

Men's Olympic Golf Competition

Tuesday, 27 July 2021

Saitama City, Saitama, Japan

Kasumigaseki Country Club

Marc Leishman

Cameron Smith

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'll get started with questions.

Talk about the pride and excitement to be here representing Australia for the Olympic games. We'll start with Marc.

MARC LEISHMAN: Obviously very excited to be here. To represent your country is a huge honor and I know we're both very proud to be wearing this uniform. The course looks great out there. It's in unbelievable condition and I'm sure it will only get more difficult as the week goes on and yeah we're excited to be here.

CAMERON SMITH: Yeah, I mean, yeah, growing up you really never think that you're going to wear the Olympic uniform with the coat of arms on it. It's pretty special. Yeah, I mean, it's just going to be an awesome experience. Leish and I get on great. We're going to have great week off the course and hopefully a great one on the course as well. The course is in great shape and I can't wait for Thursday.

THE MODERATOR: For both of you, are there Olympic sports you remember watching or you pay closer attention to than other sports in the summer Olympics?

MARC LEISHMAN: I remember watching the swimming. Australia has been very successful at that for a lot of years. As a kid I love watching that. The diving. I used to really like that. And of course the sprints. I love watching the 100 meters. But any, just as a sports fan in general, to watch all the sports that you wouldn't normally watch is a thrill for the two or three weeks that the Olympics does go on.

THE MODERATOR: Cam.

CAMERON SMITH: I would say the biggest memory is probably swimming as well. Like Marc said, Australia's

been very successful. Ian Thorpe and Grant Hackett I remember so much as a kid watching them. So I think that's probably the biggest thing, but I love watching all the Olympic sports. It's typically something that we don't really look out for on the TV, but it's great that it's on for a few weeks and we're able to celebrate our athletes.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions.

Q. Was this something you guys talked about in New Orleans when you were paired together and kind of looking ahead and what it would be like to play together in the Olympics?

CAMERON SMITH: Yeah, I mean, for sure we were certainly both up there in the rankings that were pretty close to almost being done. Obviously I think we both needed to play pretty solid golf which we have done the last couple months. We partnered pretty good at New Orleans. So we had such a good week off the course and obviously on the course there and I would like to think that we can try and replicate that here.

Q. More so about the fans in Australia, which would be bigger, winning a major or winning a medal?

MARC LEISHMAN: I mean, this is only once every four years. In my life time there's only going to be probably another, not too many gold medalists. As a golfer, I think we didn't grow up thinking we would have a chance to win a medal, so I think as time goes on, this is going to get bigger and bigger and bigger. But this is a big deal. I mean, I think it would be, if it wasn't equal to a major, it would be a very, very, very close second.

Q. Curious where you guys are staying this week, if you're staying in the village, and what kind of thought process you gave to where you wanted to stay and if you might even use the village if you're not staying there? Where are you kind of dwelling this week?

MARC LEISHMAN: We're staying close by in a hotel. The village is, we have been told, a two-hour drive from the golf course if the traffic is not perfect. With our bodies, it's not ideal to sit in a car for a couple of hours beforehand. So



that was our thinking behind that, try and prepare like it was a major. Yeah, I think I would love to stay at the Olympic village, but it just wasn't as convenient as we maybe would have liked this year.

Q. Cam, can you talk us through the AUS on the side of your head, the reaction to it, and the thinking behind that?

CAMERON SMITH: Yeah, I mean, it's the Olympics. It doesn't happen too often. I thought I would give Australia a shoutout on the side of the melon. I mean, I thought about it for a few weeks beforehand and then I just said stuff it, I'm going to do it, and I think it's been received pretty good. My mom called me up. She was laughing. She was like, oh, you were just on the news. Called me all sorts of names, but she loved it and she loves that it brings a lot of, I guess, joy to, it puts a smile on people's faces, I think, she enjoys the most, so, yeah.

Q. Are you going to join him, Marc?

MARC LEISHMAN: No, I don't think I've got the head for it, to be honest. I'll leave that to Cam (laughing).

Q. Given the years, how successful Australian golfers have been around the globe, how fitting would it be to have a medal join in the year so far?

CAMERON SMITH: Yeah, I think, yeah, we have both had pretty solid years. Obviously the win at Zurich together was nice. I think for me the, really, icing on the cake to a pretty decent year so far to be able to get a gold for myself but also my country is something that I look forward to trying to do.

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, it's been a successful year for Australians, a couple of winners on the European Tour very recently. Obviously Minjee winning the Evian over the weekend, and both myself and Cam having a win. So, yeah, this would be a nice way to, well, I won't say end the year because we're only in July, but this would be pretty awesome to go home with a medal from here.

Q. Have you guys played? Have you seen the course much?

CAMERON SMITH: We just played 18 this morning.

Q. Your thoughts on the golf course. Does it remind you of anything around the world or, just overall thoughts, if you could.

CAMERON SMITH: I don't think so particularly, but I've played a lot of golf in Japan and in Asia. It reminds me --

I've never played a bad golf course in Japan. They're always in such pristine condition. The greens out there are amazing. Hopefully the rain holds off and it's able to get a little firmer and faster for us. I know we both like that. But nonetheless I'm sure it will be a great course.

MARC LEISHMAN: I really like the golf course. It seems like every bunker has been put there for a reason. They're all in play. I think if you are hitting your irons well I think there will be an opportunity for a lot of birdies. But on the other hand, if you're just a little bit off you're going to have some really difficult putts for birdies and tough 2-putts. So I think there's going to be a fairly big spread in scores. I think if you play well you can go low, if you're not playing well it will get you. Which I think is good, you should be rewarded for good play and punished for bad play. So yeah, I think it's a great venue for the Olympic golf and it's just a pity that we can't have crowds here because I think it would be really special. I know how good it is to play in front of the Japanese fans and how much they love their golf. And I believe I've been paired with Hideki, so it's going to be a very different atmosphere than what it would have been like if we did have fans. But, no, it's going to be a special week no matter what. I'm excited about it.

Q. I know it's the same format as a regular PGA TOUR event but how different is it this week playing for your country than on a normal week just kind of just playing for yourself?

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, I think as Australians playing on the PGA TOUR in a way we do represent our country every week. That's the way I feel. Just this week where we're wearing the green and gold and we have got Australia on our hats and shirts, which is an, I think adds a bit more to the prestige, I think. And I'm certainly very proud to call myself an Olympian now and I know Cam is as well. So, yeah, like I said, I feel like we do represent Australia every week, but this is just really, really special.

CAMERON SMITH: Yeah, I mean I feel the same way. The green and gold, the coat of arms on the chest just hits a little bit different. I mean, it's always nice to play for something bigger than just yourself every week and yeah, it should be good.

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