

LIV Golf South Africa

Thursday, 19 March, 2026

Midrand, Gauteng, South Africa

The Club at Steyn City

Southern Guards GC

Louis Oosthuizen

Charl Schwartzel

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Let's welcome to the stage, Southern Guards GC Captain Louis Oosthuizen and Charl Schwartzel. Gentlemen, obviously an emotional start to the tournament, emotional week for you and for the team. Maybe just start with you, Louis, and you, Charl. What was it like on the first tee today?

LOUIS OOSTHUIZEN: Me and Charl just stood there talking a little bit, and I was there watching his tee shot. I was tearing up a little bit. I put my glasses on because I felt so proud, and then Charl just said he felt the same way. We're standing there and nearly had bit of tears to get out of his eyes.

It was a long time that we've been trying to do this, trying to explain to everyone that I promise you South African fans will bring the vibe to the tournament and that we're a big sporting nation. Couldn't be more proud standing on that first tee.

CHARL SCHWARTZEL: Yeah, look, we've played many tournaments in our lives, and they dropped us off in the front there and you had to walk up, and the walk -- very few times you get to experience in your career where your hair stands up and you get these needles going through your body. I was walking up there, and it was just so loud, and I started tearing up. I was like, wow, I need to hit a tee shot but I'm busy crying.

I was just exceptionally proud to have been able to experience that. It was way, way above my expectations.

Q. To what extent do you think you guys were lifted by the fans today? Secondly, Charl, your back injury, how bad is it? If it were to be so bad that you were unable to complete the tournament, would you be able to be substituted for the tournament?

CHARL SCHWARTZEL: I mean, I phoned Louis last night because I was so worried about dropping the team. I said

to him, my back is really bad. I'm not sure I can play. I don't want to come out here and play badly and then I'd rather let somebody else play. He sort of said to me, look, we've come a long way with this. We've tried. You deserve to play, so at least try.

I normally get to the course about two hours before my tee time. I was here four hours before. I was jacuzzi, then I was in another sort of bath, had needles -- I had a whole bunch of things going on this morning. Then the last thing was a couple of tablets.

It's just amazing to me what an amazing crowd, how it lifts you. I don't know if I would have got through today if I didn't have all the people supporting us as hard as they did. It was amazing.

LOUIS OOSTHUIZEN: Well, he beat me by three shots, so I'm doing exactly the same as him tomorrow morning. (Laughter.)

Q. Louis, you shared a moment just after Charl teed off and you were a bit worried about how he would actually fare today, but he managed to do well. There was almost a connection you guys had, even on the 18th when you finished. How much is this like day one, going back to when you thought about having a tournament in South Africa, how much has it exceeded the expectations you guys had?

LOUIS OOSTHUIZEN: Look, we've come together a long time. First time we met I was 12, he was 10, playing the SA Boys just down the road. We played together for South Africa multiple times. It was very special. They asked me who do I want on the first tee, and I said Charl definitely deserves to be there with me on the first tee. It was a very special moment. It was one that I'll never forget.

Like I said earlier, everything we expected this to be, it's exceeded it by 10 times.

Q. Charl, round 1 LIV Golf Sa, you guys are the overnight champions or at least leaders. Take us into

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your confidence as a team and how much of a conversation you guys have had between the four of you about performing well as a collective and giving this crowd that have really shown that they want to have you here your support or at least your thanks?

CHARL SCHWARTZEL: Look, most of us have played pretty well so far this year. We've just every time seemed to get off to a slightly bad start and then played much better the last three rounds. So we've been very consistent with these fourth and fifth finishes.

But I think a week like this, we don't really have these team talks. We just know that each of us is going to try a little bit harder here at home for the South African fans, for our team. I think that little heightened in your concentration and trying a bit harder is what sometimes makes the small difference.

Q. Similar question, but obviously big crowds today, came with a lot of hometown pressure. Louis, what kind of mindset do you have in this situation to sort of convert that adrenaline you're feeling into performance on the course?

LOUIS OOSTHUIZEN: Look, first it was just take the biggest club in your bag, the biggest head and just get it down there and then take it from there.

After the first few holes I think I settled in and sort of started hitting some better shots. But yeah, I sort of in my mind knew that that first tee shot was going to be electric and the first hole, and just the whole hype about everything.

But yeah, once you get out there and you get into your rhythm, we've played before big crowds loads of times in our career, and it just makes it a little bit more special if you do well in front of your home crowd.

Q. You spoke to us about how your morning looked. Based on that, how does the rest of the afternoon and evening look? Are you going back in the jacuzzi?

CHARL SCHWARTZEL: Look, I think it's going to be very similar. We both got in this magnesium bath yesterday, lying there for recovery. So I guess we don't know after this.

Look, it's what we do most of the time. Every week there's a warmup and then a sort of physio session after each round. You walk a long way especially, so your legs get tired. It's just my mornings this week looks like is going to be more effort than normal.

Look, I just hope I can manage it like I did today going forward. I don't need it to get any worse.

Q. Guys, you were playing in four different groups today, but did you feel like you could feed off each other? There was a stretch where each of you made long putts, and it seemed like you were able to kind of feed off that. I don't know if you were looking at the leaderboard or -- could you feed off each other?

LOUIS OOSTHUIZEN: Well, Dean was just behind me and Charl was in front of me, so I could sort of have a sense of what was going on. I was just seeing Dean hitting bombs down the fairway behind me, and every time I looked at Charl, he made a putt where the crowd sort of tells me, it's a birdie. It was nice to see the guys play well and then now and then look at the leaderboard and see Branden was playing really well. I was the only one that had to get my head in a good space to make some birdies and have a good score.

Q. You talked about playing on adrenaline. Can you play on adrenaline for 72 holes? How much of a challenge will that be the next three rounds?

LOUIS OOSTHUIZEN: It'll be a challenge. I mean, look, there's certain times you need that adrenaline, but other times you actually want to be calm and make good decisions. Like I say, we've played in front of big crowds before, so I think we know how to handle the situations.

Q. Looking ahead, what do you need to do to maintain the momentum tomorrow into moving day and into the final round?

CHARL SCHWARTZEL: Look, pretty much what we did today. The guys did exceptionally well. There was high expectations. In golf we always say you can lose it on the first day -- you cannot win it on the first day but you can lose it. We did a great job just putting ourselves up there.

I've just got a feeling that the LIV guys are -- the players are really good. The scoring is not going to stand still. It's going to keep going. Everybody, you're going to have to stay on the pedal. The guys are really good out here. We've seen it so many times.

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