

LIV Golf Team Championship Dallas

Sunday, 22 September, 2024

Dallas, Texas, USA

Maridoe Golf Club

Ripper GC

Cam Smith

Marc Leishman

Matt Jones

Lucas Herbert

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Let's welcome the champions of LIV Golf 2024, Ripper GC!

We are joined by Lucas Herbert, our captain Cam Smith, Marc Leishman and Matt Jones. You guys did it. I was saying to Cam what an incredible season you guys have had, two wins, the incredible win in Adelaide, and then the exclamation point at the end of the season today. I want you just to tell us what's going through your head, how you're feeling.

MATT JONES: It's indescribable actually. I've got goosebumps right now thinking about it. Winning Australia was a highlight for all of us, but I think coming here and doing this as a team, the amount of -- I wouldn't say stress, but watching that scoreboard all day, it wasn't comfortable out there at all, for myself especially.

But to be able to do it with these other three guys is amazing, and I couldn't be happier and more proud of being on this team. I'm looking forward to smoko tomorrow.

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, feeling unbelievable. Obviously to be a part of this with these lads is pretty special. Crowds were great out there. It got really tight there towards the end. Any one of the four teams could have won.

Special day. It's going to be awesome to celebrate this with the lads, and like Jonesy said, smoko is going to taste amazing in the morning.

CAM SMITH: Yeah, it was pretty unreal. I think, like



TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP

Jonesy said and Leish said, watching the leaderboard today was pretty stressful. I almost wanted to take my eye off it, but I couldn't, I was so intrigued with what we had to do. Yeah, so proud.

There was something in me that was going to tell me that the boys were going to come through. The Gladiator, the last four of the five holes, pretty unbelievable. Really cool stuff. I mean, to be a part of this is unreal, especially with these guys.

Q. Herby, you've had such an awesome back half of the season. You have been so clutch and really secured a lot for Team Ripper. How proud do you feel of your contribution to this team being your first year in? Tell us about the experience this year.

LUCAS HERBERT: Yeah, incredibly proud, to finish off the way I have this season and to play the way I have this week, as well. Puigy and I had an unbelievable match yesterday, and to get over the line in that one and to finish the way I did today, very, very proud, but also there's a feeling of massive gratitude because I really don't think I would have been able to do it without the help of these boys throughout the season.

I feel like this is one of the best years I've ever had from a developmental point of view, what I've been able to learn off these guys just being around them. Cam has been so gracious with his time. The boys have been so gracious with their advice throughout practice rounds, throughout just general chats, throughout smoko. They've been amazing to me.

I feel like if I was the one that kind of helped get the team over the line this week, these boys kind of earned it because they gave me so much advice and so much help this year that we wouldn't be here without that.

Q. I heard a little rumor from Leish and Herby that you guys have this amazing boys' trip tomorrow called Mad Monday that's taking place at Cam's house. How epic is this Mad Monday going to be now?

LUCAS HERBERT: I think it won't be Mad Monday, I think it'll be a period of sort of three or four days, a madness 72 hours. But yeah, I think the boys will have a good time.



MARC LEISHMAN: I've never been this scared in my life.

Q. Cam, you're hosting them. What do you have planned?

CAM SMITH: It's a -- Mad Monday is a term we use in Australia for all the footy teams that exit the finals early or win. The day after they're done they generally will go up and dress up. It's a costume party tomorrow. I don't know what these guys will come as. It's all a surprise. It'll be a good day.

Q. I've heard there's no phones allowed so there will be no photographic evidence of this.

CAM SMITH: We'll get photos, but --

LUCAS HERBERT: You won't see them.

Q. You guys have something special; you guys all are genuinely great friends, and I think above all else, you guys all have fun out here pretty much no matter what. You guys are having a good time and just enjoying yourselves. Talk about how important that is to the magic you've created this season.

CAM SMITH: Yeah, I think when you have guys that you genuinely care about, those moments out there with three or four holes to go, we're all pulling for each other, you can't replicate that. That's a feeling that only friends really get. Teammates is a cool thing and of course you're playing for your team and all that stuff, but wanting to win as friends is almost cooler.

Q. What do you think, Australia is waking up, do you think they're proud of the Rippers? They have a new solid sports team to root for globally.

LUCAS HERBERT: I hope there's some bosses fielding phone calls for taking days off on a Monday, because they should be.

Q. Just taking a moment reflecting on this entire season, tell me your best or favorite moment from the season.

LUCAS HERBERT: I think no matter what happened for the rest of the season, it was impossible to top Adelaide, just the way that all unfolded, the playoff, the drama, just the way the public got behind us. I just don't think there was a better way -- there couldn't have been a better event than that. That's honestly one of my favorite golfing memories was the whole experience of Adelaide. Yeah, for me that entire week was just super special.

Q. Cam, favorite moment this season?

CAM SMITH: Yeah, I'd probably agree with Herby. I think Adelaide was pretty special. I think it was really special again to back it up in Singapore, especially coming off such a big week for us, lots of commitments, lots of media. It's a very draining week, and then to go there in Singapore where it's so hot and there's a lot taken out of you and win again I think was pretty good.

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, Adelaide was certainly a highlight, but I think -- I mean, at the moment, my highlight for the year, to dig ourselves out of that hole yesterday and then do what we did today and be able to enjoy that last hole after Cam hit the fairway on 18, that was special. Like this is so cool, just the anticipation of the celebration is pretty -- right now is my favorite moment of the year.

CAM SMITH: Even they're excited when I hit a fairway. I'm ecstatic when I hit a fairway, but even my teammates are excited.

Q. Jonesy, best moment of the season?

MATT JONES: Yeah, I would say it's tough to compare Adelaide and here. They're very different. Winning in Australia, it's tough to beat winning in Australia. But to win here with these boys and what Leish and Herby did yesterday to get us to this point to give us a chance, it's tough to beat this one, too, because we looked down and out, and for us to come back and do it today the way we did, I'd probably say this one right now.

Q. Apart from the wins and Mad Monday or mad next week, whatever we're calling it, is there a story, maybe a behind-the-scenes story from this year that illustrates how close you guys really are, maybe a meeting, maybe a party, maybe just a dinner that stood out in your mind?

LUCAS HERBERT: I would probably -- Leish hosted a charity day for his charity, Begin Again, and I think it wasn't even a second-guess or a question as to whether any of us turned up. He asked us all, and it was like, yep, we'll be there; whatever you need from us, whatever you need donated, whatever it is we can do to help you guys in what you're doing, I felt like for me, that was a pretty good show of a family kind of environment that none of us even hesitated to donate our time or money or auction items. I know Cam gifted some stuff. That solidified what I thought about this being very much a family environment.

MARC LEISHMAN: I mean, obviously what Herby just said. I appreciate that more than they know, and Audrey.

For me, I think probably the celebration after Adelaide. We rented out the top floor of a pub and drank all the beer in there.

MATT JONES: The plane ride was pretty good, too.

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, and the plane ride to Singapore. That two days was pretty cool. I think backing it up in Singapore was probably more impressive than anybody thought because of those two days.

MATT JONES: No, what they said. The plane ride was pretty fun, too, after Adelaide all the way over to Singapore. We pushed pretty hard there, and that was a lot of fun.

Q. Cam, we talked about this I think a week or two ago, but not having an individual win but having all this team success, how do you view the season through those kind of two prisms?

CAM SMITH: I think it was a solid season. I think probably in hindsight I wish I would have trusted what I was doing technically a little bit more. I feel like I've made some really good strides with my golf swing. Hit the ball great some days and other days just not great, just purely because of -- I guess just trying to get better and trying to improve. There's some shots that you used to play that you can't play.

Yeah, so I think it's been a very good year technically for me. I feel like I've ticked a lot of boxes.

For me now, I just need to really let things go and basically play better. It's not a thing of on the range. I get on the range and flush it and get out there and seems I can't hit the middle of the club face. It's been a very frustrating year, but from a team standpoint, I couldn't have wished for anything more.

You're always digging deep for these guys, genuinely, and it's a pretty cool feeling to have, not having that before, and I can't wait for next year. We're going to be the same next year. It's going to be the same lineup. I really think there's going to be some added motivation before -- I think we start in Saudi next year.

Being that Adelaide is going to be our biggest event of the year again probably next year, I think there's probably some added prep and some incentive to defend that. I think the biggest regret from all of us this year is just not starting off as well as we finished.

From Adelaide onwards, I feel like we were the best team out here, and we need to be on our game from Saudi

onwards next year.

Q. Lucas, I wanted to ask you about bouncing back from the early double. Obviously you had the great final stretch. When you were walking off after the double, what was going through your mind? How did you process it? Honestly, how did you craft this incredible finish that you had?

