

Horizon Irish Open

Tuesday, 5 September, 2023

Straffan, County Kildare, Ireland

The K Club, Ryder Course

Shane Lowry

Press Conference

Q. Delighted to be joined here at the Horizon Irish Open by Shane Lowry, former champion. How special is it to return to play in your home open, particularly when the weather is as nice as this?

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, I keep telling everyone this is what it's always like here.

Yeah, I think it's going to be an amazing week. Forecast is very good. Golf course is great. We've got a great field here. It's very exciting to be here. It's always one of my favourite events to play, obviously, and with it being so close to home this year, as well, it's extra special, so it's nice.

Q. Can you give us a sense of how special it is, obviously being a proud Irishman playing in front of your home fans?

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, it's the best. Obviously there are certain years where you get bad weather where people maybe don't show up as much as you'd like, even though you get great crowds all the time, but I fully expect the crowds to be huge this week, and I think it's going to be a great event.

Like I said, it's great weather, great course, and it will be a great crowd, as well; it will be amazing.

Q. A start of an incredibly busy month for yourself, defending next week at the BMW and congratulations on your second appearance at the Ryder Cup, as well.

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, thank you. As I said to somebody earlier, it's an amazing month to have ahead of you, to be honest. Obviously this week is our fifth major, and it really is a -- I do treat it like that, and then we have obviously I'm defending at Wentworth, which is one of my favourite events, next week, and then buildup for the Ryder Cup the week after that. Yeah, it's kind of dream stuff and something that I'm looking forward to the challenge the next few weeks, and very excited for what it could bring.



Q. How pleased or relieved or what was the overall emotion when you got the official call from Luke about being selected?

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, was just delighted. Look, I'm very confident in my own ability, and I know what I can bring. I think Luke knows that, as well. I'm very happy to be in the team. I think we have a very good team this year. I think we have a very strong team, and I'm very excited for Rome.

Q. He was certainly very complimentary about your yesterday, saying that although your form hasn't been the greatest maybe this year, that you're a player for the big time. Is that how you feel about it?

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah. I mean, my form probably has not been the greatest, but some of the bigger events I've played some of my best golf, and I think that's where I like -- there's nothing bigger than the Ryder Cup, and hopefully I can go to Rome and show people what I'm made of.

Q. When did you officially get the call from Luke? Was it Sunday?

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, Sunday afternoon, late afternoon, yeah, he called me. I hadn't talked to Luke for a few weeks, so yeah, it was nice to get the official call on Sunday afternoon. Obviously started with some media, so it was nice to have the announcement, and as I said, it's a very exciting month for me going forward.

Q. You did say earlier on this week that the Ryder Cup was one of your goals. Was there any extra weight on your shoulders over the summer in the tournaments you were playing?

SHANE LOWRY: Look, I wouldn't say -- I probably did maybe -- I think the last Ryder Cup was the same. Although I made the team, I was literally a few points away from making the team. I had a great summer, played good golf in 2021, and like I definitely said at the start of the year, my big thing was to not only make the team, but winning the Ryder Cup this year was one of my main goals, and I probably put too much pressure on myself.



Did it get in the way a little bit? I wouldn't say so. I think there's certain times throughout the season where I maybe didn't finish off tournaments as well as I would have liked, which makes it look like -- you finish 15th or 20th, it makes it look like an average week, but finish the tournament a little better on Sunday or a couple of shots here or there you're not far away. I certainly didn't feel like I was far off this year.

Yeah, look, I'm just very pleased to be here and I'm very excited, pleased. (Indiscernible) started yesterday with the whole team. That's exciting. Everything about the next three to four weeks are going to be very exciting and they're going to be great fun.

Q. A lot of guys were up in the mountains playing, but you were obviously down in Curry. What were you doing down there, just some casual golf?

