching each other play good golf, particularly on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday leading into an event.

MARC LEISHMAN: I watch Cam's short game and wedges a lot. I love watching him hit any shot inside of 120, 130 yards. Love the way he goes about it. I've tried to improve my wedge game from watching him and I feel like if you can learn from your friends, which I think I have, I think I've gotten better with my wedges. And, yeah, I mean, there's always an opportunity to learn.

**Q. Leish, at what point did you call your shot at 16?**

MARC LEISHMAN: Once I saw where I was going to be dropping it. If I had to have dropped it 10 yards shorter than that it was pretty screwed, actually. But where it went in, I was able to, I was dropping it on an up slope and I said, Boys, why don't we just make it. You know? I didn't think I was actually going to do it, but. I think the power of positive thinking is a pretty good thing. If you're thinking about making it, you probably have a better chance of making it rather than thinking about, All right, don't chunk it in the water. I don't want it rolling back past me or anything. Yeah, it's funny, I've learned that over the years that positive thinking's really helpful.

**Q. Can you give us a little taste of the what the celebration will be like tonight?**

MARC LEISHMAN: I'll be flying home by myself. The boys are going back to Jacksonville. I'm flying to Virginia Beach to see the family. So I'll be probably having a few beers by myself and get a ride home from the airport.

CAM SMITH: I won't be waking up too good tomorrow morning, that's for sure.

**Q. A lot of people pointed to the chip in at 16 and how big that was, but I'm curious for both of you, is there another pivotal point today that or pivotal moment that really kept you guys going in the right direction?**

CAM SMITH: I think 9. Leish hit an absolutely perfect shot into 9, it was kind of 50/50 on the club, he had to crush it to get there and it lands just, lands in the perfect spot, go up there and hole the putt on probably one of the toughest holes of the day. So that for me was probably it.

MARC LEISHMAN: I think Cam's bogey putt on 13. That really kept us I think tied for the lead maybe or one ahead. That was a big one. Cam's tee shot in the playoff. I mean, it's hard to hit that tee shot having seen Louis just hit it in the water. It would have been very easy for him to hit that a long way left and to get that pretty close to the fairway, that was a big tee shot. Yeah.

**Q. You guys obviously get on well with Charl and with Louis. Was it a jolt to your system to see that tee shot at 18?**

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, I think all of us, we weren't expecting it, that's for sure. Louis's such a great player and a great driver of the ball and yeah, it was definitely surprising. Yeah, I don't really know what else to say.

CAM SMITH: No, it was very surprising. I was expecting him to slot that one straight down the fairway. I mean, the only bad drive he hit before that was probably his tee shot on 18 in regular play and still it was only six yards off the fairway, it wasn't even the worst thing. So, yeah, very surprising.

RACHEL NOBLE: That's it, guys, congratulations and thanks again for your time.

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