

LIV Golf South Africa

Tuesday, 17 March, 2026

Midrand, Gauteng, South Africa

The Club at Steyn City

Southern Guards GC

Louis Oosthuizen

Branden Grace

Dean Burmester

Charl Schwartzel

Press Conference



the course here and what the rest of the players can expect and what kind of test it'll present?

BRANDEN GRACE: I think this is maybe a better question for Burmy or Charl. Louis and I haven't played it, but we've played a few holes. But from what we've seen and what we've tried to do, Louis and I came out here for the media day, we did a tour, we tried to toughen it up a little bit with the rough and the thickness and that sort of stuff.

We grew up with kikuyu grass. The rest of the field has probably never even seen it the way that we know it. But yeah, it's immaculate. It's awesome condition. Obviously the weather has not played its part so much, but I think the weather for the week looks good, so the course is just going to get firmer, faster, better, but we're all in for a hell of a treat.

Like Louis said, everybody that's coming, they're not expecting what these guys have done. This is something spectacular. I definitely think we're going to be in the running for the best one.

Q. Dean, we had the Rippers in here earlier this morning. One of the topics that came up was the rivalry and the 2024 team playoff in Adelaide. That was maybe the first time where, for LIV Golf, the team fandom and that competition was really showcased on a global stage. What do you remember about being part of that playoff, and having seen the success that the Rippers have had in Adelaide, does that add any fuel for the team this week?

DEAN BURMESTER: Yeah, I think certainly. Obviously being part of that playoff was one of the best things I've ever done in the game of golf, obviously not coming out on top. I think the first playoff hole, Louis and I say it all the time, we had our chances and didn't take it.

But it was an amazing stadium kind of atmosphere. It was like any other sport you'd play anywhere in the world, I think rugby for us and cricket and such the rivalry against the Australians for so long has been something that's come

THE MODERATOR: Let's welcome to the media center Southern Guards GC, joined by Captain Louis Oosthuizen, Dean Burmester, Charl Schwartzel and Branden Grace. Thanks for joining us this morning.

Louis, we'll start with you. You and the team were really instrumental in bringing a LIV Golf event to South Africa, and now this week it's finally here. How proud are you of all the work that's gone into delivering this event for your home country?

LOUIS OOSTHUIZEN: Yeah, I think for a while we've been trying to figure out how we can get it done, get a tournament here in SA, and then we had lots of people involved to try and make this work.

Last year it was sort of -- I think realistically we were thinking of getting it hopefully in '28, maybe in '27. But yeah, we had some great support from the minister and from Steyn City and from everyone, and I think we all yesterday drove through the fan village, walked through Club 54, walked through the golf course a bit, and we were extremely proud of bringing the tournament here.

I don't think the people have an idea when they think they're coming to just watch a normal tournament. I think once they get here, they're going to experience what this event will be all about.

To Chris, Steven, everyone that had a massive input into getting everything ready, to Ross from LIV and everyone, it's been an amazing job, and we're just very proud sitting here and being part of this.

Q. Branden, speaking of this venue, all the work that's gone into it, could you please share some insights on



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through generations.

For us to be able to be a part of it there was really cool, and now we get an opportunity to do it at home and represent South Africa at home and get that kind of team environment for us. Like Louis said earlier, we're just proud, and hopefully the fans have an amazing experience, and we certainly feel like they're going to be behind us.

Q. Charl, if we think back to 2022, you hoisted the first individual championship trophy in London. The team also had great success that week. You've been part of LIV since then. In your eyes, just seeing the evolution of the league and of LIV Golf from that very first event to this week, what has that meant to you, and what can you share about how much this league has grown?

CHARL SCHWARTZEL: Yeah, I mean, that first event in June in 2022, there was a lot of turmoil in our sport, a lot of uncertainty. Obviously it was coming from guys that had come to LIV. Nobody was sure what to expect.

I had a great week my first one. The team had a fantastic week. I thought, well, this is going to be nice. Then I haven't really won ever since.

At least we've had some team wins in that period. But from a LIV standpoint, it's been fantastic to be part of it, to see how it's grown, gotten better. Every year they improve.

We've had a taste of it every year in Adelaide, where you can see what it can be, because that's like the pinnacle of the LIV events. Now just to see what we've created here in South Africa, it makes you very proud to see. This is fantastic. I don't think there's any -- there's never been a golfing event in South Africa that's ever been set up like this, and I don't think many sporting events here. This is really amazing, and it's sort of a great -- to have seen, and like I said, proud to be a part of it, that's what we thought and what we were told it could be when we signed up with LIV, and it's really come to life. It's amazing.

Q. For Louis, what's the chat in the Southern Guards locker room, particularly bearing in mind that a home tournament brings a different kind much pressure?

