

LIV Golf Adelaide

Wednesday, 24 April, 2024

Adelaide, South Australia, Australia

The Grange

Ripper GC

Cam Smith

Matt Jones

Marc Leishman

Lucas Herbert

Press Conference



ADELAIDE 2024

World Best Golf Event by the World Golf Awards last year. What do you think went into that?

MARC LEISHMAN: I mean, it says a lot for the event, to not just be -- there's obviously a lot of great golf tournaments around the whole world, and to be named the best one is a huge honor for LIV and for Adelaide because obviously without all the support of the Adelaide people and the people of Australia, it certainly wouldn't have happened.

Pretty proud to be an Aussie on that one. Too easy.

THE MODERATOR: Lucas, this is your first time participating in LIV Golf Adelaide. What are your expectations for the week?

LUCAS HERBERT: Yeah, I don't know whether to be scared or excited for the week, honestly. Obviously LIV Adelaide won the best golf event of the year award last year, so sounded like they got it out of the way too easy. There's a lot of hype for the week.

I'm a big music guy, so picking out my walk-up songs for the party hole, I've been getting goosebumps every time I've been thinking about what that's going to feel like, walking out to each song. Yeah, very, very excited.

THE MODERATOR: We obviously have Fisher returning this year. Will we see all of you on stage doing shoeys again with Fisher this year?

LUCAS HERBERT: I just bought a new pair of shoes yesterday in anticipation for any shoeys that might come, so I'm coming in prepared.

CAM SMITH: Yeah, I think I'll definitely go to the concert. It was pretty epic last year, to be honest, and we've got another couple of good acts, as well. Yeah, big weekend ahead. Too easy.

Q. This event really puts Adelaide, South Australia and Australia on the global stage. There's so many eyes on Australia and South Australia this week. What does that mean for the country, for travel, for tourism and being on this global stage?

THE MODERATOR: Let's welcome Ripper GC to LIV Golf Adelaide 2024. We are joined by Matt Jones, our captain Cam Smith, Marc Leishman and the newest member of Ripper GC, Lucas Herbert. It's been exactly a year since we were here last year. A lot has changed. We're expecting even more fans this year.

Matt, tell me about how excited you are for this week.

MATT JONES: Yeah, I mean, last year exceeded all expectations for all of us. This will be the first year Herby is here, and it's going to be amazing.

The atmosphere last year, especially for walking up the 18th hole for the first time when we walked on the green, people started cheering before we'd even hit a shot. Got on the tee, they started cheering. To have even more people this year will make the experience that much better.

Looking forward to it, and I think it's going to be amazing.

THE MODERATOR: Cam, you're really the hometown hero, and everywhere you go it's like the Beatles. Does it feel so good to have that really warm welcome being back here in Australia?

CAM SMITH: Yeah, it's just nice to be home, really. It's a pretty cool experience I think for all of us this week. We're definitely the fan favorites around here, and you can definitely tell.

Like Jonesy said, just the amount of support we got last year I think will be amplified this year again with a few more people out. Yeah, can't wait for the week to start.

THE MODERATOR: Marc, this event was named the



MARC LEISHMAN: Well, I think the Adelaide government took a little bit of a risk taking on such a huge event, and I think that all of that has paid off tenfold to be able to have such a massive event in Adelaide, have people travel from all around the country to here, and they really get to showcase their city.

I think it's only a good thing.

Q. Cam, what are your hopes for Ripper this year? You guys had an extremely busy week last year. I think you ended up finishing in eighth place. What are you going to do to take the podium this year?

CAM SMITH: I mean, yeah, we've been talking about it all year. It would be cool to get our first win here, I think. It would be pretty epic. But it's definitely been on our mind. We probably haven't ham and egged it the best this year. We've had a few good finishes individually but haven't quite got it across for the team.

Hopefully this is the week where it all comes together. We learned a lot from last year, I think, and the preparation has definitely been better already.

Q. LIV Adelaide is obviously the blueprint for what LIV Golf wants to be. How do you recreate that 13 other times around the world? Is there a secret recipe that makes Adelaide the pick of the bunch?

