

LIV Golf London

Wednesday, 28 June, 2023

Hertfordshire, UK

Centurion Club

Cleeks GC

Graeme McDowell

Martin Kaymer

Teleconference



Q. Question for both G-Mac and Martin: Just the framework deal announced in the past couple of weeks, what was your initial reaction to it, and now that the dust has settled a little bit, what are your thoughts going forward?

GRAEME McDOWELL: Yeah, I'll go first. I think we were all surprised. This was something we all hoped would happen in the future. I don't think anyone expected it to happen quite this fast.

Most importantly, it's great for the game of golf going forward. I think we're all excited about what it means for the sport. I don't think Martin or I ever wanted to be fracturing the game the way we've seen it fractured the last 12 months. That's really not what we were all about.

Watching the game of golf come together in the future, we're all curious and kind of excited to see what this all means. I don't think anyone knows what it means. I'm not even really sure that the decision makers at the very, very tip of the spear have worked out what this all means yet. That's going to take a little bit of time to evolve I would say.

I'm guessing this could take 12 to 18 months to figure out. There's probably a very long laundry list of items that need to be addressed, questions that need to be answered, and kind of what this all means for the tours in the world, the players, the best players, where everybody fits in.

Like I say, we can only speculate, but the most important thing is that the game of golf hopefully is in a better place moving forward for everybody.

MARTIN KAYMER: I can only -- obviously G-Mac is such a good guy who can put everything well together. We don't know much more than you guys know. That's the bottom line. I'm sure it's frustrating for you. It's also a little bit -- we don't know where the PGA Tour and PIF will go the next few years. I don't know how they will go.

But at the end of the day, as G-Mac said, it's great for golf. Finally we have a little bit more peace. That is what I think at the end of the day what everybody wanted. No one likes to fight and be mean to each other and stuff like this.

It was a bit of a surprise how quick it came, but when Mohammed from PIF, he called me a couple of hours before the news broke, and he explained that this will come out and this was the plan all along, to find common ground at one stage. I said, congratulations, that's great; that's good for the whole picture.

But wherever we're going to go from now, you've got to call PIF, you've got to call Jay Monahan and find out because we are all just speculating, just like you guys.

Q. In a future where you were able to play on both tours, would either of you still consider playing on the PGA Tour or DP World Tour?

MARTIN KAYMER: I would love to play on the European Tour. I had great success there. I have good friends there. I have great relationships with the guys. I enjoy the tournaments that they play. I still believe that tour can be one of the strongest, especially with all the venues that they can provide in Europe.

Once we have the possibility and the chance to play in Europe again, I would like to support a few events here and there because I enjoy playing them. But on the other hand, my commitment is towards the LIV Tour, and this is my priority. This is what I wanted to do, and this is what I want to do for the future.

But I hope that we find some common ground that we have more possibilities. Especially in my case last week I would have loved to play in Germany. I would have loved to play in my home country. If that would be a possibility in the future, that would be nice.

GRAEME McDOWELL: I feel exactly the same way. Obviously my priority right now is the LIV Tour, but moving into the future, having no idea what it looks like, would I love the opportunity to support PGA Tour events and European Tour events that I care about, that I have relationships with via my sponsors, tournaments that



Martin and I have won, tournaments we care about, the Irish Open for me.

Will I have a chance to play the Irish Open in September? Probably doubtful the way things are going here in the short term. I'd love to be there. I'd love to support.

There's no doubt, I think 14 events a year is a lot of golf, but I think to stay sharp, and I think we've always played probably between 20 and 30 events a year, so I've always wanted to supplement my LIV schedule with other events to stay sharp and to compete, give myself the chance to be the best I can be, be in the major championships and play the best tournaments in the world.

I would welcome that opportunity, and I hope one day we get there.

Q. Finally from me, the language maybe in the beginning of the merger was that Jay Monahan said he couldn't see the two tours coexisting going forward, but everything from the LIV side of things seems to be planning for the future. Does it feel that way to the both of you? Do you envision playing LIV a full schedule in 2024, 2025 and beyond that?

MARTIN KAYMER: I mean, I don't understand if I were the PIF, for example, and I create this baby, and that baby becomes an adult and is successful, why would I get rid of it? I don't understand. This is just my common thinking with the knowledge that I have these days.

I don't know what the plan is, but I have difficulties believing that LIV will go away the next year. I just don't see any reason why it should.

GRAEME McDOWELL: And I think we all believe that the team model, the franchise model, the LIV model, there is a place in the sport for it. There's 48 guys out here that believe deeply in the idea of teams that are international in nature, South African teams and Australian teams and Asian teams, Korean teams, American, European, the Cleekers. There's so much -- we believe in the value of that, and we believe there's a place in the game of golf for that.

What does that look like, though? There's all these puzzle pieces in the game. The majors, which is the most important piece. You've got the LIV Tour, the PGA Tour, the European Tour, the Asian Tour. You've got all these puzzle pieces that need to fit together to make one cohesive golfing environment where the fan gets to see the best players in the world more often playing against each other at a high level.

