

LIV Golf Hong Kong

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Fanling, Hong Kong

Hong Kong Golf Club

Tom McKibbin

Legion XIII

Caleb Surratt

Legion XIII

David Puig

Fireballs GC

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We are joined today by three guys I like to call the young guns of LIV Golf. We are joined by David Puig from Fireballs GC, Caleb Surratt from Legion XIII and Tom McKibbin from Legion XIII. I just want to acknowledge that Legion XIII had some very big news this morning. You guys were officially signed by Callaway to be the official team equipment sponsor, so congratulations, first of all. I just want to get first reactions from you guys on this exciting news.

CALEB SURRATT: Yeah, it's exciting. I think me and Tom sitting here have always been Callaway players, so to be able to carry that on with us as we progress into our professional careers, it's an honor and what I believe is the best team in golf. To have their support and their backing to our betterment of our careers, it's a dream come true, so we're very excited about the future.

TOM MCKIBBIN: Yeah, obviously very similar to what Caleb said. It's very exciting. I've been a part of Callaway for the last couple years, and to continue that trend on is pretty cool. As Caleb said, it's one of the best teams or brands in golf, so very excited to have them on board with us.

Q. Getting back to the young guns press conference, you guys are really what we like to call the next generation of talent, not only on LIV Golf but in the golf world all together. David, you're currently No. 4 in the LIV Golf standings for the year. You are 23 years old. You are currently the top 3 in driving distance at LIV Golf, the top 3 in strokes gained at LIV Golf, the top 3 in stroke average at LIV Golf, and the top 3 in most birdies at LIV Golf at 23 years old. Let's just have a moment for that and talk about your incredible career this year and your journey.

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DAVID PUIG: Yeah, no, I think the start of the year was pretty successful so far. I think I played more consistent than last year. As you mentioned, in some of the stats I'm doing pretty good, which I'm glad that all the work back home in the off-season kind of paid off. That's pretty much the plan throughout this year, just try to be more consistent in every part of the game, and hopefully move from that top 3 to that first spot.

Q. David, you've been grinding out there playing the International Series events, as well. You won two, won in both Malaysia and Singapore. Obviously back in Asia. How do you like your chances this week?

DAVID PUIG: Yeah, I love Asia. I've played a lot of golf here in the last two years or so. Great continent, great countries that I played in. Never won in Hong Kong before, but it would be awesome.

Q. Caleb, you were part of Legion XIII's incredible success last year, winning four team events and really dominating. Can you talk about your first year on LIV Golf as a member of Legion XIII and then the confidence maybe that's kind of motivated you for this year?

CALEB SURRATT: Yeah, it's exciting. I think being able to come directly from college into being around Jon Rahm and Tyrrell Hatton every day, it's hard to not get better, and it's definitely hard to not learn a lot. I've learned a ton from those guys. I've learned how to become a better version of myself, how to become a better player, just in the way that I work and my habits. It's valuable information for a 20-year-old, and I know it's going to all benefit me in the long run, even though I'm still in kind of learning phase right now. But very excited about the future and extremely driven and motivated to get after it.

Q. 20 years old, only your second year in, you're currently sitting No. 20 in the rankings. How does it feel when you look at those ranking and you see all the other names of some of the golf greats and you're sitting above them? How does that feel?

CALEB SURRATT: Yeah, it's good. It's early in the year, and I know that I've progressed as a player. I think I've

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kind of shifted my goal from less about results and more if I can do everything the right way and continue to work in a positive way and continue to keep great habits, I know in the long-term I'm going to have a lot of success.

Yeah, it's cool being around all these guys and competing with them, and it's definitely helping me become a better player.

Q. Tom, equally as impressive, you're currently sitting No. 13 in the individual rankings for the year. You turned pro at age 18, won your first DP World Tour event in 2023, and so far this season you have yet to suffer a three-putt. Pretty impressive. Can you talk about your experience on LIV so far and your journey so becoming a professional?

TOM MCKIBBIN: Yeah. Obviously the last couple of weeks have been a lot of fun, something that's been a little bit different to me. But I've had a great time.

