

LIV Golf Nashville

Thursday, 20 June, 2024

Nashville, Tennessee, USA

The Grove

Stinger GC

Louis Oosthuizen

Dean Burmester

Branden Grace

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Good morning, everybody. Let's welcome Stinger GC. We are joined today by Dean Burmester, our captain Louis Oosthuizen and Branden Grace. Noticeably absent is Charl Schwartzel. He is out playing the pro-am and was not able to make it.

Welcome, guys. People might not know this or expect it, but the Stingers are huge country fans, all of you. Branden, you recently bought a home and moved here to Franklin, Tennessee. Can you tell us what makes this part of the country so special and why you moved here?

BRANDEN GRACE: Yeah. Kind of reminds me a little bit of home. It gives me a home away from home, I suppose. We made the move about a month ago. We love it. We love the people. Like I say, we're big fans of country music, the whole vibe, the whole everything. We just wanted a little bit more land for my kids. It's everything we could have dreamt of. We're loving it.

Q. This is technically a home game for you?

BRANDEN GRACE: It is technically a home game. I'm a member down here at The Grove, as well. I played here for the first time last week, and it's great. It's a great place, great state this, and Greg and his team did a marvelous job out here.

LOUIS OOSTHUIZEN: We're expecting three really good rounds.

Q. Dean, I saw you walking down Broadway last night in a cowboy hat. You seemed to be embracing Nashville. Can you tell us about that?

DEAN BURMESTER: Yeah, I think when you have my fringe line, you wear a hat all the time. It's actually quite funny, it was my first time down Broadway, and we've got



NASHVILLE 2024

friends who's actually a country artist and they live out here, so we met them, and I've got other friends over from South Africa who were with us. They've been going into town every day and loving it.

We took the opportunity before the function last night just to go down there and ended up sitting in a bar listening to great music having a couple bourbons, a couple whiskies. I think I've probably got to say whiskey in Tennessee. Yeah, it was just great fun. I love the hat. I pulled it off the wall at the house I'm staying at, so I didn't pay for it, which is even a bigger bonus.

But yeah, it was fun. It was a great evening.

Q. Louis, you were an actually farmer. You spend your free time in cowboy boots on tractors. What is it about South Africans and the country vibe?

LOUIS OOSTHUIZEN: Yeah, I don't know about the cowboy boots, but Dean had great cowboy boots on yesterday. You see his white sneakers with a white cowboy hat (laughing).

DEAN BURMESTER: I'd probably get locked up for that.

LOUIS OOSTHUIZEN: I grew up on a farm, lived my whole life on a farm. Then eventually staying in the States for a long time, bought a farm down in Ocala. We wanted the kids to have the same sort of what me and my wife grew up on. She also grew up on farms her whole life.

We really enjoy that style.

Q. The most important question, you guys all have country songs I believe for your walk-up songs. Everyone is wanting to know since you're in Nashville, in Music City, who is your favorite country artist?

DEAN BURMESTER: I'd probably got to say Chris Stapleton is probably my favorite country artist.

LOUIS OOSTHUIZEN: I'm a big Eric Church fan.

BRANDEN GRACE: Same as dean, Chris Stapleton.

LOUIS OOSTHUIZEN: It's the only one you guys know.



DEAN BURMESTER: What do you mean? I know Shaboozey.

Q. Dean and Louis, you guys are both sitting inside the top 10 right now in points at third and fifth respectively. Tell us about what's clicked with your game this year and how and why you guys are playing so well.

DEAN BURMESTER: Yeah, for me it's obviously kind of having that home feel, I think, in the team environment, and certainly the vibe that we have kind of helps us feed off each other. Last year I had a pretty good season. Branden had a really strong season. It was nice to kind of feed off him.

Louis, I finally remember in Tucson last year us waiting on the green with Louis, and I really wanted that. I wanted that obviously for myself but also for the team and for us to get wins. Yeah, that kind of drives you to keep practicing and keep grinding it out and getting better.

Yeah, I can contribute just being happy as a whole to kind of my golf.

Q. Do you feel that LIV and the team aspect has really improved your game?

DEAN BURMESTER: Definitely because I get to feed off not only these great players, but I get to feed off a lot of other great players. You learn from them day in, day out. Bryson obviously is doing amazing things, but I've had the honor of spending time with him on the driving range and picking his brain, his crazy brain, which is really cool, and you get to understand a lot of that stuff. Those things kind of make it a little easier and maybe make you feel a little less mad and make you feel like you're just normal and one of the guys out here.

LOUIS OOSTHUIZEN: I think towards the end of last year, I started playing a little better. I've been trying -- went back to old sort of things that I knew worked in the past for me, and then had a really good last two events of the season by winning the two events in Europe, on the European Tour. Then sort of just carried over into this season.

I think being part of a team, it drives you a little bit more. You don't get -- you do get down on yourself, but you've got three strong guys to really pick you up and motivate you to keep on going, and if you have a bad round it's not the end of the world, but you're always working harder and harder to try and contribute to the team.

Being part of something like that, I think your focus is a

little bit not just me, me, me like it used to be all the time. It's all about the team setup and environment. I know I love it, and I think the boys love it, as well.

Q. Louis, you withdrew last week in Houston with a back injury. Can you give us a status update on that?

LOUIS OOSTHUIZEN: Yeah, it came out of the blue really. I woke up and just paining off and came back up and I was like, oh, that's not good. I got to the golf course, and I couldn't even get in my setup position properly. I knew it was going to be a case of trying to play and I would have probably made one shot or two shots and then walked off.

Knowing Wade is right there and he can tee off and help the team, it was an easy decision for me at the end. But yeah, I've had it a long time ago, five, six, seven years ago where something like that happened. It was a strange one, but I'm all good. I'm ready to go this week.

Q. Back to 100?

LOUIS OOSTHUIZEN: Yeah. I didn't play much last week. I've done some -- I played Saturday last week, nine holes, and it felt okay, and played with the boys on Tuesday, and it's all good.

Q. We talked about Bryson for a minute. I want to get everyone's reaction to Bryson's win at the U.S. Open and if you guys were watching and just your feedback on it.

BRANDEN GRACE: Yeah, geez, what a spectacular win for him. Not just for him but for LIV. I think we were all cheering for Bryson. I watched it. I'm sure they did, as well. I don't think I've been that nervous for somebody else before in my life, just kind of what happened, where he hit it, that sort of thing, and how he got out of trouble every single time. Obviously the clutch up-and-down at 18.

It was amazing to see, and it was nice to see last night the nice words that he said towards LIV, the LIV guys. We all took a big step coming over here, and it was nice to see that a guy like that also is trying to give back to us, as well, and dedicate it to us, as well. It's nice. We all feel like a brotherhood out here, not just in the team but in the LIV aspect, as well.

Q. Dean, you got to experience how tough that course was having played it. Can you give us how remarkable Bryson's win was?

DEAN BURMESTER: I'm trying not to relive my performance that much from last week. I don't know how



you make birdies, let alone shoot under par around a place like that when it's playing that tough. I certainly felt that way. For him to shoot 6-under around there, over four days, under those conditions, it's crazy how good that is. I don't think people realize how small your margin of miss was around a place like that.

You've really got to be on top of your game to make birdies and to not make bogeys.

I think towards the end of that round, you could kind of see with pressure what was really able to happen, and yeah, for him to hold his nerve is incredible. I'm super proud of him, and I think everybody here is super proud of what he's done and achieved.

It's an amazing feat to be a two-time major champion, and he should certainly relish in that.

Q. We were talking about the team aspect and how important it is. You guys have obviously as a team faced some challenges this year with Charl's wife being diagnosed with breast cancer, and you guys have all really rallied around him. You guys all shaved your head, you have the breast cancer flag on your bags. Can you talk about that team aspect and how important that is when you're going through something so challenging in your personal life and how important it is to have your friends around you.

LOUIS OOSTHUIZEN: Yeah, I mean, not just as a team. I think anyone in life that goes through stuff like that needs to -- that's where I think friendships really help you and close family, to get through those things. We just told them we're there for you whatever you guys need, whatever we can do.

It's not a great time for them to go through, but we all try and keep very positive for them going through these things. They're seeing the very best people that can help them with that. We're just there for them, whatever they need, and try and keep his mind off of things and just get on the golf course and play.

He's done unbelievable. I think everything happened sort of the Oman week before our season started. For him to still play under all of those things and play really good, he's got a strong character, and Rosalind has been unbelievable. It's just nice to see -- I think we've actually bonded a little bit even more as a team and as friends, and they're going through this, but they'll get through it. They're good.

BRANDEN GRACE: It's easy to support somebody like that when you know the family really very well. For us,

we're not just part of the team but we're four very good friends. It's easy to give back like that and do simple things like shaving your head.

There was no doubt in anybody of us of we were going to do it, and the whole team actually did it, not just the four of us but all the physios, management staff, everybody, caddies. We're there for them. We support them all the way. Like Louis said, whatever they need, we've got their back, and it's just nice knowing that they know that.

Q. As the league leader in scrambling - I didn't know if you knew that or not, Louis - I just was curious how you evaluated Bryson's 55-yard bunker shot on 18.

LOUIS OOSTHUIZEN: In Miami where Dean won, I think I had 65 yards on the 17 and it pitched 92 into the water. I knew exactly how difficult a shot that was.

I don't think he could have left himself a more difficult shot. I think the stat was 1.7 percent or something for him to up-and-down. I mean, when he hit it there, I was like, you can actually lose it here, nevermind playoff. You can lose it here because if you got a little aggressive and you hit it long then you've got a treacherous one coming back.

I said to him on the range yesterday, you're not going to hit that shot again, not under that situation again. That was just one of those. It was meant to be your event or your tournament, and then you pull those great shots off.

Q. Dean, you mentioned talking to Bryson yesterday on the range. What was it like to hit that Crank driver?

DEAN BURMESTER: I mean, if there were people on the right of that range, they would have been severely injured is what I would comment on that. It wasn't great, but then the second one, not only are his grips a lot bigger than what I'm used to, but how upright his driver is is something else.

But the feel of the face, and when he told me hit as big a hook as I can and it came out with a little five-yard draw, that kind of blew my mind a little bit. We all know he's kind of the scientist in our game, and he's developing 3D-printed irons.

I know Louis loves his gadgets. He could be building his own irons soon. He's got every gadget under the sun. So he's going to get a 3D printer, eh, Louis?

LOUIS OOSTHUIZEN: No, I'm okay. I'll just stick with my clubs.

DEAN BURMESTER: It was pretty cool. Those are the

kind of moments I was talking about earlier, things like that, where he actually doesn't mind you actually hitting his driver and looking at his irons and maybe hitting a couple and just learning off him. It's pretty awesome.

Q. Of the top 7 guys in points right now, you're the only one that's not a captain. I was wondering if you took a certain sense of pride in battling the captains there at the top.

DEAN BURMESTER: I suppose I do now. Or do I feel like the odd one out? I don't know.

I suppose, thank you, Louis, for picking me then, giving me the chance to kind of play amongst the captains.

LOUIS OOSTHUIZEN: There was no one else.

DEAN BURMESTER: Thanks, Louis. You're probably not wrong, really.

Q. The Olympics field was released on Monday. I was just curious what you guys thought of the process and if you thought that each country should go ahead and find their own selection for their golfers like a lot of the other sports do in the Olympic Games.

BRANDEN GRACE: Yeah, I think it's definitely -- I'll probably be getting a little bit of grief for this, but in my opinion these are the two guys that should be representing South Africa out there this year, just by what they've won, what they've played, where they've played, how they've performed, and not just in the last five months, but probably the last year or so, if not longer.

I think that's maybe a good call of maybe each country picking or trying to get their own solution on how they get the criteria right for guys to qualify, things like that. It's definitely a way forward. But the system at this stage, that's not very accurate.

We all know that. We all talk about it, week in and week out, but these should be the two guys probably representing South Africa out there.

LOUIS OOSTHUIZEN: I'm probably the wrong person to talk to. I think I've said this before, years ago when golf became a sport in the Olympics. I grew up with the four majors being your main events, and I don't really see the fit of professional golfers playing golf in the Olympics, to me. It was never -- I had the opportunity to go to one of the Olympics and I pulled out at the end. It was more getting scheduling-wise getting everything -- at that time I think it was close to a major and that was my main focus always, majors, so the Olympics didn't fit into my schedule that

year.

Looking back at that, I think it would be a nice thing to have on your CV that you could have represented your country. I've represented my country in World Cup and in Presidents Cup before, but yeah, look, the system is what it is. I think we're all higher up on the World Ranking than we are right now, or we should be. But I hope the boys play well and that they perform well, and it's still going to be a strong South African team playing.

