

# THE PLAYERS Championship

Thursday, March 11, 2021

Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, USA

TPC Sawgrass

## Lee Westwood

### Quick Quotes

#### Q. Basically a continuation from Orlando?

LEE WESTWOOD: Yeah, to a certain extent, yeah. Obviously I built a lot of confidence last week, and this is a place where I've played a lot and I've played well before. The key for me really coming in here is getting fresh again. So I didn't do anything on Monday, just played nine holes on Tuesday, nine holes Wednesday. Really just trying to reenergize my body and be ready to go 100 percent this morning.

#### Q. Some big names with some big scores out there. Rory shot 43 on his first nine, which is the back. Was the wind especially tricky and were the pins especially tricky?

LEE WESTWOOD: Well, I was writing the pins in my book last night and you could see that there were a few smelly ones out there. Like I haven't seen too many of these on a Thursday before. To be honest, when we went out first thing this morning, there wasn't a lot of wind for the first sort of nine, ten holes for sure. The greens, there was still a bit of moisture in them, so that's the easiest scoring conditions are going to be certainly today and I think all week. So it will just dry out, and just tried to make the most of that.

No, I played solid. I hit 17 greens in regulation. I putted nicely. Even if you're on some of these greens, it's not easy to still make par. So you had to be conservative in places, smart, play smart golf, strategic golf, and that's what I tried to do and pick up the odd shot. Hit a lot of fairways, as well, so you can attack a few flags.

#### Q. Obviously these courses last week and this week are totally different. What are you seeing in your game that is a positive that you've been able to take from one place to another?

LEE WESTWOOD: Feel like what myself and Liam are working on in the golf swing has enabled me to drive the ball better and hit a lot better iron shots. I feathered a few in there left-to-right today, which is nice coming into some



of these greens. Felt like I had a lot of control.

And when I'm starting to swing well and turn on to my right side I can see a fade and I kind of get rid of the left-hand side of the golf course. So that's mainly it. Obviously I'm putting nicely. Dropped two shots today; one was a 3-putt on 4, I thought I was a bit unlucky there; and then something happened to me on 10 which has never happened before, my second shot landed on the green, hopped up and landed on the front edge of my pitch mark and spun 20 feet off the green. Which is I've never seen that happen before. So other than that, it was a pretty good, calm day out there really.

#### Q. Would you say that if you had any -- I'm not going to say mis-hits but missed shots, maybe let's take the second at 14 where it was a little left, that wasn't in your control, it was more that you maybe misread the wind more than that?

LEE WESTWOOD: I pulled that shot about 15 feet. So I maybe got a little club face closing slightly on it. When the club's coming out for me that's a good thing, and I just got to keep turning my body hard, and when I don't, it just goes a little bit left of where I'm aiming, but I wasn't aiming at that flag, I was aiming 15 feet left of it and I was 30 feet left of it, so it wasn't much of a pull. I'd take that for the rest of the week here, 15-foot misses.

#### Q. I was looking for a couple of examples that stood out to you of pins.

LEE WESTWOOD: Right out of the gate, really 1. Front left, you know anything landing flag high front left even say like the safe shot into 1 is hit it 15 feet right of the hole, but if you don't get to flag high, it rolls back and leaves you a 40-footer up and over the hill. 2, hanging on the back; 3, hanging on the back; 4, hanging on the back.

#### Q. Where was your pitch mark on 6?

LEE WESTWOOD: 6? I played a lovely shot in. I made sure I got it right of there. I don't normally hit a 3-wood up there but I did today, but right up there, so I only had 120 yards into that pin. I could control my long U-wedge, take the spin off it, landed it 10 feet past the hole, drew it back to about six feet. That's a tough flag on the front edge of



that green.

**Q. Wondering, how different is it now that you're sort of back into a normal rhythm of the season and the events are in the right order, as it was, as opposed to what it was in the fall, and do you think that it's more comfortable to play in this type of format?**

LEE WESTWOOD: There's certainly more familiarity with it. It's the run of tournaments that we've done before. I always play well when I play on a run rather than stop-start. People are here watching, that's great. It's nice that they -- Helen was saying we were on the 16th green and she was saying, even though there aren't a hundred percent crowds in yet, there was still that hum and that buzz and that kind of that feeling and that atmosphere, which we didn't get when there were no crowds. So yeah, it feels a lot more familiar playing tournaments, certainly since we came back across here to the States, the few more crowds they're letting in.

**Q. It seemed like a lot of people were having trouble holding the back tier on the 17th. Did you get any sense that that green was maybe firmer than some of the other greens on the course?**

LEE WESTWOOD: Well a few people have said that. I watched Louis hit his wedge shot into there and it took a big big bounce. So maybe it's a little bit firmer. Maybe they're just drying out as the day goes on. I never try and get it back there. There's like a crown in the middle of that green and I played here years ago and I played a practice round with Nick Price who said, just try and land it on that crown every day; ignore the flags. And if you walk off 17 with a 3, I think you're more than happy.

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