Australia was a whole new experience and something that was incredibly fun to be a part of, and I feel like I've played some very nice golf the first two weeks, so just trying to keep that going hopefully for the rest of the year.

Yeah, I turned pro very young, and thankfully had hopefully a lot of success quite young, and hopefully I'm able to sort of take that over to here. It's something that excites me a lot, and I'm looking forward to just playing this whole year and sort of seeing where that leaves me at the end of it.

Q. I think you wowed everyone the first event at LIV Riyadh. You came in like a wrecking ball, obviously a lot of momentum going into the season. What do you think that was attributed to? Everything was fresh and new for you but you obviously played some of your best golf.

TOM MCKIBBIN: Yeah, obviously, as you said, a whole new experience, and then threw the night golf in there, as well, which was different.

I was probably just more excited just to get started. Obviously the whole sort of waiting around for a few weeks, I sort of knew what had been going on and sort of waiting to get going, that probably maybe brought out the best in me once the golf started. I was able to go out there and do my own thing and be in a place that I felt very comfortable.

That probably helped get me off to a good start, and once that first round was over, I felt very comfortable going forward.

Q. You guys all have incredible mentors. Caleb, Tom, you guys have Jon Rahm; David, you have Sergio Garcia. Can you talk about how important it is to have a mentor like Jon and Sergio and how that's contributed to your success and your professional journey?

DAVID PUIG: Yeah, it's very important. Sergio is just a nice guy, I would say, off the course. It's more important for me to kind of see the way he plans his weeks and what he does off the course and how relaxed he is and sort of how he helps us just to be more calm and what stuff to do off the course and just to hang out with each other.

On course it's pretty much the same thing. You just try to learn from him, ask him a bunch of questions, what he would do here or whatnot. It's been an incredible journey just to have him by our side.

Q. Caleb, talk about how important Jon has been to you.

CALEB SURRATT: Yeah, the coolest thing about being around Jon right now is you're kind of witnessing a player from the outside in who's arguably still at the peak of his career and maybe not even reached that yet. To see him still contending in major championships and he's clearly the biggest -- one of the biggest if not the biggest name in golf, I couldn't name many better guys to learn from. He's been really good to me, and I've been thankful for that, for kind of a guy that has every right to go his own way and has every right to -- he doesn't really owe anything to Tom and I. He really takes a lot of time to help us become better players and better people off the golf course. To have that in the back pocket and be able to learn from him, you truly are getting to learn from the best. That's something not to take for granted.

Q. What's the best piece of advice each of you guys have gotten since you've been out here, whether from your mentor or someone else out here?

TOM MCKIBBIN: Yeah, that's a good question. I don't really know. I wouldn't really say that I've gotten any just deep down straight advice, but I think going back to what Caleb said, just being able to learn and notice certain things these guys do, especially with how relaxed they are, I think maybe me and Caleb are very similar people. We love golf, and it's sometimes easy to take it very seriously, and it feels like life and death sometimes, and seeing how relaxed some of these guys take it and enjoy their time, for me I've seen that as a way of, no wonder these guys are so good, because they really -- sometimes it looks like they don't really care too much, and they're just out there having a good time. I think sometimes that can contribute to a lot

of good golf.

I think sometimes me and Caleb maybe take it a little serious sometimes, and just witnessing that and maybe relaxing a little bit for me has seemed to relax myself and seemed to play a little bit better from that.

Q. How do you balance that super competitive edge with also maintaining a relaxed demeanor?

TOM MCKIBBIN: I don't know. I'd say it could just be our age thing. We're younger, want to try and do well and maybe prove ourselves, but I think sometimes just sort of taking your time and realizing that we're good players and don't need to be out there stressing too much early in the week and just getting our work done and just sort of having a good time after that I think is very important.

Q. Caleb, best piece of advice on or off the course from Mr. Rahm or someone else?

CALEB SURRATT: Yeah, I completely agree with everything Tom said. My way of putting it would be just the value of simplicity. I think David experienced this when he first came out here. It's easy to go from college and try to come tinker with everything, try to feel like you're in total control of everything and stressing about things that you shouldn't be stressing about in order to maintain the so-called perfect that we can't. Jon is undoubtedly the best player I've ever seen at just being present, keeping things simple. He does the same thing literally every day and every round in routine.

