

LIV Golf South Africa

Friday, 20 March, 2026

Midrand, Gauteng, South Africa

The Club at Steyn City

Southern Guards GC

Branden Grace

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome back to the media center Branden Grace, Southern Guards GC, a 5-under 66, tied for second. You teed off in the final group today. The energy off that first tee, it seemed to follow you all over the course again. What's that experience been like?

BRANDEN GRACE: Yeah, Louis and them told me last night, and they said, listen, get yourself ready because you've not experienced anything like that. It was that and better.

I got a little teared up there on the first hole. It's a very special week for us. We've dreamt of bringing the LIV Golf event here to South Africa, and we bought into this thing from day one. We believe in the product. We believe in the league, and we believe in all the players here, and we believe in where we're going.

Bringing it here, we would have hoped that this is what it was going to be like, but the guys came out in the thousands, and it's been phenomenal. Honestly, today was probably the best day of golf for me personally in my life. I don't think I've experienced anything like this.

Q. On your performance today, obviously there was a lot of pressure, you and the two guys from the Crushers. You guys were kind of going toe-to-toe. How was your mentality, especially with the crowd backing, but you also had Bryson with you?

BRANDEN GRACE: Listen, I think you kind of just prepare yourself for that. The South Africans are Bryson crazy. You can hear them outside now. But it's phenomenal. This is what it needs to be like. This is what all of our LIV tournaments need to be like. You have the guys like Bryson, DJ, Cameron Smith, Phil, all these guys.

The one thing that makes this week so special is I remember the day that the Presidents Cup came to Fancourt. I was -- I can't remember how old I was, but I saw two guys on the range and it was Tiger Woods and Charles Howell III, and I've told Charles this story probably

four times.

I ran back there and I sat behind them, and I was the only guy on the range sitting behind two of these guys watching them hit golf balls, and this is what we are doing for all these South African kids out there. We're giving them hope. We're giving them a dream. We're giving them something to look forward to.

I just had to prepare myself for that. I myself felt a lot more at ease than probably what I thought I would have been. Yesterday I think I was more nervous than today, although there wasn't that many people. 17,000 is not that many people, you know, so I love a lot of people. When I got to this turn, I teed off at the bottom, and I feel the bottom side there is a little bit quieter than when you come to the top. When I got to this side of the golf course, then things got busy.

But it's phenomenal. Listen, it just made me stay in the moment even more and just focus on what I need to do.

Q. I know you were born in Pretoria, but you call the Garden Route home. I wanted to ask a two-part question. The golf course that you call your home course, that you spend kind of fine-tuning things on the Garden Route, where would you say that that is?

BRANDEN GRACE: Yeah, so I've been fortunate, my whole career, I've been part of the Fancourt Foundation, part of the Ernie Els and Fancourt Foundation after that. Ever since my first -- I don't want to say proper one, but since I won the Volvo Championships at Fancourt, I became an ambassador. I live on the estate pretty much all the time, and the links down there at Fancourt gave me honorary life membership. When I go home, that's the only place I go to play golf.

I do the odd trips to George Golf Course and Knysna Golf Course. It's just awesome to play these very old-school golf courses and see that type of things again, but the links is definitely my home course.

ASAP sports . . . when all is said, we're done.®

Q. If we go all the way, Sunday we lift the trophy, individual and team, if we go all the way, can we have a commitment from you now that we're ringing the bell behind the bar at Fancourt on Sunday night and you can do --

BRANDEN GRACE: I will definitely ring the bell on Sunday night.

Q. Can you do an iwalit (phonetic) to Parkview in Johannesburg, as well, and George and Knysna? So we're locked in, you're going to ring the bell at Fancourt --

BRANDEN GRACE: Let's just stick to I'll ring it at Fancourt, not just the links because the links is pretty quiet, so let's do Fancourt. You've all got it on video here so I'm pretty screwed now.

Q. I was just wondering, a year ago when this tournament was announced at UK and somebody had told you I'd go into the weekend in the final group playing with Bryson, especially given all that you've kind of had to deal with, the year leading up to that, what would you have thought back then?

BRANDEN GRACE: Listen, I would have had two things. I would have thought you're crazy, and then I would have thought that, well, this is exactly where I want to be, or where I would like to be.

Listen, there's a lot of change, a lot of hard work, a lot of effort and a lot of team things, a lot of backing from my family, my friends, my team. I think that's what makes the Southern Guards so special. We really have each other's backs. We're all one big family, and that's just how we do it.

But yeah, like I said, this is exactly where I want to be going into the weekend. Coming in, I know tomorrow is going to be even more electrifying than today, and we're ready.

Q. Would you say you've been riding adrenaline for these first 36 holes, and can that be sustained for another 36 holes?

BRANDEN GRACE: Yeah, 100 percent. Listen, I've been playing some good golf. I started off the season very well the first two events, top 10 and then I felt when I came back -- I had a week off and then played the SA Open, and SA Open kind of threw me a little bit of a curve ball. It was really windy conditions, and I just felt like I wasn't ready for it.

That threw some bad habits -- it forced some bad habits back into the swing and into the body the last couple of weeks, and I've just been trying to grind it out and grinding through that. Coming here, my coach just said, listen, just work on the rhythm, just almost try and hit it smoother and things.