LOUIS OOSTHUIZEN: Yeah, obviously I think us four would love to perform well. We'd love to play well. But I think the bigger picture is getting the tournament here. The bigger picture for me is that the four of us really enjoy this week, what everyone has done with team behind the scenes, the LIV guys and everyone that was involved, what we've done in achieving and getting this tournament here was a massive goal of ours.

I know when we step on the golf course, it will be all down to business and we want to play well, but to be honest with you, I'm just -- I want to enjoy this week. I want to take everything in. There's a few more things you have to do off the golf course, a little bit more than a normal event, but I think this week we're happy to do it and just make sure that the fans and everyone here, players, caddies, everyone, has a great experience of our beautiful country, and that's the main goal for the week.

Q. You've made sure that this is a terrible week to be a brandy and Coke. It's going to be tough out there, obviously --

DEAN BURMESTER: That's just in our locker room.

Q. I wasn't even speaking about my personal consumption. Hopefully outside of that it's a tough week for everyone that comes up against the Southern Guards, as well. South Africa are a proud sporting nation. We thrive in team sports. Obviously we have individual major winners in the room, but are we more geared towards taking this on as a team? Does a Southern Guards W count more than a solo win? Are we poised to go in a team direction this week?

LOUIS OOSTHUIZEN: Yeah, look, individually obviously if you're playing well, a win is great. I think to me, those proud moments are like Chicago last year. Obviously Dean was playing really good and he had a rough start on the Sunday, but how he pulled it through and got in the playoff and then won.

But for the rest of us, if you're not playing great and you manage to play really good those last five, six holes or get it through or get your team a win, that almost to me is a greater moment than playing well the whole week and winning the tournament yourself. It's sort of bringing that little extra for the team.

I think for me, I'm more invested in that the team does really well every week and that we play well, and me trying to do my part and have a good score.

But it has changed my mentality about what LIV is all about. For all the years being pros, always individual, and now being part of a team with three good friends is more important than the individual for me.

Q. Charl, as a former Masters champion, you've had many highlights in your career. Where does this tournament in South Africa rank in terms of that?

CHARL SCHWARTZEL: Look, winning the Masters will always be the biggest event, most proudest moment of my

career. But this is in a different light. This is something that was also way off a dream when LIV started, to just have a tournament, just to be able to play a LIV event in South Africa and for it to have happened at this sort of biggest stage is, as a South African, a very proud moment.

For myself -- you asked about the team thing. I think we've been very consistent this year. We haven't had a podium but it's been fourths and fifths. I think this tournament from a team point of view, to play with these three guys here, I think this week somehow the team aspect is going to mean a little bit more. When you look at a leaderboard when you're playing other places, you look at the team, but you also look at where you're standing individually.

But I've got a feeling this week, you're going to be looking at the team score a bit more than we normally do.

Q. So much has been spoken about in Ryder Cups going into them about preparing the course for the home team. To your average golfer, golf courses are difficult; that's just how it is. How do you look at a golf course like this, and how do you go, we're going to make it beneficial for us? Are you sort of making a couple of holes Bryson proof by putting rough in a certain place? Are you making some of the greens more susceptible to your shot shapes?

CHARL SCHWARTZEL: Yeah, it was a tough one because if we make it DeChambeau proof, we've actually made it Burmester proof, too. It's a bit of a Catch 22.

Look, when we first came out in September, we came here, and this golf course was just a course for the members. Dean played a tournament that way, and they destroyed the golf course. The very obvious first thing was to make it tough.

I spoke to Louis, we both played the Million Dollar, the Nedbank back when it was a 12-man field back in 2010, around there, where the rough was very long. Then single digits would win, and there would be more emphasis on quality golf shots, where modern day, the way the course was, was just for bombers so you could hit it anywhere and guys would get away with it. So that was the first thing to try and stop, so at least make the guys think, reward quality golf shots.

We played just before Riyadh, but they fertilized it that week, so the rough wasn't up yet, but with all the rain we've had -- we're going to go out today, but I'm sure it's going to be nice and juicy and there's going to be a lot of emphasis on hitting fairways. Bryson hasn't felt the kikuyu grass yet.

DEAN BURMESTER: We're going to test his form, that's

for sure. Probably on that, I think, on what Charl said, we came here, we played, and they had just fertilized it. Branden and I played three holes yesterday just quickly, and I hit it a foot into the rough on 10 and Branden was a yard into the rough on 10, and we're both carrying 7-woods this week because of the rough, and neither of us had a chance of getting it anywhere near that green.

There is definitely the element of that fairway has been narrowed to like 17 yards wide, where drivers are going to pitch, and that's Louis' goal. He wanted to give 57 guys a chance to win this tournament. You don't want to take 30 percent of the field out.

I think everybody involved on this has done an amazing job. It does look incredible considering all the weather they've had, hot and rain, but yeah, I think we'll find out more this nine holes we get to play a little later.