You learn that less is more, and that has been monumental in my development because I've always been a player to kind of want full control of everything. So being around him learning that is probably the best piece of advice.

DAVID PUIG: Yeah, for me I would say consistency. Sergio is probably one of the best ball strikers ever in this game, so just kind of like hit more greens in regulation. It's something that he always tells us to do. I think it's very important if you hit a bad tee shot just to try to put the ball back in position, try to hit the green, and from there, it's way easier to score. So it's something that I always have in mind. Try to hit as many greens in regulation as I can and just keep it simple and very consistent.

Q. Do you think winning breeds confidence? You had an opportunity to win a couple times last year and then obviously you're playing the best golf of your life. Do you think that's contributed significantly?

DAVID PUIG: Yeah, definitely. I think it's one of the parts of my game that I still need to get better at, greens in

regulation. It's something that I don't know if I'm maybe too aggressive sometimes or if my driving accuracy hasn't been as good as I want, but trying to hit more greens in regulation is definitely up there for me, and I'm just trying to get better at it to hopefully contend a lot more.

Q. We're going to talk about this week, LIV Golf Hong Kong. Caleb, David, you guys have experienced playing Hong Kong Golf Club. First reactions on the golf course?

DAVID PUIG: Yeah, the golf course is great. I played it twice. Didn't do very good last year, but I played pretty good in that Asian Tour event they had here a couple years ago.

I think it's playing a little softer than what we're used to. But yeah, I think hitting it off the tee, it's very important. Like hitting it good off the tee, it's very important here just to try to be in the fairway as much as possible, and if you can achieve that, then I think it's -- I wouldn't say super easy, but it's pretty easy if you do pretty good off the tee. That's the plan, trying to hit as many fairways as I can, and hopefully if I do that, make a lot of birdies.

CALEB SURRATT: Yeah, everything that David said for sure. It seems like where this course can bite you is when you get in that rough that can be sticky and kind of get on the outskirts of the woods. Fairways are so perfect that if you're in the fairway and you can have the ability to keep it around the pin just on the green -- these greens are small enough is what I've noticed, that you're always going to have 25 feet maximum almost.

Yeah, a great goal is just going out there and trying to hit fairways and greens, and bogey avoidance is going to be huge because I think if you're not making bogeys, you're going to be in position to make a lot of birdies, and a lot of birdies is what you're going to need.

TOM MCKIBBIN: Yeah, I really like the course. It's not the longest, but as the guys said, it's very important to be in the fairway. If you can manage to hit the fairways and hit sort of the right side of the fairways because there's a few holes you can still be on the fairway and be slightly blocked out, then it's nice. As Caleb said, the greens are small. If you get it up there around the green or on the green, you seem to have a nice birdie chance. I think it's a really cool course. Something probably a little different than we're used to with it not being too long or too many drivers off the tees.

Yeah, I've only played the front nine so far, and I'll play the back nine later, but it's been super fun so far, and I've enjoyed it.

Q. We talked about it at the beginning about you guys being the next generation of golfers. Do you guys feel a sense of responsibility to the game?

TOM McKIBBIN: I don't know. I mean, probably not too much at the minute. There's far better players than me that probably should feel a little bit more responsibility. So at the minute, not too much. But I guess we're all just trying to play the best that we can, and at some point we can have a responsibility hopefully, and that's sort of what I'm aiming for.

Q. Do you feel a responsibility for the future growth and sustainability of the game, Caleb?

CALEB SURRATT: I think so. I think every single person here for the most part is very invested in the league, and I know Tom and I are very invested in our team. In hopes and knowing to be a part of that for a long time is I'd say maybe a different way of looking at it, to growing that brand and obviously growing as players and becoming a household name out here one day is I think something we're all striving for.

Betterment of the team, betterment of the league, and just betterment of our growth.

Q. David, not only out here but also within Spain, as well, I'd love to get your thoughts.

DAVID PUIG: Yeah, I agree. I think just kind of looking back when I started in Spain, just trying to show the kids in Spain that are starting playing golf or that are around 16, 17 years of age, they can do it. It obviously requires a lot of work, maybe a little bit of luck and a lot of other things. But they can do it, so hopefully in a way they look up to me a little bit, and they see that I got here and that they can do the exact same.

Q. I'm curious as part of LIV Golf's first youth movement, have other young golfers reached out to you and asked you what it's like to play out here?

CALEB SURRATT: Yeah, I'd say absolutely. At least for me, I still have a lot of ties to the college community with all my friends being still in college for the most part.

I think through us and a few other guys, you're kind of reshaping a new pathway to youth golf and amateur golf into professional golf. I think it's opening a lot of eyes, and I think there's a lot of people that would want to be sitting where we are. I think we're all very thankful for that.

To be able to tell people about a new experience and new

learning experiences out here at my age and particularly guys that maybe never have really quite thought about it because they're still in college, it's cool.

It's something I didn't really see coming. It's something I'm thankful to be out here for, and to be able to share those experiences and make a lot of other guys want to come out here is a great thing.

Q. David, have some young Spanish golfers reached out to you?

DAVID PUIG: Yeah, all the time. Even in college, as Caleb said, and in Spain, there's a lot of guys super interested in how LIV Golf is. As I said, we're kind of opening a new path for youth players, and at the moment, everybody that I talk to around my age, they're super interested in what we do and where we travel and how we're playing and stuff like that. So definitely yes.

TOM McKIBBIN: Yeah, same as the two guys. I probably haven't had as much. I didn't go to college or anything, so I'm not probably as close to those two to as many younger people, but I've had a lot of my friends asking what it was like and thought it was really cool when I said I was going to be a part of this, and I also probably spoke to a lot of people or other players that have told me how cool and exciting this looks and how interested they would be, as well.

I think this just shows how exciting this is for golf and other players, that people just show interest and want to know what LIV is like, and I think a lot of people just think it looks really cool from seeing the different sort of things that go on and how different it is.

Q. I wanted to ask each of you if there's been a moment or do you remember a time where you kind of took a step back and said, man, this is really cool, whether it's something in the team room or maybe it was just a moment on the course or something like that? Do you remember maybe one instance of that?

TOM McKIBBIN: I think in Australia for me, just the whole week. I had obviously heard so much about it going into it, and then getting there and getting started and playing and getting to the party hole or the Watering Hole for the first time and not being able to hear myself think, after that I just couldn't believe how different and how cool that experience was walking up that hole and playing that every day, and that was probably for me the first real, wow, this is really cool and something that I had never experienced and just was excited to go back to that hole every day and try and hit a better shot.

Yeah, that was awesome.

CALEB SURRATT: For me, it had to be -- I had a lot of good time to reflect in the off-season, which was great. But the initial shock hit me in that first week in Mayakoba in 2024, my first week out. Obviously had the whirlwind of going and progressing on to LIV and was focused on the golf and focused on media and all the obligations and trying to do my absolute best that week, and it hit me in that ceremony after the round when we were celebrating our win, it was like I went from literally taking college classes in December to, like, in the start of February hugging Jon Rahm on the 18th green celebrating a win. It was just a shock.

I think when I got back to my hotel room that night, I just looked in the mirror, like wow, life has changed a lot. It truly is what dreams are made of. So excited about the future.

DAVID PUIG: For me it's when I'm more at home, I would say, in Scottsdale. I'm lucky to spend a lot of time with Jon when I'm back home and just kind of see him -- everything that he did in Spain, along with obviously Sergio and other guys, but kind of like waking up and working out with him or playing some golf or when I come here and I'm playing alongside Sergio, like I still think it all the time, like I'm playing with these guys that I was watching on TV literally two years ago, and now they're, I would say, my friends. It's just unreal. Every time that I share a day or a few holes with them or dinners or anything, it's just unbelievable.

I think I'm still kind of learning on that, and hopefully in a few months or a few years, this thing kind of changes a little bit, but for now, I'm just so thankful and grateful for what they do.

Q. Obviously all three of you guys have celebrated team victories. Just curious, what's the most challenging thing about the champagne celebration?

CALEB SURRATT: Age.

TOM McKIBBIN: Yeah, I've never did one, so there was no champagne.

CALEB SURRATT: Yeah, it's tough when you're traveling to the next week and if you have the champagne all over your shirt because not many people know it smells terrible the next day if it sits there. I haven't been able to spring the champagne yet because I'm still underage in America, but I would say the smell is the hardest part to deal with. But it's definitely a good problem to have.

DAVID PUIG: I would agree the smell is tough. But it's

part of the plan, it's part of the deal here, and hopefully we're spraying champagne every week. We'll find a solution with the smell for sure.

Q. Do you think this generation will have different thoughts on how they plan for Korea? And for you guys, you are so decisive and you wanted to join LIV Golf. By what time? By what age you start to have this kind of thinking that I want to join LIV Golf?

DAVID PUIG: Well, for me, I was still in college when that happened. I kind of got the chance to play actually in the first LIV Golf ever event in Centurion back in the day when I was still an amateur, and it was a great opportunity for me. I was super excited just to play alongside the best players in the world.

Obviously I was still in college, so it was somewhat of a big decision to make, but I'm glad that I made that decision. It literally changed my life, and because of that, I'm here playing against the best players in the world.

CALEB SURRATT: Yeah, I'd say also having a similar path leaving in the middle of my sophomore year in college, I think we all -- players like us have always grown up with the intention of playing elite professional golf, and when you get the opportunity, it kind of sparks a fire in your brain. When I got the opportunity, it was a no-brainer for me, just being -- it was a direct path to go play against a lot of the best players in the world.

It's tough to not take that opportunity for me, and it was pretty early, so I'd say that was the one scary part. But I couldn't be more thankful for the decision, and I'm very happy where I am now.

Q. How long would you need to take, just overnight --

CALEB SURRATT: Oh, yeah, mine was same day. Once I had heard that it was an opportunity, I had talked about it with my team in college. I had talked to my coaches and agent. It made -- it was a route that I was excited about. It wasn't just an opportunity. It was something new. It was something that I was excited about. I'm very thankful I made that decision. It was a quick one for me.

TOM McKIBBIN: Yeah, maybe a little bit different. I'd been a pro for a while, and I was a pro when LIV started, and it's something that I'd watched a little bit from the start of it all and something that definitely made me curious or made me think about it. It's something that I think was really cool to watch and see, and I felt sort of to be a part of it one day would be pretty cool, and I think sort of once the opportunity came or I thought about it, it was something that, like Caleb said, it excited me.



Obviously I love golf and a lot of things excite me, but there was just a gut feeling and a real excitement there that I sort of obviously had to think about it hard, and it was a decision I had to make, but it was something that excited me a lot. I really just couldn't wait for it to start once I sort of got everything finished.

I'm really glad I'm here. It's been pretty cool.

Q. For Tom, this was asked of Rory in the Genesis Invitational. A reporter asked, what did you say to Tom, and why can't you ask Tom to play the PGA TOUR because you already have your PGA card. What exactly did he ask you or what exactly convinced you to stay in PGA, but at the end of the day you still want to play LIV Golf?

TOM McKIBBIN: Yeah, no, I'm not going to say what he said to me or what we talked about. Obviously I respect Rory a lot and I've been able to be very close to him the last four, five, six years and spend a lot of time with him. Obviously I spoke to him, obviously, when the opportunity came around and we had a couple of conversations. But ultimately, as I just said before, I just had a really good gut feeling about this, and it was something that excited me a lot. It was something different for me. I sort of felt it was a good decision for me and something that I had to go with my feeling, and only I can sort of make my own decisions. It's something that I'm very happy I made. I've really enjoyed the last couple of weeks, and I think it's going to be a great thing for me and the whole thing going forward for the future.

Q. In LIV Golf a player like Tyrrell Hatton would approach you and talk more about LIV to you?

TOM McKIBBIN: I was very lucky I got to play the Team Cup at the start of the year with Tyrrell, and we played a couple of practice rounds and played in the four-balls together, and we chatted a lot about it.