LUCAS HERBERT: I was kind of frustrated. I said to Nick, I felt like I hit six good shots and made a double. Obviously a drop in there, as well.

So I just reminded myself that obviously I've been playing great last week and then this week. I hit six good shots to make the double. So just don't carry that too much. Don't look at the scorecard too much because it's not an accurate representation of the way I was playing.

Obviously yesterday made a stack of birdies so I knew that I had the ability to do that, and if I just stuck to my guns, then that would come. I just kind of needed to get out of my own way a little bit. I didn't need to force anything. Didn't need to do anything ridiculous, just get out of my own way, just let my own skill set form the way I'm playing, just let that come to fruition, and I kind of eventually got to that point on the 15th.

Q. Matt, kind of a similar question. Without those two late birdies after the double, who knows if you guys are actually sitting up here. Every shot obviously counts, but those two birdies were really huge down the stretch.

MATT JONES: Yeah, it was a pretty poor double, but I knew I had two left in the back pocket, and I knew it was a good chance at birdieing 2, and 1 if you hit the fairway, to that pin you had a chance -- I can draw it into that pin.

Yeah, it was a good way to finish. Finishing on 3 was a bit tough, but I hit a good shot there and had like a 25-footer for birdie and just lagged it down there.

But I wasn't too happy after the double, considering I'd saw us just tied the lead and then we would have gone two back but someone birdied to go one back or tied. I knew we were still fighting. I knew the boys would still be fighting.

Q. Were any of you guys aware of the stretch, there was a two-hole stretch, so that's eight scores, and you had six birdies in that stretch, and that really flipped the script a little bit and got you the lead. Were you guys aware of that at all? It was kind of midway in the back nine there.

LUCAS HERBERT: It's kind of tricky to know who's doing what at specific times. But definitely when you see if we were at 6-under, we move to 7 or 8, it's not surprising. I know what these guys are like. I know what they're like under the pressure. It was almost like I was kind of expecting us to rise at the end there because I just knew how good these boys are under the pump.

Q. What's your thought on being called the Gladiator?

CAM SMITH: He loves it. Look at him.

MATT JONES: Did his chest poke out a little bit there?

LUCAS HERBERT: Definitely worse names to be called.

Q. On a scale from 1 to blacking out and waking up in a McDonald's parking lot, how drunk are you guys going to get in the next few days, and what are we drinking?

CAM SMITH: Beer. Herby doesn't drink beer, but beer. He's just a seltzer guy.

MARC LEISHMAN: I'll be drinking just beers. I'll stay off the shots and all that sort of stuff.

CAM SMITH: Responsible.

MARC LEISHMAN: Just beer, probably Miller Lite, something like that.

MATT JONES: I'm going to be sipping on some tequila. There will be plenty of beer, too, but there will be tequila and margaritas and especially martinis.

CAM SMITH: He's fun until he goes to sleep at 2:30 in the afternoon.

MATT JONES: I'm old.

Q. This is the best field that we've had in north Texas in some time. I just wanted to get your impressions of playing in Texas with all the golf history that we have in Texas. We're kind of proud like the Aussies, Texans are. Did it feel like home being so hot and dusty, kind of an out back type feel? Just your thoughts on playing in north Texas, the course, the crowd, that kind of thing?

CAM SMITH: I've always loved coming to Texas. I think it's a great spot. You're right, the golf course this week was very much like home. It played a lot like home. Probably the greens had a little bit different grasses, but

other than that, it was exactly like home. You're hitting different shots. You're hitting different shapes. It was windy like home. It was hot. Yeah, there was a lot of things coming into the week that we liked, and it was good to get it done.

Q. How do you learn a new course like this so quickly? Is that just you and your caddies figuring it out in a day or two?

LUCAS HERBERT: We have great rats that walk the course morning and night to figure out where to hit it. Yeah, it's hot out there, so we want to spend as little time out there as possible, so those boys, they deserve a lot of props because they have this place figured out really, really well. Like Cam said, it played amazing. I think it was a great venue for the Team Championship. Some really good pins there for the match play over the first two days and some great Greenbrier complexes, as well. Like Cam said, really enjoyed coming to Texas. I feel like Leish and I would have felt at home with a very dry heat and quite windy, so we really enjoyed it, and obviously sitting up here celebrating is probably proof of that.