Thankfully there's a bunch of smart people that are going to have to get in a room and figure this all out and then you're best players in the world and they're going to say, does this work for you guys, because that is the most important thing is we all know who the best guys in the world are. How many events a year do they want to play? That's kind of the first variable, and then you have to work back from there and try to create something that all fits together.

It's going to be really fun to see how it all plays out, and I think we all have to focus on the positives of what that's going to be.

Q. It wouldn't be particularly smart to invest \$2 billion into a business only to be told to essentially fold it.

GRAEME McDOWELL: We don't think that's going to happen. There's too much value out here. This product is a real thing, and it has a very compelling nature to it, and we think the fan wants this.

Q. Regarding the PGA Tour and DP World Tour, what do you think they could learn from LIV? What particular aspects could they learn from?

GRAEME McDOWELL: That's a great question, a real cracker of a question.

I mean, I think it really just goes back to the team element. I think the things that I've read over the last couple weeks is they're going to take a market analysis of kind of how sustainable and how compelling the team franchise element is, right, to the world of golf and kind of what that all means.

We know team golf works. We've seen it in Ryder Cups. We've seen it in Presidents Cups, Solheim Cups. We've seen team golf work.

There's 48 guys out here that care about team golf. We've played it for 12 months now. We've seen what it means to the individuals within each team. Getting a chance to dress like Martin Kaymer every day is what I've always wanted.

The team dynamics and the franchise opportunities and the business sustainability of that is something that I hope continues because I do believe there is a place in the game for it, and the product will work. It's just a case of how it kind of bolts into the golfing ecosystem and the majors and the best players in the world playing the events that they want to play wherever they might be in the world.

But you know, you're talking about two of the most



successful golf tours in the world in the PGA Tour and the European Tour. You're not going to sit them down and start to teach them things they don't already know. These guys have been through it all.

The LIV Tour is a startup tour which has been incredibly successful in 12 months and broke down a lot of golfing barriers in the last 18 months. We've certainly learned a lot.

Have we made mistakes? Of course we have. The biggest thing I love about being out here and the brotherhood and the team that supports us out here is the transparency, the communication they have with the players, the ability to be able to grow and change and do better and pivot when we need to. I think when you're small and light on your feet like this tour is, you have the ability to be the best you can be.

But I think just bringing what we've learnt hopefully to the table with, like I say, the most successful tours in the world, I think that's a great opportunity for everyone.

Q. As you mentioned with the team aspect, obviously the Ryder Cup has been a big talking point regarding the merger; are they going to be able to participate in the event this season going forward. What would you like to see going forward? Obviously a lot of the European legends have given up their stakes on the DP World Tour, so what do you see going forward? Is there a way to have a mixture of these players and LIV players together?

MARTIN KAYMER: I think this year nothing really should change, if you ask me, because there's too much chaos anyway. I'm just talking about the European team now. I'm not talking about the U.S. Team that is obviously not our thing.

But going forward, I think it would be nice for the golf fans and also for us players, we want to play against the best players from both continents, and I think it shouldn't matter where you play, if you play on LIV, on the DP World Tour or PGA Tour. Wherever you play, you should be eligible to play the Ryder Cup if you're good enough and if you're one of the top 12.

But this year I think it should stay the way it is because I mean, imagine the chaos that could come out if Henrik Stenson is being picked.

No, but for the future, I think for the golf fans, I think you want to see the best players competing, and that would be my way forward.

GRAEME McDOWELL: I totally agree with Martin. I think I'm not playing well enough to be considered for the 12 players for the European team this year. Do I believe I could play in the future? Yes. I still think I'm good enough to be out there. Would I like to be in Rome to help Luke Donald out with the team? Of course I would. I'd love to be there. I love everything that is the European Ryder Cup team, and I'm sure Martin feels exactly the same way.

But there's too much water under the bridge regards the prep and everything that Luke and his kind of backroom staff have done for this year, and we wish them well.

I fully expect that we won't have anything to do with it, unfortunately, and do I think there's any players out here on LIV good enough to play on the European Ryder Cup team? Yes, I do think there are a couple of guys that are good enough, and we'll just have to see how it all shakes out.

If someone goes and blows it up at the Open Championship and wins the Claret Jug as a European LIV player, that will throw the cat among the pigeons and we'll see what happens then.

No, listen, I hope Europe wins the Ryder Cup in Rome. Aside from that, what that 12 looks like, we'll see. But I think I agree with Martin; it should be the 12 best European-born players against the 12 best U.S.-born players. The end. It doesn't matter where they play.

Q. You've obviously still got mates on the European Tour and PGA Tour. Since the merger announcement, have more players from those tours been in contact with yourself, for example, regarding the merger news?

MARTIN KAYMER: Well, I mean, that evening I got, I think, six messages from six different players on the DP World Tour in regards to the future for them on LIV.

I think you will be surprised how many players want to play all different tours. This will be great for the game of golf if we have all the opportunities, PGA Tour players, European Tour players can play LIV tournaments. I don't know how that will work. I don't know all the details and vice versa that we can play all the other tournaments, as well, because this is ultimately what I think the fan, the golf fans want, and that is also what we would like to have.

