

LIV Golf Adelaide

Thursday, 13 February, 2025
Adelaide, South Australia, Australia
The Grange

Ripper GC

Cam Smith

Marc Leishman

Lucas Herbert

Matt Jones

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Let's welcome Ripper GC to LIV Golf Adelaide 2025, the defending champions. We are joined today by our captain, Cameron Smith, Marc Leishman, Lucas Herbert and Matt Jones. We are here at our biggest and best event of the year. We spoke with Brooks here yesterday, and he said that he could confidently say that this was every player on LIV's favorite stop of the entire year. How much pride do you guys have in hearing that statement, and what makes this the best stop of the year?

MARC LEISHMAN: Well, obviously we're a little biased. Being from Australia, playing in front of home fans is massive. But yeah, like Brooks said yesterday, all the players love it. Playing in front of the Australian people on a golf course like it is in the condition it is, the whole city embraces us coming to Adelaide, which I love. It's not just the buzz around the golf course, but you go out for dinner and there's buzz in the whole city. I think that has a lot to do with it.

There's not too many golf tournaments in the world that have that, and this is certainly probably one of a handful.

Yeah, defending. Just excited to be here.

Q. Cam, does it give you a sense of pride knowing that all the other 50 players out here know this is the best place to be on the entire LIV stop?

CAM SMITH: Yeah, absolutely. This is our home event, and to be here and have the support of the local fans, and like Leish said, not only the fans but the community, is massive for us. Yeah, a bit of pride in the heart this week, and hopefully we can bring back another team win for our loyal fans.



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Q. Lucas, what makes LIV Adelaide so special from a player's perspective?

LUCAS HERBERT: I think like Leish alluded to, just the way the players are treated. From the minute we showed up and walked off the plane on Sunday night, it's felt like every single person here has been super excited to have us. It feels like a week that everyone in Adelaide really looks forward to.

The golf course, I don't think you can make the Grange Golf Club look any better than it does right now. The greens are phenomenal. The fringes, the fairways, the rough, the tee boxes, just everything looks and plays phenomenally. The food has been amazing. The events we've had around it has been amazing. I just don't know how you make this any better. It's a phenomenally run event, so it's no surprise everyone loves being here and it's a favorite stop of the year.

Q. Jonesy, we break records year on year with attendance. We are expecting over 100,000 fans to come out this week. What is it about the LIV Golf product that fans love so much, particularly Aussie fans?

MATT JONES: Yeah, there's so much more than golf that goes on at a LIV event. You have so many fan zones, you have kid zones, you have so much entertainment for everyone that turns up here. So yes, they come to watch amazing golfers, amazing players, but there's so many other things they can get to do and enjoy, watch it on TV while the kids play in the fan zone, go to the merchandise tent, and it's over such a short period of time. It's five hours of golf, four hours of golf, in between four and five. It doesn't ruin everyone's day by coming out here for four or five hours. They can come and watch golf, have a lot of fun, drink some beer, and it's great for everyone.

Q. Cam, 100,000 fans coming out this week, is that a testament to what the fans want?

CAM SMITH: Yeah, I think this is our bar. I really do, as a league. We have two of the best DJs in the world playing at our event, which is pretty crazy. I'm biased because I'm massive fans of both of them. But it's cool that, like Jonesy said, you can go and watch some golf, have some fun



around the golf course.

The Watering Hole is unreal. Hopefully there's another hole-in-one there this year, and hopefully it's one of us. That would be epic.

And then after the round, as well, yeah, the acts, it's incredible. It's awesome to be a part of.

Q. I'm going to take you guys on a trip down memory lane to last year. After that epic playoff with Stinger GC, your very first team playoff, you guys took it home with the fans surrounding you. It was an indescribable moment. Can you guys reflect back a year later having been out of the madness of it, and what do you remember the most from it?

MATT JONES: It was a little bit of a blur. I actually putted in for par on my last hole, which was No. 2, and I honestly thought we'd won. I had no idea what happened in the previous few holes before that. I walked off and I was actually in a little bit of shock that we were in a playoff.

But I couldn't have picked two better guys to send out in a playoff, and just to see those guys fans down 18 with the guys trying to get through those fans, we were lucky enough to stand behind the green and watch them, and to get through that first hole was I would say lucky. It was. The guys made two great par putts, and we were lucky that they missed a couple of putts.

But after that happened I was pretty confident these two would get it done, and they did, and we were very lucky for that.

Q. What is your favorite memory from that moment?

LUCAS HERBERT: Yeah, it was a whole range of emotions there in that playoff. It was just incredible seeing how many people were around the 18th green. They were hanging out of trees and hanging off the side of the scoreboard and basically anywhere they could get a vantage point to watch.

Yeah, it was pretty incredible. I mean, my kind of memory was talking to Leish after he hit his great shot in there on the second playoff hole, and he was like, it was the exact same yardage as my backyard. It was one of those meant-to-be moments, but it was super special.

Then getting up on the stage with the trophy presentation, I couldn't see the back of the crowd. It kind of blew my mind that there was that many people in one space at one time. It was like watching those old-school music festivals with Metallica playing for 5 million people. It felt like, what have

we become. Yeah, a lot of cool memories.

Q. Leish, Cam, you guys had the weight of the world on your shoulders to get it in last year. Take us back.

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, obviously it was a pretty special moment, and for all of us -- me and Cam had a little different perspective of it than the boys did here. I remember the cart ride back to the tee after the first playoff hole, and talking to Cam and just saying -- driving through the crowds, I don't know, there's so many good memories. I forgot about the trophy -- no, there was a trophy ceremony, obviously, but all the people, it was just crazy how many there was.

I remember walking to the golf cart to get to the trophy ceremony and it felt like it was 500 people deep on both sides and people screaming at us. Then you've got the golf memories, obviously.

Yeah, an amazing week, but particularly that hour was pretty special and something I'll never forget.

Q. Cam, you were saying the other day that your heart was beating out of your chest standing on that tee for the playoff. Take us back to that very last hole that you guys played to win it.

CAM SMITH: Yeah, I feel like I've been in a lot of stressful situations throughout my golf career, but nothing has felt like that before because I feel like we were playing for all of Australia. They all wanted us to win.

It would have been not upsetting, but -- I guess it would have been kind of upsetting if we'd have lost, given that we were so far ahead in that final round and then coming down to a playoff.

The biggest thing I remember was just the relief once the putt went in that we'd won. I was so relieved. It felt like I didn't breathe there for 30 minutes. I could barely get a word out and could barely think. Yeah, the relief of finally getting the job done was quite special, and then obviously the ceremony at the end was epic.

Q. Is there any extra pressure this year since you guys are coming back as the defending champs?

CAM SMITH: I feel like we've had pressure on us in the past. We've dealt with it pretty good. And to be honest, all we've tried to do the last four or five weeks is really just prepare as good as we can and get in and get our work done and tick a lot of boxes and get here on Friday and just let it all go.



We know we're going to have the support of the home crowd. We love the golf course. I think this is the best I've ever seen it. Hopefully it gets firmer and faster, and like I said, we can all just free up. We know we've done the work, so why not two in a row.

Q. Obviously we're playing at a different time of year this year. How is the course playing, and what do you think that winning number is on Sunday?

LUCAS HERBERT: Definitely firmer and faster than it has done in years gone by. I think maybe even around the greens a little less grainy for chipping, which I love that, and I'd say these boys would be the same.

Look, I think it plays into our strengths, as well. We've grown up playing this kind of golf. We love golf courses where you've got to pick a land number that's not the flag number.

It's definitely going to suit us, I think. If the wind stays up like it has done today, I think the winning score is going to be a little worse than it was last year, but I think that's good.

I think the Grange might show its teeth this year a little bit and show us why Australian golf is so well regarded around the world.

Q. Music is the DNA of LIV Golf. We have two, you mentioned earlier, major international DJs coming this year, obviously Fisher, greatest show on earth, returning for the third year in a row, and we've added Dom Dolla. How important are these international music acts to the overall experience at LIV Golf, and can we expect you guys to be on the stage doing shoeys again this year?

CAM SMITH: Have you been to the Fisher concert?

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, I went to Fisher last year. I'm probably old enough to still call them disc jockeys, not DJs.

CAM SMITH: No, it is amazing. Like I mentioned before, to have two of the best DJs in the world come to our event and entertain is pretty cool. I actually just met Dom today. He caddied for me in the pro-am. He's a great guy. I've listened to his music for a while now. I can't wait for tomorrow night.

I don't know if a shoe is in order during the tournament, but yeah, we'll see how it goes.

Q. Sunday night Fisher for sure though, right?

CAM SMITH: Absolutely.

Q. Obviously we love playing here in Adelaide and at the Grange, but are there any other courses in Adelaide you guys would be interested in playing coming up in the next few years?

MARC LEISHMAN: I think this is a pretty good home for LIV, LIV Adelaide. There's obviously a lot of great courses here. You've got Kooyonga, Royal Adelaide, Glenelg would all be very worthy venues for it. Yeah, we don't have time to play them, obviously, this week or anything, but yeah, I think they'd all be worthy venues.

I can't speak for all the boys but I can speak for myself and say this is a pretty good home for LIV Adelaide.

Q. Cam, unification of the tours seems to be the buzz of the week with Adam Scott meeting with President Trump and whatnot. Do you spend much time thinking about that?

CAM SMITH: No.

Q. The teammate format and Ripper and the development and how it's been embraced in Australia, does that surprise you, and where do you hope Ripper GC will be as a brand in three, four, five years?

CAM SMITH: I honestly think that's the amazing thing about LIV and the team stuff is we really don't know where it's going to go. If you had have told me three years ago that we'd be where we are today, I would have said no. Honestly, I think we've far exceeded all of our expectations, not only with venues, with the league, even within the team. The players continually get better.

We're just making so many great strides, and I can't wait to see where this goes in the future. Where it goes, who knows. I think we all have a dream, but I think we'll be there quicker than later.

I mean, who knows. If we just keep growing the brand, we keep playing really good golf -- last year I think we maybe had one staff and now we've got probably five or six, so everything just keeps growing. There's definitely a feeling of exponential growth, not only within the team but within the league. It seems like every week there's something different going on, something new, something better. Yeah, it's been awesome to be a part of.

Q. Cam, you've already talked about the course. Obviously you came home in December to Melbourne and it didn't get hard and fast. Does that give you a little bit more buzz when you get here in that it is

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exactly how you want it to be?

CAM SMITH: Yeah, absolutely. I think the time of year probably helps a little bit down here. I think the last couple of years you could probably lean on weather and trying to get it through summer.

This place is in such good shape. This is what we want. This is probably what the rest of the players want. But this is so unique to Australia, this style of golf, having to hit shots that you don't hit around the world. This is what we want when we come home. It's perfect.

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, I think having a firm golf course is pretty important for Australia. That's how they're designed, to have runoffs around the greens and to have decisions to make around the greens. There's shots out there, if it's not lying great that you can't actually get a wedge under it and you've got to pick a different shot, whether it's a bump-and-run or a putt or something else. So I think that's pretty unique to Australia.

Looks like the weather is going to lend itself to it firming up. We just played the pro-am out there, and the greens are starting to get a little bit shiny and Australian. Yeah, it's set up great. It's probably more exciting to watch as a spectator, as well, when people don't miss a green and just grab a lob wedge. I keep talking about around the greens, but I feel like that's where Australia really has that unique factor.

Q. Just on that, obviously you would have heard about the shift in the Australian Open plans moving away from the multigender format. Cam, you were obviously pretty vocal. Can I get your thoughts on that? And Jonesy, would that mean now you might come back this year?

LUCAS HERBERT: To touch on what you said before, I think this is probably the gold standard for how we should present a golf course for an international event in Australia. I know Southo is in the room at the back somewhere, and this is what he should be looking at for an Australian Open.

I think if you presented a golf course like this year in, year out, you would get some very high-quality players from around the world very eager to come out and play.

Like Cam said, the weather was a factor the last couple years. It's obviously dumped some rain on the course, which hasn't made it easy, but I think we could have done a better job to set it up, to find the best players in the men's field a little better than we did.

We obviously had a great winner in Ryggs. But I don't

want to take anything away from him. But we would have loved to have seen an Australian Open venue play a little differently from what it was, and I think we're a little handcuffed, as well, from having the women play with us.

I think the ideal course setup for them and the ideal course setup for us is a little different, and I think it showcases their skills differently. I don't think you should set up the courses the same way because it's not fair to either gender and their skill sets don't get showcased the right way when you do that.

I think it's a great move that we're now splitting the Australian Opens. We're giving much more attention to the girls and much more attention to the guys if we're going to have separate weeks to be able to showcase our great players. It's always a scheduling issue for one of the genders. It's either tough for the men or tough for the women to get back and play, so I do think splitting them up is ultimately going to be a great decision longer term for the Australian Open, and I think the event is really going to grow off the back of that.

CAM SMITH: Yeah, I mean, I don't disagree with anything Herby just said, to be honest. I feel like the biggest thing has been course setup, and we just haven't been able to get there. I've asked a lot of questions and haven't got many answers.

Yeah, I mean, like he said, this is the gold standard this week. This is what we want when we come down to Australia. We get to play some -- we have some amazing golf courses, particularly in Melbourne on the Sand Belt, and we want them to play how they're designed and how they're meant to be and have all those shots that you don't really want to have, but they're fun. You have to make decisions on the fairway. You have to use slopes. You really have to use your mind. I feel like that's been the missing ingredient the last few years.

Q. We've got two Americans have won the individual titles here. Obviously you guys would like to sweep both trophies on Sunday. But is this one of the instances where it's actually more satisfying to win as a team maybe more than an individual, given your roots here?