Q. I'm really intrigued around the psychology around LIV Golf. Usually golfers are attracted to the game because of the individual aspect, now you turn that around with the team element, and especially the growth Bryson spoke about, the fact that golf needed to innovate in order to attract a younger golfer. Now you add in the sensory experience of mics everywhere, it's a different thought process when you're playing as a solitary golfer and now you've got this team aspect and even in the individual league format. How has that changed in terms of how you think through the course, how you think through different shots, and what do you think about how it's going to attract a younger golfer who perhaps wasn't brought up in the purest perspective of golf?

LOUIS OOSTHUIZEN: One of my daughters is sitting in here, and they love watching YouTube, watching the guys on YouTube channel golf, especially Bryson, what he's doing. So the game is definitely changing for the younger people to get attracted to golf through not just watching a tournament. They do all kinds of things now online.

I think it's still -- golf will always respect the game for what it is. Open Championship is the best tournament in the world. You'll always have those things. But it definitely evolved, and you need to sort of go with it to make it popular to the youngsters.

Being mic'd up, I know it's not for everyone. I'm not a big fan of being mic'd up when I play golf, but all of that is part of the change. Once you're out there and you get on the golf course, I think you still play the same golf you've played all your years. You still think the same way. But there's a little bit more stuff going on around, after your round of golf or around you. There's lots of things that you

need to now take into consideration.

It's not for everyone. I don't think the older golfer, the true golf fan that grew up with watching old-school golf, it might not be for him, but I think under the youngsters, it's very popular.

Q. We brought up cricket a few times today, and a lot of times we mention how the crowd is that 12th player in a cricket team. With over 90,000 tickets sold this week, what big of an impact do you think the fifth player of your team is going to have on this week?

DEAN BURMESTER: Look, I probably won't shy away from this question because I really do thrive off a little bit of crowd energy. I like getting the crowd behind me a little bit

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LOUIS OOSTHUIZEN: Nooo...

DEAN BURMESTER: Okay, but somebody has got to do it, I suppose. But look, it's going to be insane. There's a few surprises. I think a couple of our sponsors have organized some amazing things that are going to get the crowd hyped and get them jacked up. We know the party hole, we've obviously experienced it in Adelaide, and it's big. You can hardly hear what your caddie is saying on that tee, and hopefully we're expecting more of the same for us here.

Like Louis said, those things are all what's going to grow the game for a younger demographic and I think having a crowd that's going to be a little boisterous and behind you is not your traditional golf crowd. That's how we're going to change the game and get more golf clubs into more kids' hands. Yeah, let the crowd get behind us, and we expect a lot of great things, and pretty sure the Aussies might have a slightly harder time than they do in Adelaide.

Q. Gentlemen, just wondering, how do you balance the promotion of the event versus the competition? Obviously, Louis, you said the promotion, the experience itself is kind of the bigger picture. But how do you weigh those two things throughout the week?

LOUIS OOSTHUIZEN: Our staff has done a great job. The Southern Guard team behind the scenes has done a really good job. We've done a lot of things last week, social media things and things that we were supposed to do yesterday, we got that out of the way. This morning we're booked up until about 11:00, 11:15 or something, so then we can actually go and play some golf. Obviously tonight we have the welcome party and we were going to go anyway so that doesn't make a difference, and then the green room tomorrow night, we've got a few more things

tomorrow afternoon. I'm not sure -- no, we don't. Look, they've done a great job.

But we did have -- we knew this week was going to be tough. I spoke to Cam about it on his first experience and could see how much it took out of them. Performance level, they weren't great that year, and the next year they were really good.

I think we'll learn from this week, as well, how we can do next year better, but so far, it's been really good. We're ready for the week to start. We're anxious to get out there and see the golf course and practice a little bit.

But again, bigger picture for this week is everyone having a great time.

Q. What's the key to doing the rhino jive properly?

LOUIS OOSTHUIZEN: Do it properly, it'll be probably a Sunday night thing after about 14 brandy and Cokes. We'll do it properly then, yeah.

BRANDEN GRACE: We'll send you a video then, as well.

DEAN BURMESTER: I'm pretty sure something will pop up on Louis' Instagram.

Q. This season so far, you guys individually have done well. In tournaments the team also. Does that give you some pressure going into your home tournament for the first time?

BRANDEN GRACE: No, I think it actually helps. We know everybody has played some good golf. We know that we're trending. So that is good. Obviously the last couple of weeks Louis has really played well, Charl has been up there, Burmy has had three top 10s, I started off pretty decent this season, and we've been very solid, like Charl said. Obviously not the podium, but we've been there and thereabout.

Maybe this is all it needs, coming home, being in front of your home fans, being comfortable, and just having all our friends and family here. Like Louis said, sometimes just being relaxed and having a good time is all it needs. I think everybody is in for a big treat this week.

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