But again, I think you can only speak for yourself, and I think G-Mac and me, we are very happy where we are right now. We were very happy when that merger came out because I think it was another proof that we definitely made the right decision.

Some people say it was risky and you didn't know what you were going to get into. These days in life, you never know. You've got to go by intuition and by trust and by belief, and after all, I think the way that everything is shaping is pretty good.

Q. Graeme, just in terms of playing in front of a home crowd, what's that going to mean to you next week?

GRAEME McDOWELL: Yeah, excited to get back to London. I think 12 months on, it's going to be hopefully a very different feeling. We got great support last year in London, but it was the first LIV event. It was extremely controversial. I think fans -- there was a little sort of trepidation, perhaps, coming to see you in London. Like I say, 12 months later, I'm expecting a great reception next week.

We play a lot of golf in the London area, Wentworth, et cetera, and they've always been great fans and great supporters of, especially the European players, but they love to see the international players coming, as well.

Great golf course in Centurion. Looking forward to getting back there. It should feel a little bit different going back. It's going to be exciting.

Q. Martin, can you tell us a little bit about the course; I think last year the scoring was quite tough and you both played, so what's the strategy for yourself and for the Cleeks this time next week at Centurion?

MARTIN KAYMER: Shoot low scores and win. That's the Cleeks' attitude, because we haven't won yet. We haven't even been close yet.

Centurion is a very interesting golf course because they have two different nine holes. One is in the woods and the other one is very open. It's a very interesting golf course. It's challenging. When the wind blows, it's quite gusty, especially those nine holes, the front nine in the woods, so it's very tricky to play. But Charl obviously managed very well last year.

I just hope that we have a good week as a team. As an individual, it's nice to play well, but you go back to your hotel room and celebrate on your own. When you play well in the team --

GRAEME McDOWELL: I'll come have a beer with you.

MARTIN KAYMER: But there's only two of us. How weird is that then?

GRAEME McDOWELL: We can invite some more friends.

MARTIN KAYMER: But as a team, if you finish in the top 3 in the team, there could be a good party on Sunday night.

Q. You kind of alluded to it earlier, but you guys were both here from the very beginning with LIV so you guys both were there when we teed off in London. Just reflecting on this past year and what's transpired and where we were then, where we are now, can you talk a little bit about that reflection?

GRAEME McDOWELL: Yeah, I think it was certainly a bumpy start. I think it was difficult for us personally. London last year, especially for me, being a British-Irish player in London and the first event and kind of all the controversy and scrutiny that we were under, it was difficult. I felt like I struggled with it for a few months. Took me a little while to kind of settle in.

I think as we sit here now, 12 months later, with the belief level that we have in the product, having spent 12 months among these players and this brotherhood out here that makes LIV tick. I think we feel so much more comfortable and confident about the product.

It was a startup. We didn't really know where it was all going to go. Was it going to be a one-and-done with all the noise and all the craziness that was going on. It was like we had no idea what was going to happen.

We knew the PIF and how much belief Yasir and his team have in the game of golf and how much they love the game of golf, and I think that was the comfort that I took in the very beginning.

But like I say, 12 months later, we really feel like we have something special, and hopefully we can continue to grow and take it forward into the future.

MARTIN KAYMER: I think a lot of people think that Yasir and PIF, they just give the money, but the vision that they have and the passion that they have for the sport and the people who are involved, they're very passionate about it, and they believe in us players, and they also believe in the product.

This is great to be part of something that positive and part of a new journey. Every startup will have their problems, or challenges, I would rather say, at the beginning, and as G-Mac said, it wasn't always easy at the beginning. Yeah, you get a lot of messages that aren't that nice on social media and stuff.

But at the end of the day, I learned a lot the last 12 months,

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

that whatever you do, you always have some people who disagree or who think you do something bad or who think you do something good.

It's so important to go by your belief, your intuition, and trust the people that you work with. After all, now looking back 12 months, I think we all did a great job. We all have a very good product. We have fun. We have good energy at those tournaments. It's very positive.

Families like to come, friends like to come to watch the event and to be part of it, to go to those parties and concerts in the evening. It's a really nice atmosphere, and I'm glad that I made the decision.

Obviously having PIF in the background and you guys, we feel good. It's very transparent. The transparency is such a big -- in that world that we live in is very difficult these days, and I like the openness and the honesty about stuff, how things progress.

Q. I got one really burning question that was asked of you on Twitter: What is a "cleek"?

GRAEME McDOWELL: A cleek is like an old Scottish driving iron or a little --

MARTIN KAYMER: Like a 3-wood, 5-wood --

GRAEME McDOWELL: Yeah. It looks a little like that right there (pointing at Cleeks' logo).

MARTIN KAYMER: Very old. Not rusty, though.

GRAEME McDOWELL: Full of heritage and tradition is a cleek. We're still trying to stamp our authority on world golf. We're working on that.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports