

PGA Championship

Thursday, May 16, 2024

Louisville, Kentucky, USA

Valhalla Golf Club

Luke Donald

Flash Quotes

THE MODERATOR: Luke Donald joins us at the 106th PGA Championship. A 1-under 70 for you today. What are your overall thoughts on your first round?

LUKE DONALD: Yeah, a lot of good. A few loose shots. Obviously very nice conditions. It's soft. The course plays long. Most courses play long for me, but when it's soft conditions, greens are perfect, you're going to see some birdies. It was nice to make five birdies out there on a major championship test. Just need to tidy up some of the mistakes. A couple drives, pulls off the tee kind of cost me some bogeys today.

Q. You were talking about the length here. How difficult is this golf course if you're not in the fairway?

LUKE DONALD: Well, this morning going off first, the rough is manageable, but when it's wet and you're trying to hit long irons into some of these long par-4s, that can be tricky. I felt like I hit enough fairways today to create some chances and make some birdies, but if you're in the rough all the time -- again, I think they're reasonably generally targets off the tee, especially now with the softer conditions. The ball isn't really running on the fairway. It's not getting away from you.

Good drivers are going to hit a decent amount of fairways today and create some opportunities.

Q. Is there a highlight among your pack of birdies?

LUKE DONALD: Maybe the first hole. We had the little 10-minute delay for fog, and I striped one down the middle, hit a good 5-iron from 196 and rolled in about a 20-footer. It's always nice to get off to a start like that.

Q. What were your expectations coming in?

LUKE DONALD: Not extremely high. I've played four events on the PGA TOUR and missed cuts in all four. I played at Zurich a couple weeks ago and really struggled tee to green and a little bit on the greens, as well. I did work quite hard the last two weeks. Felt like I found a little



bit of something in my swing, and certainly saw some of that today.

Made a couple putts, but still, a couple of putts I would have liked to have been a little tidier from short distance.

I felt like today was a good solid start. Hopefully I can do something similar tomorrow.

Q. Do you work with someone?

LUKE DONALD: I work with Jamie Goff.

Q. Did you spend some time with him or did you videotape?

LUKE DONALD: Yeah, mostly tape. He's here this week, and he'll be in Belgium where I'm playing next week, as well.

Q. Being the Ryder Cup captain when you're at home, and I know now it's an away captaincy and you're not as familiar with what exactly everything is going to be, but talk about being a home captaincy, how much time and effort does that take?

LUKE DONALD: I think home or away, it's taking time. Obviously it's a little bit up to you how much time you want to put in, but there's a lot of little details that take place, a lot of little things that I think can be important with the end result.

I had a good trip last week to Bethpage. Came with Edoardo and a couple of the team, the back room staff, looking at team spaces, looking at beds, looking at the golf course, obviously where everything is going to be at the golf course, possible areas in the hotel. So just starting that planning process now. It's nice to have some time to kind of figure all that stuff out.

Q. I don't know if you've had a chance to see what Xander is doing out there today, but what is it about this course this morning that permitted such low scores?



LUKE DONALD: I think anytime you have soft conditions, the fairways, again, are nice, it's in great condition, but the greens are really holding. Even me hitting some longer irons, 4-, 5-, 3-irons into greens, they're holding. The pins are tucked away on some of the holes, but you can still access them. Xander is probably hitting less club into the holes than I am.

But when the ball hits on the green and just stops there and you can control that, then you can make some birdies. There's not a lot of wind. It's really nice conditions. I'm not surprised to see someone going pretty low.

Q. When was the last time you played so well? What's it like to enjoy a round so much?

LUKE DONALD: I played quite well at the beginning of the year in Dubai. I had a chance to be top 10 in the Dubai Invitational. At home practicing, my game shows a lot of signs. I just haven't really taken it to tournaments. I've played obviously less this year. This is only my fifth event on the PGA TOUR in the U.S., seventh overall. It's been a little bit difficult sometimes to get that momentum. You have a few weeks off and then you play one week and have a few more weeks off. I've found that a little bit more difficult to kind of get in that rhythm.

But yeah, I'm very happy to hit some solid shots today.

Q. I know it's a long way to go, but how nice is it to see one of your men from Rome, Bob MacIntyre, doing so well today?

LUKE DONALD: Yeah, had some good form last week, too. I know he didn't have a the Sunday he probably wanted, but he was up there in contention. He'd said in the media it's been a little bit of an adjustment coming here. I remember my rookie year here. It's difficult. You're going to unfamiliar places. You don't really know where to stay. It's just a different setup. That can take some time to kind of get used to.

Nice to see him swinging well and off to a good start.

Q. Are you surprised the Americans haven't announced a captain yet?

LUKE DONALD: I haven't really thought about it too much. There's been a lot of chitchat. It's not really affecting what we do, and whoever the captain is, I'm looking forward to Bethpage.

Q. Because you've played so well today, do your expectations change now for the rest of the week?

LUKE DONALD: Not really. I think you go out there and you try and execute every shot as it comes and kind of stay in the moment and stay in the process. Hopefully -- it looks like it could be a little bit of a wet one tomorrow afternoon, which will make the course play even longer for me, but we'll take it as it comes.

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