He told me how he found it, what he liked about it, and we had a lot of good conversations that week, which was nice and sort of definitely eased my mind a little.

Q. Before the champagne challenge, here we got another challenge in Hong Kong; it's the weather. Any solutions or strategy or tips that you would like to share to conquer this weather challenge?

DAVID PUIG: I think Tom should respond to that.

TOM McKIBBIN: I think it's just really important to keep everything dry. Your caddie and stuff sort of having plenty

of towels and keeping everything as dry as possible. It's very hard to play golf in the rain when your hands are all over the place on the club or the golf ball isn't dry. I think sort of keeping everything dry, keeping the ball in play off the tee, it's very hard to play in the rain. It can be quite tricky. But I think once you can sort of try and keep it on the fairways, the iron shots are very similar, sort of swing and it shouldn't take too much. It's very difficult, very stressful when everything is getting wet, and it's certainly not enjoyable for sure.

Q. You all mentioned that you're excited about joining LIV. May I know why or what do you love the most about playing in these LIV tournaments?

DAVID PUIG: I mean, for me it's just playing against the best players in the world. It's that easy. As I said in college golf, I think the level right now is super high, but when you join here or when I joined here, just playing against the best players in the world, it was one of my dreams, and just being able to do it every day, it's unbelievable.

CALEB SURRATT: Yeah, it has to be. I hate to copy him, but it has to be the same answer. To be able to come out here and have a full schedule and know exactly what you're going to get every week from the caliber of players, it's definitely a step up from college, even though how elite it is right now.

I'd say just knowing that you're going to have that opportunity to come out here and compete with these guys week in and week out, it's extremely valuable to the betterment of someone's career. It's clearly helped David become a great player, and Tom has had a lot of experience from his professional career, and that's something that I'm still learning out here.

I'd say the thing I'm loving the most is kind of the process because that's what I'm working with right now.

TOM McKIBBIN: Yeah, I think being able to, as the guys said, play with some of the best players in the world week in and week out is something that's very cool, and being able to learn from Jon and Tyrrell and play practice rounds and play some competitive rounds, as well, with them has just been really cool to be able to do that so quickly and learn from them. It's going to be exciting going forward as I get to play more weeks and get to play with more guys.

Q. Caleb and Tom, you guys are in the Legion XIII team. While you are going out there, do you discuss about strategy more or any target scoring?

CALEB SURRATT: I would say no. I think our goal is just

to go play the absolute best we can, and one thing I admire about Jon and the way he runs his team is he knows if all four guys are just trying their hardest and we're putting our best foot forward every day, when typically going to end up being pretty good.

We're all very different in the way that we play. Jon is a runner and Tyrrell as well, and me and Tom are still kind of learning how to be that guy. I think we're all very different. We have different playing styles, and we just focus on adding them up at the end of the week.

TOM McKIBBIN: Very similar to Caleb. I wouldn't say we discuss strategy or scores. Maybe just one thing like just playing the practice rounds with the guys, if you're maybe not sure on a hole you can see what they did, and it maybe might help you make a decision. But for the most part, I think we're all just out there trying our best and trying to make the best decisions we can possibly make, and Jon I think has made it important that we're all just trying our hardest and giving it our all and sort of one shot lower is always better.

Yeah, very similar to what Caleb said, but our strategies are probably all very different, and we probably just go for whatever we feel most comfortable with.

Q. David, your team captain is Sergio, and he used to be a young prodigy at an age like yours. Did he give you any advice on being a young player competing with all these experts?

DAVID PUIG: Yeah, all the time. He just kind of explained to me what he did back in the day and what he does right now. He always tells me that I have the game to be out here. Sometimes things don't go your way, and sometimes you can have a very good stretch and think that you're one of the best, and you just kind of need to find that balance and find that work ethic outside of the golf course and even when you're at home.

Yeah, just work as hard as you can, don't show your emotions that much, and just try to be as relaxed as possible, and again, try to be as consistent as you can.

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