CAM SMITH: I think the Australian fans is pretty hard to recreate around the world, but you just pick a city or a country that's been kind of -- I guess hadn't seen good golf for a long time. It worked last year. It's going to work again this year here.

I can see it definitely working internationally a lot better than the U.S. because there's just so many tournaments in the U.S.

I'm definitely putting my hand up for more of an international schedule and getting fans out that haven't seen quality golf for a while and showing them what LIV is all about.

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, I think like Cam said, there's opportunities all around the world, markets that haven't been hit yet like Adelaide hadn't been. You've got Torque -- there's an opportunity for a tournament in Chile; the South African lads I'm sure would love to have one in South Africa; you've got all of Asia and India. There's just so many opportunities, and I think places like Cam said that haven't seen world-class golf for a long time, I think that's where there's huge opportunities.

Obviously the Tour plays a lot in America, and they've got that fan base there. I think we can really create a huge worldwide fan base because there's a lot of big financial markets around the whole world.

LUCAS HERBERT: I guess that team aspect, as well, it makes it very easy for a country, for example, Chile to follow the Torque team or all those sort of markets.

Honestly, I think by all reports that I'm hearing about this event last year and obviously what I've seen so far, I think you're going to struggle to recreate it 13 times again around the world. It's just a special event. It obviously won best golf event of the year last year, so it's going to be hard to recreate that 13 more times.

But I do feel like with that team element, with it being quite a country -- a country is sort of dominating each team, I feel like that is going to allow for maybe a market where our international events can get hyped up really, really well and really get behind a home team kind of feeling.

Q. Could you see LIV Golf evolving into a scenario where each of the home events are a home event for one team and each team has a home ground home country advantage and therefore all those fans are incentivized to get out to support that team in each city?

LUCAS HERBERT: Yeah, I think so. I think it would be a great idea format, sort of idea to do that -- I don't know how it works logistically. You've obviously got a few teams in the States where I don't know how that may work perfectly, but I definitely know with the Stinger team, with the Torque team, with the Ripper GC team, with the Iron Heads, I think there is definitely a market there for feeling like there's a home base somewhere and getting like a home event system.

Q. Curious with all the support that you guys are getting this week, does that also come with a certain weight of expectations, Cam?

CAM SMITH: Yes. Yeah, I think it can definitely be a good thing and a bad thing at the same time. Obviously the support from the fans is amazing, but internally I think sometimes you can get caught out just trying a little bit too hard, trying to make a putt go in, trying to hit a shot close, and you get caught out.

Yeah, I think the prep, like I mentioned before, has been a little bit better this year. We probably haven't had as much success to do outside the golf course, which is nice, so we've had a little bit more time on the course, and just got to treat it like another week, although it's really not for us.

This is probably our biggest week of the year.

Q. Also wanted to ask you about the 12th hole, just about your experiences last year. Is there a certain moment or memory that you recall? Cam, I think you had a Fisher encounter at one point if I recall.

CAM SMITH: Yeah, probably the first memory that pops into my mind was that Friday afternoon, and yeah, to be honest, I was kind of shitting myself, and I probably hit the worst shot of the week by far. I think I like fat flum-pushed it. It was so bad. I had about 50 meters left for my second shot.

I got better gradually over the weekend, but it was pretty scary, to be honest, on that Friday afternoon.

MATT JONES: It's a great hole. It's a great length of a hole for that type of a hole. You'll be hitting a club where you expect to hit a good shot and hit a decent shot to get the crowd to go crazy, and I'm the same as Cam, I missed the green short right on Friday because I was a little nervous and a little intimidated by everything that was going on there.

It was a great experience, though, and I can't wait to get back there.

Q. Marc, is there something that stands out?

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, I was lucky, like the boys were saying. It was pretty intimidating even though it wasn't that hard a shot just with the crowd going crazy. I actually hit three pretty good shots, which was nice, but the one that stands out for me is Sunday afternoon, it was my last hole, and I remember pouring a cold Leishman Lager into a warm shoe, and it was pretty warm when I drank it. The crowd went off, and it was a good way to finish off the tournament.