Q. I'm assuming you guys played a lot growing up together in different tournaments in Australia and that kind of thing?

CAM SMITH: Lucas and I did as juniors -- Lucas is a year or two younger than me, so I kind of went out of junior golf into amateur golf. But we've known each other since we were probably 13, 14 years old. Yeah, we kind of went on separate routes to kind of get back here. It's been good watching his career, and he's done a lot of good stuff, and he's a great player, and he's going to be better again next year.

Q. You've won an Open at St Andrews, you won THE PLAYERS, you guys have all won PGA TOUR events. What does this feel like? I'm trying to get a handle on LIV. If you can just speak to that.

CAM SMITH: Yeah, I've been in a lot of nery situations, I think. But when you're playing for some other guys, there's really no feeling like it. I think that's what events like the Ryder Cup do so well, because you genuinely want to win for the other guys.

You want yourself to do good for them, and that's a feeling that is really rare in golf. I think it genuinely makes you a better golfer, too, when you're out there and times are tough, you're digging for these guys every week, and it's a pretty cool feeling to have.

Q. Leish, you said earlier in the week that what was

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

already a good year would become a really good year with victory today. Did you maybe under-club a bit with that analogy? Was it only a really good year?

MARC LEISHMAN: I mean, it turned into a great year, I think. I don't think I've ever won three events, team events. I don't think I've ever won three professional events in a year.

Obviously we all would have liked to have thrown in an individual win, no doubt about that. But I think if we -- if you had have said you're going to win twice during the season and then win the Team Championship but none of you are going to win individually, I think I would have taken it. Just to be able to celebrate with these boys is pretty special. It's something that you don't normally get to do in golf, but here you do, so it's pretty awesome.

Q. Cam, you mentioned the Gladiator, four birdies your last five holes, Matt bounced back from that double on 18 with birdies on 1 and 2. What makes this team such good closers?

CAM SMITH: We're Aussies.

No, I think there's -- at no point today did I feel like we were under the pump or had to do anything. I think there was a genuine feeling within the team that these guys are going to do the best. Having these three guys up here with me, I mean, I wouldn't -- I don't think I'd want any other three guys closing a tournament.

That's what our team is about. We've come second a couple times this year, as well, kind of when you think you're going to win, so I think that moment when you get kind of disappointed, getting out here on Sunday and actually doing it makes these moments a lot better, but we should have done it a couple more times, too, I think, without being greedy.

Q. Herby, I was there when you won 2020 Dubai Desert Classic and you've always been a great putter, but you seem to have turned into a clutch putter in this last five, six weeks of LIV Golf especially. Is that something, part of developmental -- you said this was the best year of development as a golfer, and did Cam have a role to play in that?

LUCAS HERBERT: Yeah, I think a little bit. Cam and I are both great putters. He's probably just got me covered, but we think about putting very, very differently. It's almost like completely opposite ends of the scale when it comes to the way we kind of look at putts.

I've almost had to kind of take what he says and then

change it into a language that makes sense to me, so yeah, I've had a little bit of developmental work and help from Cam in that perspective. It's been a little tricky because he thinks about it so differently from me.

But yeah, look, I think I've been a good putter most of my career. I've obviously had a very good few weeks in just trusting that. Yeah, kind of not getting in my own way with it, just understanding that it's a real skill -- it's a real asset of mine as a skill set. It's definitely the strongest part of my game. Just kind of not get in the way and really believing that. It was the last couple days when I made the putts I have, just really believing in the fact that I have obviously very, very at holing putts when I need to and tried not to let the moment get bigger than it needs to be.

Q. Cam, I wanted to ask you, the last hole, I think you hit a driver. I thought you were very close to the water. I'm sure you would have known that you were leading by two shots at that time. Can you take us through why you hit the driver, especially since you have been struggling with that particular club throughout the year?

CAM SMITH: I mean, it's pretty simple. You don't win golf tournaments by not being aggressive. Everyone is so good out here. Even with a two-shot lead, if I make a bogey there and Dustin makes a birdie, we're back down there again. It's just a mindset of remaining aggressive, not changing your game plan. This is what I would have hit if I wasn't in this situation; why should I change it.

I felt actually pretty good with the driver all day today. I missed a few fairways, but a lot of good swings. I felt comfortable over that one and hit a really good drive, probably the best drive of the week.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®