SHANE LOWRY: Just playing golf, yeah. I went away, played Adair Manor on Friday, and I played (indiscernible) this weekend, which is one of the most beautiful places I've ever been, and we obviously got the weather, which was extra nice, and just played some golf, and yeah, it was good.

Q. On the Ryder Cup, just wondering, Thomas Björn yesterday said you make people around you on the team better. Do you feel that you have that influence on people?

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, it's nice to hear that. I don't try to do that. I think anywhere I go or anywhere I am, I am myself, and if that happens to be that, that's amazing. I'm not going to go and try and lead anyone else in Rome apart from myself.

The last Ryder Cup, being a rookie, you kind of feel like you're kind of sitting there and back. You don't really want to be too loud or too -- maybe wasn't myself as much as I would have liked there in the team room, and I think this time I can be myself a little bit more.

We've obviously got a few very young players this year, and it would be nice to be able to help them along the way throughout the week.

Yeah, it's nice to hear. As I said, I'll just be myself, and that's all I can do.

Q. They said you're easy to motivate them, that you know what buttons to press.

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, yeah. I'll have no problem getting

motivated, don't worry. Come Friday morning on that first tee, I'll be ready to play. There's no doubt about that.

Q. The number of picks that there were this year on the team, does that take a bit of pressure off of (indiscernible) less pressure than having two picks?

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, if you look at the way the team was picked, there's not many players playing that weren't in the top 12, myself included, I think. I think if you went down the list, you have the best 12 players, and that's why you have six picks, so you have the chance to pick the 12 best players.

Yeah, I personally think that's the right way to go about it, and like I said, I think we have the best 12 players from Europe coming to play this Ryder Cup, and I think we're in form. A lot of players are in very good form, as you've seen over the last few weeks, and I think we're going to give it a great go this year.

Q. Not to necessarily disagree with you, but many people think that Adrian Meronk was one of those 12.

SHANE LOWRY: Well, people have their opinion. Adrian has had a great year, and obviously he's unfortunate to miss out, but somebody has to miss out. I'm not going to sit here and disagree with Luke Donald. It was his decision at the end of the day, if he thinks that somebody else is better for this team than he was.

Q. On the Aberg side, here's a kid that's 23 and never played in a major, played a handful of professional events, 10 or 11 professional events. Could you think of yourself being in that situation, and how hard would that be being on a Ryder Cup team with that little experience?

SHANE LOWRY: Well, I think he's playing with a lot of confidence at the minute, so I think he'll be okay. I think Ludvig -- I've not played with him or seen him shots, and obviously I watched last weekend. I think Ludvig is probably going to play in the next six or seven Ryder Cups, so this is a good one to start with in Rome with a very strong team. I think he'll fit into the team nicely.

He drives the ball incredibly well, which is what you need around that golf course, and I think he's a great fit for the team.

Look, he's never played a major, but he's played, like you said, a lot of PGA Tour events and never missed a cut, not even close to missing a cut. He's been very solid since he turned pro, and statistically he's one of the best players on the European side at the minute. I don't see any reason for



him not to pick him.

Q. Looking at the course, the biggest change since 2016 would be the fairways. I just wondered, it's quite an amazing difference --

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, they're running and they're firm, and obviously the weather has a lot to do with that. But the course is in great condition. It's dry. You can see the work they've put in here over the years. There's a lot of rough. With the fairways being firm and there being a lot of roughs, the fairways are going to be harder to hit. Yeah, the place is in incredible condition, and it all sets up for a great week.

Q. You mentioned you probably put a lot of pressure on yourself to make that team. Now that you have made it, how do you expect to play this week and next week?

SHANE LOWRY: I mean, I always have very high expectations of myself, so I expect to come here and compete and give myself a chance on Sunday. This week is obviously a very special week for me, and it's a tournament that I'd dearly love to win again.

Yeah, like I feel like I'm playing two tournaments that I love playing, two golf courses that I like playing the next two weeks, so there's no reason why I can't come out in form over the next two weeks.

