

LIV Golf Virginia

Saturday, 7 June, 2025

Gainesville, Virginia, USA

Robert Trent Jones Golf Club

Anirban Lahiri

Crushers GC

Graeme McDowell

Smash GC

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the media center, from Crushers GC, Anirban Lahiri, and from Smash GC, Graeme McDowell. Baan, you shot a 7-under 64; you've got the 36-hole lead. You had seven birdies today but I think those two pars at the end were pretty spectacular. Can you talk about it?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: Yeah, those felt like birdies, as well. I think the first 15 holes was about as solid as I could have played. I missed a few putts and I still made quite a lot of birdies.

Then 16 I was trying to hit like an in-between 9-iron and I tried to compress it a little bit too much, and everyone else saw what happened. It was nice to make that putt. Golf is a really funny game. You look back to a month ago, I hit one of the best shots of the year, hit the flag and make double, and I stand on 16 and I hit a shank - I'll say it out loud - and I still make par.

GRAEME McDOWELL: Don't say that.

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: Well, I'm just saying.

18 was nice. That was a loose shot. But yeah, looking forward to tomorrow. I'm just happy with where my game is at. Just more of the game; I think it's going to rain overnight so just focus on finding fairways and giving myself looks.

Q. G-Mac, obviously you're tied for second, Marty is up there, too, Phil is in the mix. Did the 2010 major winners decide you were going to get together and make some noise this week?

GRAEME McDOWELL: Yeah, as always here on LIV, it's a great leaderboard. I'm excited to be up there. I'm excited to give myself probably my first opportunity on LIV. I've underachieved greatly so far in my career out here.

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Certainly expect more of myself, and opportunities like this are kind of what I've been working towards and kind of what I feel still inside of me. Looking forward to being out there tomorrow and try and put myself in position, try and see if we can get to this guy beside me. I'm excited to be where I want to be. I haven't really given myself any opportunities on this tour yet.

It's a great golf course, like Baan said, a little bit of rain overnight, maybe in the morning. Greens were certainly a lot softer today. I'd imagine they'll be pretty soft again tomorrow. It certainly offers up a lot of chances if you can keep it in play and attack with the irons.

Q. Baan, you've celebrated 17 titles as a member of the Crushers. I know you love your teammates, but I suspect you'd like to celebrate an individual title tomorrow.

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: Yeah, I'm pretty sure -- I haven't felt it, but I'm pretty sure the best feel is to have both those trophies. I've been really close on a number of occasions.

I'm not going out there to prove anything to anyone. I just want to go out there and just play freely, play like a kid. It was fun playing today with Jon and Joaquín, especially Joaquín. He still plays like a kid and I was just watching him go about his business, and it's so much fun. It was great inspiration just even playing with them seeing them just enjoying themselves out there, and I want to do more of that tomorrow.

Q. G-Mac, obviously the two teams up there, you're going to be battling defense each other. You want that individual success, but also you've enjoyed some team success, too, with Smash.

GRAEME McDOWELL: Yeah, the team element is what's special about LIV. There's more than just yourself out there tomorrow. You're playing for something more than that, and it brings that little bit of added pressure, as well.

It's great. Obviously when you're up at the top of the leaderboard you've got a lot to take care of individually. The great thing about LIV is it doesn't really matter where you're at on a Sunday if your team is playing well. You're grinding, you're digging, you're trying to do the best you can. It goes without saying, we'll be in grind mode out

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there tomorrow and trying to do the best we can and hopefully the team stuff will take care of itself.

Q. Baan, you referenced being close on a number of occasions over the last few seasons. Twice you lost in playoffs. What have you learned in those near-win experiences that you can use tomorrow?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: I think I've been guilty of playing a bit defensively, especially when I've gotten close, and I think tomorrow with this golf course being the way it is, I think it's a great opportunity because you cannot be defensive. You have to go and attack and make as many birdies as you can. I think that's the one big learning for me is whether I'm three ahead or two back, I'm still going to try and birdie every hole that I can because it's going to give you that opportunity.

Q. No. 11 kind of seemed like an intersection of the trajectories between you and Joaco. He comes in there with the lead, it goes into the front of the hole, takes the penalty. You're one of the few people who stuck it within 10 feet and put a birdie putt and look the lead and never looked back from there. Did that feel like a momentum shift as you were going through it?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: I think 9, 10, 11 played really tricky because just the wind around that corner was not what it was for the first nine holes. So you saw a lot of people misjudge yardages in that stretch. I think all credit for that hole goes to Tim, my caddie, because it was right between 8 and 7 and he said, look, you've got room, just commit to it. I made a good swing. I got a good look from Jon's putt, as well.

Again, I'm just trying to play my game. I'm playing with two of the best golfers in the world, they're going to get me by 30 yards on most tee shots. I just keep my blinkers on, I stick to my guns and I do what I need to do. I wasn't really thinking about what Joaco was doing or what Jon was doing. This field is so good that you blink and you look up and someone is 9-under par. It's happened plenty of times.

The best thing I can do is just keep my blinkers on and stick to what I need to do.

Q. G-Mac, I wanted to talk to you about what you've done to resurrect your career in terms of the physical work you've put into it, probably the mental work involved. Has there been something that has stood out in getting you back to where you are right now?

GRAEME McDOWELL: I think there's a lot of things. I think I struggled the first couple seasons out here just

maybe with a lack of golf. I think when you're used to playing 25, 30 weeks a year, you might play a run of three weeks in a row, the first week might be a burner week as you get ready for maybe two other events. There's just no burner weeks on LIV. Every week is huge. It's taken me a little bit of time to work out how to prep myself with less golf, and I think being a part of Smash, having a guy like Brooks expecting things from you, expecting a level of work and a level of effort, he leads by example, he's such a great player, so I think that little extra bit of focus that he brings has been huge, trusting me to be on this team.

I've felt my game coming. I've felt my game coming for the last year or so. Been working the last couple months trying to get rid of a little right-left shape on the ball, try and straighten my flight out a little bit. Just been chipping away. Like I say, I expect more of myself than what I've achieved on this tour so far, and tomorrow is my first real opportunity. Kind of like Baan said, this rebound, the way it is, there's no room for any defensive golf tomorrow. You've got to go, you've got to play, you've got to make birdies, and I'm looking forward to the opportunity.

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