

LIV Golf Chicago

Sunday, 15 September, 2024

Chicago, Illinois, USA

Bolingbrook Golf Club

Crushers GC

Bryson DeChambeau

Anirban Lahiri

Paul Casey

Charles Howell III

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Let's welcome the winners of LIV Golf Chicago, Crushers GC. We are joined by Charles Howell III - welcome back; it's so nice to see you here - Paul Casey, our captain Bryson DeChambeau, and Anirban Lahiri. Welcome, guys. It's a familiar sight to see you guys sitting up here. You guys eked out this win at 14-under, almost forcing a playoff in the end with Legion XIII.

Can you guys talk a little bit about what you guys were doing in the clubhouse waiting to see what happened on 18 with Jon?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: There's not much to do. We were all thinking what we could have done better, actually. Yeah, kind of hoping that we don't have to go to a playoff, and keeping our bags close, our clubs ready, and it kind of fell our way this time, so it's nice.

Q. Bryson, when I talked to you guys earlier in the week you were talking about how important it was to go out and win this week and stay competitive going into next week. Can you talk about the week from a team perspective?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Yeah, team perspective, super proud of the guys. They fought it out out there today. It was not an easy golf course.

Paul, you had 18 pars today. How many times have you done that in your career?

PAUL CASEY: Never, as far as I'm aware. Never.

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: So yeah, I played pretty solid. I didn't make a bogey. Charles played pretty solid. Baan



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was solid. We all played like Crushers play. We've been steady all year.

We didn't have Charles for a little while and it was nice to have him back, and the mojo is back. Chucky always gives us the mojo.

No, it was fun being able to eke out a victory here and give us some momentum for next week, but again, the job is still not done, and I think that's the way we look at it right now is we have one more week to pull it all together and do what we did last year.

Q. Does this win give you some confidence heading into next week?

PAUL CASEY: I think so. Like I said, I don't know when the previous victory, last victory was --

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Hong Kong.

PAUL CASEY: Thank you. We missed out at Valderrama. But like I've reiterated, John Catlin was a great little substitute, and we hope to see him next year, but we've missed Chucky. He's that kind of glue. He proved that. He proved that he can't read the PDFs that we send out with trouser color and hats, but he's been away for a while, so we'll forgive him.

Q. Charles, after being gone for so long, coming back, getting to hoist that trophy, stand up on stage with your teammates, spraying champagne, how good did that feel?

CHARLES HOWELL III: Well, honestly, I missed all of them. As hard as it is to miss Paul, I did.

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: I've never heard him jab someone before. That's the best jab; I've never heard him do that.

CHARLES HOWELL III: He's hard to love, but we do. No, I actually truly did.

Sitting at home and rehab and therapy for 12 weeks thinking, it's just going to be a few more days, few more days, and it's not, I really did miss them. Man, to come

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back, and they were playing phenomenal golf. I'm trying to hold up my end of the deal, and I think our eyes turn now to next week.

Q. We haven't had you back in the media center since you've been back. Can you tell the world what happened over the last couple months and how you're feeling today?

CHARLES HOWELL III: I somehow stress fractured the tibia in my left leg. No idea how I did it. I've hit a lot of balls and I'm old, I guess, is the best description. Had a whole lot of rehab, whole lot of therapy, but glad that's behind me and excited for next week.

Q. Next week is kind of Crushers' land, being in Dallas, your hometown. I know there's a lot of Crushers activations going on next week. Do you think being a home game, is that also giving you a little edge up?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: I hope so. We're going to have a lot of Dallas fans that have turned into Crushers fans. Hopefully we can convert a lot more and get all of Dallas behind us.

Q. You guys were all up here checking scores. As we talked about in the beginning of the week, there was so much on the line for so many players this week, and it literally went down to the wire with people moving up and down, down to the last hole. After having a second just to take a moment and look where everyone landed, can we get your quick thoughts on the jeopardy that was at stake here this week and how everything panned out?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: Well, I think it's a testament to the product because the top two teams -- we slugged it out today. Legion came from behind, but we kept our noses ahead. It was great to see Jon and Joaquín battle it out. Tyrrell made a run. I think it was great golf.

Also with the relegation and the lock zone, it means a lot. It's life-changing for some of the guys who have got the opportunity, and it just goes to show that it means a lot, and it's good to see. We had some really amazing storylines last year with Scott Vincent literally making it happen on the Sunday at Jeddah. We had Kalle really close, Pat was out, Pat is in. There's a lot going on, and it just tells you that it means more than what people think it means. It means a lot.

Q. Bryson, any comments?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: I think he said it best. Not only

are we looking at us playing the way we're playing and looking at Legion coming up on our heels, but also like I was looking to see if Pat got in or Kalle got in. It was just a dynamic day, and I think that's what LIV provides is a lot of fireworks to finish.

It was quite fun to see Jon Rahm play as well as he did this year. That's something to -- that's a year. I played pretty solid and I think I finished eighth or something like that.

Jon, every week, it seemed like he was up near the top of the leaderboard, as far as Joaquín, Joaco. They just played unbelievable golf, and it just shows how impressive it is to do something like that. When you've got Brooks out here, Cam out here -- Cam and I, we didn't get a win, and my team -- we didn't win individually, yet we're still up at the top, and I think that's what's so cool.

It provides all these different dynamics and variables that it's not just one format, and okay, whoever wins wins and that's kind of it. It's like there's so many things to look at with LIV, and I think that's what's so amazing about it. That's at least my perspective, and like I said, I couldn't be more proud of the team the way they played today.

Q. You guys came in this week and you already had the bye, which is obviously the main thing for next week. What would you consider the primary motivation for this week? Was it to get the No. 1 seed? Was it to maybe send a message to the rest of the league? Is it just simply pride and wanting to win?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: All the above. All the above. Literally Paul and I just said it, all the above.

There's not much more to say than we wanted to prove a point. We wanted to show that we're back, and we wanted to have some momentum going into next week. We feel like we've got ourselves in a good place.

Q. Charles, how important was it to get a couple of reps in before the team championship?

CHARLES HOWELL III: Well, very. Practice at home is not tournament golf. It's hard to even make it similar. So yeah, to play Greenbrier and here before next week obviously was really important.

Starting now, I feel comfortable again. This was a tough golf course and a bunch of crosswinds and rough and firm greens. Yeah, it's hard to replicate this at home, and I think to Bryson's point, too, I think we really wanted the No. 1 seed going into next week. We've still got to play good golf, but it does mean something.

Q. Paul, Baan, was there a message sent this week?

PAUL CASEY: I'm not sure we focus on the other -- we're very aware of the other teams. We're not necessarily trying to send a message. We're trying to take care of our own business because we know how difficult this is going to be next week. Match play is a whole different beast, and then all four of us playing on Sunday hopefully in that championship bracket or group, whatever we want to call it.

No, it's just important, for all the reasons you listed, and putting Chucky back in the mix, as well. It just proved to ourselves -- it's not about everybody else. Proved to ourselves that we're in a good spot. We talked about it internally, we haven't gotten a win in a while, let's go get one, and we did it. We're proud of that.

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: I also think, like Bryson mentioned individually, we've had decent years, but we haven't had a good year. None of us got a win. We were in contention quite a lot.

But now the focus is not on ourselves; the focus is on the team going into the next week. This is a really good way for us to kind of get our heads together, which we are very close anyways, but the focus changes. It's all about what I can do for the team and what we can do together.

In that sense, it's the right kind of mindset and attitude rolling into next week because that's all we care about at this point.

Q. They always say it's harder to defend than actually win that first title. Do you feel like going into next week will be a very difficult test, especially since you've got the expansion team right on your heels?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Yeah, look, I've got four guys that -- three other guys that literally are going to fight tooth and nails for every single shot, and that's what I wanted starting out a couple years ago. I wanted guys that would fight for every shot, and that's what makes us pretty special.

Going into next week, yeah, it's going to be a difficult challenge, but I know they're going to give it their best, and if we do it, then we do it again. That's the job we set out to do. And if we don't, I still love them no matter what.

Q. Had any of you ever been here, played this course before? Did you know much about it? How did it play over the week?

PAUL CASEY: I've never played it before.

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: I played it in 2007, so that was when I was -- it was a World Junior Team Championship.

PAUL CASEY: It's been an interesting week because the golf course has changed frequently even during the course of a day. Sometimes, as Baan said, a lot of crosswinds, some difficult tee shots. Yes, there's some big fairways, but it seems like there's always trouble if you've not got control of the golf ball.

But it was the way the golf course changed in its firmness. From this morning or whenever we teed off today, 12:05, it went from soft to concrete again at literally a flick of a switch. It was that that was very difficult to predict. The rough is long, and there are occasions -- yesterday, see if these guys agree, felt like a Chicago major had broken out. It was making birdies even sometimes just scrambling par was very, very difficult.

It's a hell of a muni.

Q. Bryson, you always seem to win something here in the State of Illinois. How much would you like to see LIV Golf back in Illinois next year?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Yeah, it would be great. Illinois is a fantastic state. It's always been a great golf community. Golf courses are always fantastic, and shoot, Bolingbrook -- this golf course played close to a major championship test. There were some shots out there that I'm like, wow, this is playing exactly like a jumper in the U.S. Open would right now. The greens that firm with the rough all around it, it was pretty difficult.

I'd love to see us come back here and have some more of this type of golf because I truly do love it. I feel like our games are well-suited for a place like this, and hopefully we'll get another shot.

Q. Bryson, I think you've played three events in the U.S. since you won at Pinehurst. I'm curious, how have you seen the energy around your group change in that time span? It feels to me year to year it's a lot bigger this time around. How do you manage that? Does it take away energy? Does it add energy in certain situations?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Yeah, I think it definitely adds a lot of energy. The fans and people around have been fantastic, anywhere in the world, not only just here in the States but everywhere. Ever since I won the U.S. Open, it's kind of opened people's eyes, I think, to what LIV Golf is, meaning like we're here to stay, one, and two, we're here to provide fans an awesome experience. We really do enjoy providing that opportunity for them.

I certainly feed off of it. I know that my team, I feel like, feeds off of it, and hopefully I can continue to provide some energy and we can all gather behind this great product because it's here to stay, and there's a lot more fun to come from it.

It's definitely gone in a really cool direction recently.

Q. As far as preparing for team play next week, I know it's a team-oriented league, but you guys don't play that much team golf, twosomes, two-ball, that sort of thing. How are you going about that in the coming days?

PAUL CASEY: Top secret.

No, last year Charles and Baan played foursomes. Was that the same the first year?

CHARLES HOWELL III: Yeah, first year, too.

PAUL CASEY: So they've got experience, and I don't at this stage see why we've got any kind of challenges, other than for us it's learning the golf course and just getting our games sharp and ready and maybe forming a little bit of strategy, but I don't think there's -- I've played so much team golf through the years in terms of foursomes and match play. It's not an issue for us. We're all experienced and we know what we're doing.

Q. Was your bond something that naturally built over time? Did you have to take some time to connect? What helped form this sort of unique unity that you guys have as a team?

PAUL CASEY: Respect for each other.

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: I still don't know.

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: I don't know either. I still have no clue.

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: Three of us have kids. Maybe that's why.

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: And I'm one of the kids.

CHARLES HOWELL III: Well, Paul and I have known each other forever, since college golf. Then obviously Baan and I played the PGA Tour many years together. Bryson is kind of our collective child, I think. A 14-year-old, a 12-year-old, and a 31 tomorrow --

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: 31 tomorrow.

CHARLES HOWELL III: No, we have mutual respect for each other's games. I think we all see the game pretty similarly. We all work hard.

But yeah, it's kind of -- we've just kind of grown together. I don't think it's one thing special. We've just kind of grown together.

Q. Bryson, one of your stated goals this year was to sort of reassert yourself in the majors, in the biggest tournaments. Obviously you did that in a big way. Did it take a toll on you at all as it relates to out here? You won twice on LIV last year, you did not win this year. I certainly don't mean to suggest that you should have or whatever, but I'm just curious how that might have fit in and how getting back to that top elite level might have impacted things.

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Yeah, I don't think that winning the U.S. Open or playing well in the majors affected how I did out here. It was more me not playing as good as I could have probably out here and not preparing as well as I should have. Maybe taking a couple things for granted here and there, not working on putting the way I probably should have, chipping and wedging.

When I was -- when I played really well the end of last year, I was certainly focused a lot more on my game and didn't have as many other things going on.

Now obviously winning the U.S. Open can take a toll on you, but for the most part, it's been a lot of just not giving myself enough prep time and working for these events, and I need to focus more on that next year because I want to give myself better chances next year.

I've played too well this year to not give myself better chances to win.

I'll say this, though: Every single one of us is super hard workers. They've all rallied behind me when it's gotten tough for me, when I've had to do some things here and there, like no, go focus on your game, go do this, go do that. It's awesome to have that support group when a lot is going on.

I wouldn't suggest that it necessarily hurt me. It was just more of another obstacle that I need to figure out for next year.

Q. You've talked also about how your equipment sort of was a turning point in helping you, certainly at Augusta --



BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: It's helped me be a lot more comfortable on the golf course, yes.

Q. What about winning last year and sort of building up some confidence coming into this year? How much did that play a part?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: That definitely played a part of it. I'll tell you, the week before the U.S. Open I actually didn't play my best golf and wasn't incredibly comfortable going into Pinehurst, but I found something, and it clicked on Monday afternoon, I believe.

Yeah, it was important last year, but coming into this year, I had to build and develop my own game again, and playing well in the majors was certainly great, but there are a couple things on the equipment side that I'm going to get dialed in for this next year and I'm going to use this off time appropriately to do so and be hopefully more dialed next year.

Q. Bryson, yesterday we had more than 15,000 spectators in over here, which was an attendance record in the U.S. what does that say about LIV Golf getting where it is now?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: I'll tell you that it's the perseverance of the LIV product and what all us players, 54 of us, including staff behind closed doors, have worked hard to do. This is just the beginning.

I know I've said it before, even said it in Nashville, but this is just the beginning. There's a lot more to come, and super excited that people are starting to appreciate what LIV is, what we're trying to do, how we're trying to impact the community.

Man, it's a great next step in our evolution.

Q. What does it say that the Crushers' merchandise seems to get sold out in every tournament?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: We've got to get more hats. (Laughter.)

It's awesome. I love it. I can't thank the fans' support enough. It's great having three incredible human beings up here to rep that Crushers logo. It's awesome.

Q. Bryson, can you just give us an appreciation of what you don't have to go through, which many of the captains might have to go through, the change in guards in the team. How difficult is that period going to be for some of the other captains?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: I haven't had to experience that, and I've been very fortunate to have three stellar players and individuals that support and see the vision of what the Crushers is and is going to be. It's something that I tried to bring on board from day one. I didn't want people changing in and out and switching back and forth and going different places and creating issues. Sometimes that's just -- one little argument or one little thing can just spark uncomfortability out there and not allow us to play the best golf, and I think that shows as a testament to why we're so good, why the Crushers are so good, because we all are quirky in our own ways, but we all work and fit together. That's what I think we do really well, because we have that trust and respect for each other.

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