Q. If I can ask you to put your designer hat on, you look at the risk-reward finish, 16 and 18 here, how good of a finish is it in terms of tournament golf?

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, like 16, 17, 18 here. 17 is one of the most difficult tee shots you'll ever hit. I think the finish is -- you start on 11 -- 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, like every hole is a chance but every hole is a chance for bogey, as well.

It's just a good golf course. It's stood the test of time, which is great.

Q. Talk about 16 particularly, the par-5.

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, I think people don't realise how good that shot Rory hit here in 2016 was. That's a very intimidating shot, and it's a very narrow target. Like unless you're going in there with 3-iron -- unless you're going in there with iron, there will be a lot of people laying up, I think, because it's one of those it's a very narrow target. But it's just a great finish.

Q. After your win in 2009, you said as long as I live,

this will be my greatest achievement in golf. What about hitting the winning shots to win a Ryder Cup for Europe?

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, that would obviously be something that would be very special. I don't really care whether it's me or not that wins the Cup, as long as it's one of us, and that's all I care about. Yeah, if it is me, that would be very nice, as well.

I obviously said that in 2009, but I think that was shot before 2019. So I think I've really surpassed that a little bit. There's always extra stuff to achieve in this game, and that is something that would be very nice.

Q. Can you believe it's been 14 years since that?

SHANE LOWRY: No, no. I can when I (indiscernible), but it's been a quick 14 years, and this is my 15th season on Tour, and it just goes by so quick.

I'm obviously very grateful for the career that I've had so far. I feel like I've got to achieve a lot going forward, as well, so yeah, it's an exciting time, and it's a great time to be playing on the best course in the world, and I'm looking forward to the next three years of it.

Q. On the Ryder Cup, I think it's Tommy who said yesterday that the guys who were on the team at Whistling Straits, there's kind of a bond between them, and obviously the result wasn't what you wanted. What was the feeling --

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, I think there was a lot of chatting on the plane back, sitting around, talking about what we need to do going forward. I think the Hero Cup at the start of the year was that afternoon, that plane ride.

I think, yeah, we definitely straight away, you kind of feel like, right, what can we do to win this back, and obviously it's a long time, two years in professional golf. You just kind of wait to see what the team does, but we have a lot of players that played the last time and a lot of guys who are very (indiscernible).

I think that's the great thing about this team. I think there are a lot of guys who are very friendly, and our wives and partners are quite friendly, as well. We all get on very well. It's going to be an amazing team room this year, an amazing experience, and something I'm looking forward to.

Q. You spoke about pressure. Loads of pressure the next two weeks. Do you think that will help you produce your best golf?

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SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, I live for the occasion and I love it. It doesn't really -- apart from major championship golf, it doesn't really get bigger than the next couple of weeks for me, and then obviously the Ryder Cup after that is one of the biggest.

Yeah, it's probably one of the biggest tournaments in the world, and these are some of the biggest tournaments for me.

Q. Will you get over to France for the rugby at all?

SHANE LOWRY: I'm hoping after the Ryder Cup, I'm hoping to get over there. I'll be there if we're hopefully, touch wood, there for the last two games. I wouldn't miss it.

It's an exciting time for Irish sport. It's the first time we've ever gone into the tournament so big with such high expectations and high hopes, and I'm pretty confident that they can live up to that. I'm looking forward to the next couple of months of that, as well.

Q. Is the whole team going to Rome to study the course?

SHANE LOWRY: (Indiscernible) flying from here to Rome. We're all playing and staying for dinner Monday night and we're flying to Wentworth on Tuesday. That's going to be an amazing trip. That'll be a nice team bonding. It'll be nice for the likes of Ludvig and Nicolai to get to know the guys that they don't already know, and it'll be good for the caddies, as well. It'll be a good trip.

Q. (Indiscernible).

SHANE LOWRY: No, I don't. I don't gamble on golf, so I wouldn't know.

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