DEAN BURMESTER: Yeah, obviously Christiaan and Erik are going to do South Africa proud, and they've also played some great golf in their own right, which is something.

But to comment on that, I think Louis and I definitely look like Olympians, first of all.

BRANDEN GRACE: They just blast it a bit badly.

DEAN BURMESTER: Just got a really bad paint job. But we'd fit in there, I think, us and the swimmers and the 100-meter runners.

Why are you blushing, Louis?

But yeah, it would be an honor obviously to go to the Olympics and represent your country. I think it's basically the field we have, and those two guys are going to have that opportunity, so it's super special, and we can only wish them well.

Q. Branden, Houston obviously wasn't too kind to you. How quickly do you shift your focus to the next tournament instead of staying stuck in the one that might not have gone your way?

BRANDEN GRACE: I've probably had seven of those this year, so for me it's -- the good thing is it's only halfway through the season. There's a lot of golf left. I've had two unbelievable seasons the last two. I don't feel I'm too far away from kind of what I had the last two years.

It helps being part of a team like this and having these guys. We've been -- I've had some late brain sessions with them on the range trying to help me out and giving me some advice and that sort of stuff, and at the end of the day it's just one little feeling that you need to get back, and that's the feeling that gets you from finishing in 45th position to winning again.

As golfers, we all have our ups and downs. That's just golf. It's the toughest thing in life, the crazy sport that we do.

But we still love it. We still get up every day. We still



practice. The motivation is still there. I need to play well to be out here again next year. That's the main focus, and just trying to win golf events.

Q. Dean, at The Open I saw you hitting off 8 tee and you were hitting some kind of iron, and I asked you what was that, and you kind of chuckled and said it was a 1-iron. Is that always in your bag? Did that play well for Pinehurst? How did that go?

DEAN BURMESTER: Yeah, so originally I thought that it was going to firm up a lot more throughout the week, which the fairways really didn't. In hindsight, 3-wood probably -- I had, I think, five perfect 3-woods throughout the week, and I hit one 1-iron. I think it probably didn't suit well, but it is something that I like to use certainly in windy conditions. To qualify for the U.S. Open at the Bear's Club I used it almost off every tee because of how firm it was. It can pitch 270 and it runs out to 300 to 310, and I'm pretty accurate with it. My caddie calls it the in-between club.

LOUIS OOSTHUIZEN: I played with him at Valderrama last year, we played a practice round, and he only hit it 20 yards past me with his 1-iron, and I was hitting my driver.

BRANDEN GRACE: We wish we had an in-between club like that.

DEAN BURMESTER: I'll be using it at the British Open for sure. Probably the next time you'll see it.

Q. In the LIV fan community we refer to you as "Lean Dean," some "Clean Dean" and then sometimes "Mean Dean." Which one of those do you prefer?

DEAN BURMESTER: I'm definitely not "Lean Dean."

"Dean the Machine." Charl calls me the Machine. That's what Charl calls me. I'd much prefer -- I'm not Lean Dean. Clean, I'll have to ask my wife. I don't know if I'm very clean. Mean, probably on Tuesdays I'm pretty mean. Eh, Louis? When I'm losing practice rounds.

Q. Louis, in a perfect world where we add a fifth roster spot and it could be any golfer in the world, who would it be?

LOUIS OOSTHUIZEN: On our team? Bryson right now.

Q. You guys are all big country guys. You guys are in the heart of America. If you could go to any bar after you guys dominate this weekend, which one is it?

LOUIS OOSTHUIZEN: I'll go back to the Jason Aldean bar because if you looked at that John Deere tractor that's

there on that third floor, man, it's a nice spot to sit there by the bar. You're not going to go wrong right there.

Q. Do you remember the Big Dig at the John Deere Classic?

LOUIS OOSTHUIZEN: Do I remember it? I've got some videos on my phone still, man.

Q. What can you tell us about what to expect from watching a team perform, how you prepare, how you get ready, and how to know when one should cheer and get excited?

DEAN BURMESTER: I think the slogan "golf but louder" probably says it for you. You should expect it to be pretty loud. Obviously the music is pretty good. The vibe is going to be amazing. Obviously the party hole, I think they've set it up incredibly well this week. They've got a nice open spot for general admission tickets, and it's going to be pretty rowdy.

If I had anything to say to the people, bring the noise, bring the energy, because I think the players will thrive off that, and I think it'll be a good time.

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