Q. Lucas, where were you last year? Were you watching this?

LUCAS HERBERT: I won the opposite week in Japan last year, and none of you gave a shit what I did that week.

Q. How did you balance what you were doing this time last year to all the attention that LIV got here in Adelaide? And what are these lads telling you about what to expect this weekend?

LUCAS HERBERT: How do I balance the two? I was obviously thrilled myself to win, but I was also very thrilled to see the Australian public embrace the LIV Adelaide event the way they did. Like Leish mentioned, the

Adelaide government took a big risk in bringing a LIV event here. Obviously with the whole political environment around this tour, it could have gone either way with our public embracing the event.

But to see it come out the way it did, to see Australia embrace the golf tournament the way it did, I was just really proud that we had done that and that we created such a golfing spectacle.

Realistically I think it was a turning point in the whole LIV discussion really, legitimizing LIV as a tour and basically saying that these guys -- the conversations around these guys don't care anymore, I think it very much legitimized this tour, that event. I was just proud to see that on Australian soil. I don't think I was really upset or annoyed that I was getting attention taken away from me up in Japan.

From what the boys have told me about it, just unbelievable. Obviously everyone said that it's crazy and it's fun and it's massive, but there's never been a bad comment about it.

If you look at something like Waste Management Open, there's a few guys that think that goes too far, there's some people that think it gets too crazy, whereas for as insane as this event was last year, no one said anything bad about it. Everyone said it was just a great time. The fans were amazing but still respectful. Everyone had an amazing time, somewhat of a party.

Yeah, I've got a lot to look forward to this year basically was the general consensus of what I've heard so far.

Q. Cam, performance-wise, what Talor Gooch did last year here was pretty incredible. You played solid but were never really in the hunt. What do you expect this year? Is it going to be that low again do you think? How do you approach the pure golf aspect of this weekend?

CAM SMITH: I think the golf course is very similar. The greens seem like they have a little bit more bounce in it this year. They were kind of almost a little bit crumbly last year. It was kind of hard to gauge how far the ball was going to run out on some holes, and they definitely seem a lot more consistent.

I think what Goochy did last year was pretty insane. I don't think we'll see that again. We were just looking at his stats actually yesterday, and what he did and trying to basically mimic that for this year. Yeah, looking at what he did, it was pretty insane golf.

I think we'll get somewhere around where he finished, but those first couple of rounds, I wouldn't expect 20-under to be leading after two rounds this year. That's pretty insane.

Q. What would it mean to be a local individually -- team obviously, but to be the first Australian to win in Australia, that would obviously be a huge achievement.

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, I mean, it would be --

LUCAS HERBERT: Will we make our Monday flights if one of us wins?

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, it would be pretty crazy if any one of us one. Obviously we're all individually hoping it's us, but it's the biggest -- look, it's the biggest tournament we play all year, and it's in our backyard. To win it would be certainly a career highlight and a pretty big few days to follow I would think.

Q. Just conditions, I guess now that everyone has had a look, does it count for anything? Hopefully the winds get up maybe a little bit, firmness of the greens, does that count for anything for you boys, or you don't get much of an advantage over the rest of the field?

MATT JONES: I think last year, Friday and Saturday was a lot softer than we were used to and expecting, so we probably played a little more like you would play a typical Australian golf course, where Sunday it was a lot firmer and faster, and I think our team was one of the low rounds for the day on Sunday.

I think that has a lot to do with our preparation this year, that if it is going to be soft, we're going to have to play a little differently, maybe more like an American golfer would play where we just bomb it, if the greens are softer like they were last year on Friday and Saturday.

Q. If you guys each have one piece of advice for Lucas for the watering hole, what would it be?

MATT JONES: Hit it close.

CAM SMITH: Bring your umbrella.

MARC LEISHMAN: Just remember to breathe.

THE MODERATOR: Good luck this week, guys. I know everyone will be rooting for you. We're excited to have you here, and thanks for hosting us.

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