Obviously the ball goes further, yes, so you don't really need to do that much more to try to get a little extra out of it, but I know that things isn't far away. I feel that I'm playing good golf mentally, I feel that I'm there.

If I can step it up on a day like today playing with one of the best in the world and in front of this crowd, then I know I can do it.

I'm ready. I know the team is ready. I know we hope for a big weekend.

Q. Let's talk about the noise because this is not a normal golf tournament. The reception on 17, mental. You stick it so close. Tell me, like, what were you thinking walking past just seeing those thousands of people, five, six, seven rows deep?

BRANDEN GRACE: Listen, I felt that on every hole today. The 17th was just a little louder. But every tee box and every green I got on to today, the guys, they were applauding us. It was phenomenal.

I've never experienced anything like that. Like I said, this is what we've dreamt of, of bringing a LIV tournament to South Africa. The good thing about 17 is you can control your nerve to be able to hit a golf shot like that. It was just such a perfect distance. It was 141 yards, a little down off the left, and it was just a stock standard wedge, didn't have to do anything special. It was more really just backing yourself to aim a little left because of the wind direction. I'll back myself with a wedge or with my wedges any day.

It was phenomenal to be able to hit a golf shot like that under that pressure and then to see the crowd go absolutely bonkers.

Q. Help us help the crowd because LIV Golf, loud, noise, music, the intros, and then the marshals put their hands up and say quiet, please, but you've got music playing. Do you want noise? Do you want not noise? Do you want English, Afrikaans? Help us help them.

BRANDEN GRACE: You're putting me under the spotlight here. I actually haven't even thought about it the way you just explained it there, to be quite honest. Listen, I think the music is something that we've gotten used to since LIV

started. I think the -- I don't mind the noise from the people. I must say I think the South African crowd this week has been very respectful of how they have done their things and how they have gotten around supporting every player out there. For Bryson, for instance, they kept quiet when he was going but when he was walking, it was chaos, as well, and it was the same for me today.

I actually like that when -- go crazy when you want to go crazy, respect us when we want to hit shots, and then enjoy the vibe.

Q. There's something quite beautiful about a guy who can come and burst on the scene. When you won on the original European Tour, now DP World Tour, you had a really good run, and then you've maintained. Here you are, it's LIV Golf South Africa, you're one of the South African guys, and you're at the top of the leaderboard. I tried to ask Bryson this question last week and he said don't try and get in my head, and I kind of agree with him. But for you, how do you keep it like that? Golf is hard; everyone in this room here is terrible at golf. Is there something special that you do that you can center yourself, like you want to play well every single week but you're doing it right now? What's happening in your head? What is the secret sauce almost to being a top-level performer?

BRANDEN GRACE: You know, listen, you make it sound very easy, but it's not. There's a lot of ups and a lot of downs. Through the years, I've been top 10 in the world, I've been top 50 in the world for numerous consecutive years winning all over the world. Then you go through slumps as well.

Those are the hardest things. When it goes well, everybody wants a piece of you and everybody loves you, and the hardest thing is when you struggle. You go through these steps where you know what you're capable of, but it just doesn't feel like you can ever get there.

But you just never have to give up. I think when you come to South Africa, it almost feels like it makes it a little easier. I remember I've always looked forward going back home, coming to South Africa after a long DP World years and PGA seasons, coming back and supporting the tour. Not that the standard of golf is different, just I felt that personally I was on a different level. I always kind of showed that with how I played when I came to South Africa.

I think events like this, like I said, this is such a close event to the heart for all of us Southern Guards guys. We've dreamt of bringing a tournament to South Africa. We've dreamt this is what it would be like. You kind of just have

that thing where you just never back down.

I always kind of think of myself as a Jack Russell. When I go, I go. I'm very gritty. I back myself. Even a day like today, I backed myself against Bryson. You have to. If you don't do it, you're not going to make it.

But the self-belief has to be there, and I think that's what I've got.

Q. Just talking about the goosebumps and the energy out there at the Lion's Den, do you feel more goosebumps there or is that the hole where you feel the most "gees"?

BRANDEN GRACE: No, that's actually one of the holes I feel most nervous on. I know it's only a wedge and things, but when you walk through there, you know, okay, you've arrived. When you go through and the smoke is going everywhere, okay, I have to step up, put your big boy pants on and hit a golf shot. But goosebumps the whole day throughout the round, numerous times.

We've got a Southern Guards hospitality down there on the 12th hole and that was like amphitheater today with all the guys behind there. It was phenomenal. Like I said, the closest thing to this that I've experienced is a Presidents Cup, and in my opinion this has topped it. It's really been unbelievable and the best experience for me today.

Q. Following up to your response about how you feel sometimes when you're struggling and then when you're winning everyone wants a piece of your attention. Do you learn more from the struggles as you learn from the good times?

BRANDEN GRACE: Yeah, 100 percent. You know, unfortunately sport is like that, and we all know it. It's not just golf. It's in rugby, it's cricket, it's soccer, it's everything. When you're good, you're good. When you're bad, you're bad. It is what it is. You have to somehow put your head down, keep on working, believe, and just hope you get on to the other side of things, get over that hurdle.

I don't know how else to explain it really. But yeah, you have to never stop believing.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports