

Horizon Irish Open

Tuesday, 28 June, 2022

Thomastown, County Kilkenny, Ireland

Mount Juliet Estate

Lucas Herbert

Press Conference

Q. How does it feel to be back?

LUCAS HERBERT: Yeah, it's pretty sweet. Just getting around the property, seeing it all again, bringing back memories from last year, it's pretty nice. Pretty special.

Q. What are your abiding memories of last year?

LUCAS HERBERT: A little of weather that's been served up so far -- but just a lot of good memories obviously. Played four really good days of golf. Just going to play the back nine now and hit a lot of the shots that I sort of remember hitting last year.

I feel like I've watched the highlights so many times; all the pins are right there in the back of my memory so distinctly. It's been kind of nice to get back and just have a bit of a stroll down memory lane.

Q. Last year, what was particularly good about your game that allowed you to win here?

LUCAS HERBERT: It was a pretty good all-around performance last year for me. I'm prone to hitting a few off-line with a driver but I kept it pretty well in the boundaries of the fairways and whatnot last year. I hit a couple on the last day but got away with them. Putted nicely. Short game was really good. Felt like it was a solid week for me pretty much all around.

Q. Any particular shot that stands out from Sunday?

LUCAS HERBERT: We just came up 16 and were talking about the bunker shot from the front of that green. I've just gone and hit it four times; I couldn't even get it close to what I did on Sunday last year.

I think the bunker shot on 15 and 16 kind of took it from, you know, head-to-head, tied for the lead through 14 holes into I had a two-shot lead walking down 17. You know, pretty much was my chance to put the tournament away from there.



HORIZON Irish Open

Q. Since that win, you've won on the PGA TOUR. Where is your game at right now?

LUCAS HERBERT: This year it's just finding that consistency has been tough. I feel I turned a little bit of a corner. The game feels like I have the ability to hit the shots. It's just putting everything and the structure in place around it to produce a little bit more of that consistency. I think we've turned a corner.

I don't know how it's going to go this week and going forward, but it's always a bit of a work-in-progress. But yeah, I feel like we've sort of moved -- turned a corner and moved into a bit of the next phase. Been playing bigger events on harder golf courses over there in the US, and it's pretty easy to beat yourself up.

But it would be nice to get back here and feel like we get that confidence back from last year, some good memories from this course. Hopefully that gets back on track a little bit.

Q. How much are you looking forward to playing in front of the Irish crowd?

LUCAS HERBERT: Yeah, it's great. Most of our practice round today we were discussing the crowd, how excited, especially around 14 green, how excited they were getting.

They are always really respectful. Obviously they are getting pretty vocal for me last year but I feel like they are really respectful. They knew when to clap and when not to and in terms of what a good shot looked like. I feel like you can cop it a little bit in America if you're not absolutely perfect.

This week and the next two weeks in Scotland and The Open, everyone on Tour knows they are some of the best crowds on Tour. They appreciate good golf when they see it. It's something I'm definitely looking forward to having around again this year.

Q. Welcome back to Mount Juliet. You are, of course, this week's Horizon Irish Open defending champion. You must come with a few different feelings from last year?



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LUCAS HERBERT: Yeah, obviously a lot of good memories from last year. We just played nine holes and felt like a trip down memory lane for two hours, talking about all the shots, where the pins were, the crowds. My Mum and Dad are here this year, my girlfriend, and I'm explaining what went on last year and I'm sure they don't really care. They were watching it on TV but it felt cool taking a trip down memory lane.

Q. You must feel like you've evolved a lot as a golfer. You've been playing across the pond a lot and a lot of majors under your belt. How do you feel you are compared to last year?

LUCAS HERBERT: Yeah, obviously like you said, a lot more experience. I physically probably had the skills that I've got now last year but had I not proved to myself they would hold up under pressure.

This event was great. Felt like I had a period from this win through to Bermuda where I really closed out some events well, and that was probably something that I didn't know whether I had the ability to do. But obviously winning here wire-to-wire, being tied for the lead with four holes to play and winning by three shots, and then closing out to get my PGA TOUR card at the Korn Ferry finals, that was a tough process, and I think we birdied four of the last six holes there to do that and.

Obviously we get in the position on the back nine in Bermuda where it was anyone's tournament for the taking and I felt like I drew on my Irish Open experience of taking the opportunity when I had the opportunity chance.

Q. You seem to thrive in the more challenging conditions. Bermuda was tough and Irish Open was tough. Do you feel like when you're presented with an opportunity where the weather isn't so fair, it's really open for you?

LUCAS HERBERT: I don't know that I necessarily enjoy being out in this weather, but I do seem to do well in it. We are kind of licking our lips when we do see the wind forecast blowing 20-mile-an-hour or little bit of drizzle on the horizon.

I don't know, I think it just makes you focus that extra bit harder. You're probably not given as many options for what shots to hit either. Middle of the fairway, 150 yards out with no wind, you've got three or four different clubs you can try and hit. But once that wind gets up, you're pushed into one or two different options, and it requires that extra little bit of imagination and the ability to just see different shots in the wind to be able to visualise how they come out and be able to react and get to them.

I don't know, I feel like I'm very imaginative human being. I'm not very good staying there with block practice and trying to hit the same shot 50 times in a row. I want that variety and be able to take that challenge on.

Q. This is the start to a few weeks presenting you with these tough conditions and shot shapes you might not be used to sometimes. What's the goal for this week, especially as a defending champion, probably you must come into it with a little bit of a different mindset?

LUCAS HERBERT: Yeah, I haven't looked enough at the forecast but I know last year the goal was to get to 20-under. I wanted to really see whether I can could do that because I think Tiger got to like 23 or 24 here when he won so I want to try to get as close as I can to that. Even going into Sunday, I had a one-shot lead but I was trying to get to 20-under as hard as I could.

I probably didn't focus on what the lead was until maybe three or four holes to go when it was all tied up. Up until that point, yeah, I was like -- I had that 20-under number in my head and I fell one short. So that would be a great number to set this week again. I don't know, it's probably going to be slightly harder conditions, so I might have to revise that, but that worked well for me last year.

I probably would try and do something similar again. Obviously got a lot of confidence here. I feel like even though I might have been playing poorly leading up, there's still some of the shots that I feel like, oh, just got to hit that shot and you're not even thinking about how do I do that. You just remember that's the shot I had to hit last year so you just visualise hitting that. If I can carry that for four days, I think that would be kind of fun.

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