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, I think individually, of course it would be pretty special for any of us to win. The field is just so good and deep every week out here that it's tough to win. We're playing against top players every single week.

So yeah, I think we would all love to win individually, but it's also fun to be able to celebrate together when you win as a

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team. That's something really unique to LIV Golf in that we have the team format and you leave the golf course if you happen to win as happy as three other blokes.

It makes for some pretty good celebrations, and hopefully we get to do that again here in the pretty near future.

CAM SMITH: Yeah, last year I think we all played solid. I think Jonesy finished ninth or eighth or something and then all of us were kind of tied for 12th or -- we all just played solid, and it didn't really feel like a week where we were going to be in a playoff to win something so meaningful.

If we had a -- it was so fun to do that. If we could replicate that again this week, I would 100 percent take it over an individual. That was just so much fun to be in front of that home crowd, not only screaming your name but chanting "Ripper" and "you little Ripper," whatever else you get around the course. It was epic.

It's amazing how the crowd changed on that last day. For me, I was in the last group, and it went almost from "come on, Cam," to "let's go, Ripper," because I didn't have my greatest on the last day. But it was so fun to be a part of.

Q. Do you guys get the sense that other teams might be a little jealous that you guys have such a connection with the fans here that, let's face it, it's a pretty special that you guys have here, and other teams don't really have that, at least right now?

MATT JONES: Yeah, of course. It's our home country so I would expect us to have a heavy advantage when we come here. Australians love Australian sporting teams, and we are the Australian sporting team this week, and if it's the Australian fans watching cricket, they support their home teams and their local teams pretty hard.

For us to come here and be the local team, we're going to have all the support, and I'd expect it all. They love all four of us golfers, and I think they support us like we support each other, and to have these three other guys, we're very close, and I think the teams will be a bit jealous of the camaraderie we have, as well, individually on our team.

Q. Cam and all four of you, if last year's Australian Open felt like a bit of a missed opportunity, do you hope it goes back to Melbourne this year so you can experience sort of what you were hoping for last year?

CAM SMITH: Yes.

Q. And why?

CAM SMITH: I mean, because they have some great golf

courses that I think people want to play. Not only do we want to come down and play and obviously support our event, I think it lends itself to having a stronger field, having more guys come down here and play the Australian Open, and let it be the event that it once was.

You look at the names on that trophy through the '80s and '90s, it's incredible, and it seems like somewhere that got lost. I definitely want it to be the best event it can be and be the fifth major. It would be unbelievable.

Yeah, we've got to start somewhere, and hopefully this is the starting point.

Q. This year is even firmer and faster than LIV Adelaide last year. Obviously you did have an advantage last year. Do you feel like you have an even bigger advantage this year. For the layman, what are the shots that you can play that maybe the other teams aren't as experienced in?

LUCAS HERBERT: Yeah, I think we definitely have an advantage. I've watched Leishy hit some 4-irons off the back foot around the greens in the practice rounds that a lot of people would struggle to hit. I mean, I think I see Cam hit short game shots every week that no one can hit, but particularly this week. He's hitting shots that just blow your mind.

I look to my left with Jonesy, as well, and he's right up there, as well, with his short game. Aside from a couple of bunker shots, he's hitting some phenomenal short game shots around the greens that if you just haven't grown up around these surfaces, you don't think to play them like that.

There's not a lot of grain in the grass and obviously less this year I think with this time of year, the February slot. I just think it's a massive advantage for us if the course is going to play firm and fast like we hope it does.

We were asked before about two American winners. I think this year might lend itself to potentially an Australian winner if the course stays the way it's playing at the minute.

Q. Just super curious what it feels like to walk on to the Watering Hole and have that pressure to emulate a hole-in-one?

CAM SMITH: Well, we'll all ask Leish because I think he's birdied every party hole in existence every time. It's absolutely incredible. I don't know how he does it.

But no, it is a really big adrenaline rush. It's loud. Not only that, it kind of plays a bit weird because there's so many

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stands and trees around that hole that you don't really feel the wind, so you're kind of guessing on that.

Yeah, it's so cool, but trying to get in Leish's head about how to play them better because I've played them terribly.

MARC LEISHMAN: I think it's one of the few times that you actually no matter where the pin is you're aiming straight at it because yes, you want to try and make that 1. I think normally you're thinking about consequences, you're thinking, if I miss this a little right, it's pretty screwed over there, I'd better aim a bit left of the pin just to give myself a bit more wiggle room, a bit more margin for error. That one for me, I'm aiming straight at it every time. It's just fun. I think it's really cool, yeah, trying to get that big roar.

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