

# LIV Golf Virginia

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Potomac Falls, Virginia, USA

Trump National DC

Cleeks GC

Richard Bland

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the Media Center, Richard Bland, Cleeks Golf Club. Currently T-3, 7-under for the tournament. On a day where wind was certainly much more of a factor than it was yesterday, you had the second lowest round of the day. What was the key for you to go low?

RICHARD BLAND: I think today, as Sergio just alluded to, it's tough to get to some of those flags. I think today I holed out very well today, which I think you have to do when it's windy. You're always going to have those -- it's hard to get those sort of 30-, 40-foot putts right up to the hole side because you might be downwind, into the wind, and that affects it.

I got the ball up-and-down when I needed to today, and those -- when the conditions are tough, sometimes those pars mean a little bit more than the birdies. They keep the momentum. For me to go bogey-free today was -- yeah, that was good for me.

As we've just said, some of the par-4s there, me being probably the shorter end of the hitters, there were some strong par-4s out there for me. So to go out there bogey-free was a good confidence boost going into tomorrow.

**Q. On a day like today when you've got a lot of wind that you're working with and you have obviously time between shots, how do you keep yourself kind of focused and in the moment knowing that what you're feeling right then could be different once you get up to your ball in terms of wind and conditions?**

RICHARD BLAND: Definitely. You do get those gusts. Sometimes it can make you look silly because you could have hit the shot already, and you get that gust, and it can come up 20, 30 yards short.

I think, when it's like this, you've got to kind of leave the decision process, I mean, literally right till the last minute. Leave it as late as you can because it is a little bit

changeable. But at the end of the day, you can just go with the decision you're going to make, commit to that decision, and you hope that it's right.

Like you say, you're not playing hugely attacking golf. You're just trying to play it to certain spots where I don't miss it there and just try and pick your way around the golf course. Usually that's what I do quite well.

**Q. It's been a bit of a roller coaster season for you results-wise. Did you feel something coming into this week?**

RICHARD BLAND: I came off a pretty tough loss last weekend at Congaree to the GM, which was a career low. Yeah, I feel like I've been working on the right stuff but not really taking it to the golf course.

This year has been quite strange. I've kind of had a good week, and I feel like, right, maybe try to get some momentum from that and then kind of don't follow that on and have a kind of pull week for me. Hopefully I can have a strong weekend and try and give Herby a run for his money, but if he keeps playing like the way he's playing, we're playing for second.

For me, yeah, if I could just build some momentum going through the middle part of the season where we've got a lot of tournaments -- I've also got the U.S. Senior Open, which I'd like to put a good show there and try to get myself in the hunt come Sunday. So, yeah, if I feel like I can improve a little more, hopefully I should be able to do that.

**Q. And the Cleeks are tied for 2nd through 36. What have you guys spoken about lately in terms of like trying to change your fortunes around, if anything?**

RICHARD BLAND: I think Victor coming on this year, he's just been a breath of fresh air. I played a little bit with him on DP World, but when you just play with a guy out in a tournament, you don't really get to know the guy. Now I've got to know him a little bit. I mean, I would never have thought he was the way he is. He's got such a great sense

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of humor.

We have so much fun together, the four of us. This is really the first time we've had an incredible team spirit, and we all knew what kind of player Victor was. He's a really strong player. We felt we had to give him a few tournaments just to find his feet a little bit, even though he's played PGA TOUR and played all around the world and won some world class events.

When you come into a new environment, I think you need just that little bit of time to settle, get used to how we do things on LIV. I think he's kind of there now, and he's shown the last two, three events that he's trending in the right direction.

Yeah, I always said I felt that we would at some point this season, we would be fighting for the top step, and hopefully we can do that this weekend.

**Q. One last question for you. I watched your career, and perseverance is the word that comes to mind for me. You've really done things the last three years, won the United States Senior Open, played great in the PGA. As you look to the future, what's the future look like for Richard Bland?**

RICHARD BLAND: I know it's coming quite soon. I kind of earmarked next year would probably be my last year of playing full-time, as I do right now. Then going forward, really kind of scattered, but play where I want to play.

For me right now, I'm 53. For me, the travel is the hard bit. My body just doesn't recover as quickly as probably somebody like David Puig or Caleb Surratt does if they're on a flight for 12 hours. That's been the hard thing for me is recovery, getting ready for tournaments.

So, yeah, semi-retirement, it's getting a lot nearer than -- and that's fine. I'm okay with that. I've had one helluva ride out here and the best decision I ever made.

**Q. Could there be a potential of maybe playing on the Champions Tour? You've had some great success.**

RICHARD BLAND: From what I've been told, I'm not hugely welcome there.

**Q. Really? That's sad to see.**

RICHARD BLAND: As far as I'm aware, I was never given the exemption -- well, I wasn't given the exemption. I'm the only senior major champion never to get that exemption, and that's fine, I don't have an issue with that. I think the Champions Tour have made it pretty now impossible for

anybody to come and play.

I'm not going to go chasing it. I'll be 54 years old, but I'm going to be banned for a year anyway. Like you say, I got asked the question the other day, would you consider going back to DP World Q-School? No.

I hope that whatever we become in the future, that I can stay with the Cleeks in some form, even if it's taking the TrackMans back to the clubhouse or something like that. I would love to stay on board with the Cleeks in some way. That's down to Jonas and Johan, whether they want me or they don't.

Yeah, I will always -- I'll come to some events as a spectator and just do the things that I want to do and live my life with my wife and go play where I want to go play. As much as I'm out here grinding and I still love that and I want to do well, but I know it's not too far in the distance now.

**Q. One of the things, speaking of the Cleeks, that the team has done, maybe more so than other teams, is embrace the concept of art and culture in building this new brand and team identity. What's it been like for you to work together with other guys and really help represent something off the course in this new and unique way?**

RICHARD BLAND: Yeah, definitely. I think as everyone has seen probably the last 12 to 18 months how much we've evolved as a team and a brand, and we've got -- I'm not going to pick him up too much, but we've got Jonas to thank for that. The difference that he's made from where we were, say, 2, 2 1/2 years ago, it's night and day.

I think it's such a cool thing to have a new golf bag every single week, and we're all excited to see what that golf bag is. I think -- and just to see the vibe from the other players, how much they come to us and go, well, that's my favorite or I really like that one. We've even had a few players offer to -- I think the Mexico bag went down a storm. I know there's a couple players who were interested in buying.

It's just been a really cool ride to be on. Like I say, hopefully in the future that can continue for me in some role, some way. We'll see. But it's been -- I've been pretty much right from the start, and it's been a cool journey to be on.

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