

# Honda Classic

Wednesday, February 22, 2023

Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, USA

PGA National Resort

## Shane Lowry

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome Shane Lowry into the interview room, making his sixth career start at the Honda Classic, finished runner-up last year. If we can get your thoughts on being back here at the Honda Classic.

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, last year's runner-up finish was obviously very disappointing. I had a two-shot lead with five to play. I didn't feel like I did much wrong the last five holes out here, which is tough to do because it's obviously a very tough stretch of golf, and yeah, I got beat by Sepp in the end. Yeah, it was disappointing at the time, but I remember it kind of kick-started a nice consistent run of golf for me, and I played well going into the Masters then and stuff like that. It gave me a lot of confidence for the year ahead.

THE MODERATOR: Talk about the state of your game coming into this week, T14 last week at the Genesis.

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, I had a good week at Genesis, a really bad week at Phoenix, which was a bit of a shock, but didn't play great there and then managed to find it last week at the Genesis, played quite well. Felt like I was very close to a pretty good week. So yeah, I'm pretty happy where my game is at. I like this golf course, like this tournament. I'm looking forward to the week. I'm looking forward to the challenge that this course brings.

**Q. Take us back to last year, just the last hole. You said that it was a bad a break as you've ever had in golf, and the difficulty of that tee shot on 18 and knowing that Sepp had already hit that tee shot before the rain. Just kind of what was going through your mind and as you had to hit that second shot again in the awful rain.**

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, look, it was one of those where I stand on the tee and torrential rain starts and I already see Sepp sort of 330 yards down the middle of the fairway, and I hit my driver, hit it to the left but hit it decent like 340 yards, so it was a pretty bad break.

But it wasn't only that. You have a two-shot lead with five

to play around this course and you play them at level par, you generally get the job done. Sepp played the last five holes in 3-under, which was pretty good around here. He went and won the tournament.

Yes, if it didn't rain, the probability was I might have made birdie and got into a playoff, but it wasn't a God-given right to win. Yes, it was a bad break, but they're the breaks you get in golf. I was hoping it was going to repay me back at some stage during the year. I had a decent year last year, so yeah, whatever.

**Q. There obviously are no easy courses despite you guys making a lot of them look easy out there, but this is obviously a particularly hard track and you've always seemed to embrace that. Why do you like this place so much and why do you like the challenge of this place?**

SHANE LOWRY: I think historically and generally, I like tough golf. I like tough setups. I dislike 25-under winning. I don't like playing those types of tournaments. So when I get a course like this, I feel like I want to come play, and I feel like I can compete around here. I think I just manage my game quite well in situations like out here when you need to keep it away from trouble and you need to be precise with your iron play, I think it just suits my game, and I manage myself well around places like this.

I can't say I particularly enjoy it. No one enjoys standing on that 17th hole with a cross wind and back right pin and trying to hit a good shot in there, but I embrace it and try and play as best as I can. Thankfully I've had a couple of decent results here and I've shot some nice scores, and hopefully go one better this year than I did last year.

**Q. Given your history with the Ryder Cup, how much is it on your mind going into this season, wanting to make that team?**

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, it has been. Yeah, it's a lot. It's certainly one of my main goals for the season is to win the Ryder Cup, not only be a part of the team but win the tournament.



I think I was a part of the last team, and we got beaten pretty badly up at Whistling Straits, but hopefully get one back this year, and I'll be doing my best to make the team, and if I don't make it, I'll be doing my best to put my best foot forward to get a pick off Luke, but hopefully I can be there and hopefully add something to the team. Like I said, for me the last one felt like it was about making the team, and I felt like I got there then, and I probably didn't perform as good as I would have liked. Yes, I had a couple of highlights that week that were pretty cool, but this one I'd be solely focused on trying to win it as opposed to just making the team.

**Q. Given the state of golf right now, we don't know what that team is going to look like, but do you ever glance at what it looks like right now and think what it could be?**

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, I don't wake up every Monday morning and look at it, but we have the bones of a very good team, and I think we've got probably the two hottest players in world golf at the minute -- well, definitely the hottest anyway in Jon, and Rory isn't playing too bad. We've got some very good golfers, and you'd like to see a couple of the younger lads step up and make the team, as well. I think we're going to have a very good team come September.

**Q. Do you have any thoughts on whether you believe the LIV players should be able to play on the Ryder Cup team?**

SHANE LOWRY: I can't sit here and say whether I think they should or shouldn't because the way it is now, I could be on the team with one or two of them or multiple of them in September. The way it is now, they're eligible to make the team, and if they play well enough, they'll make the team. So it's a very interesting time, obviously. I don't know. I don't know whether they should or they shouldn't. That's just kind of the way I am now. But even if I had an opinion, I can't really say because if I'm a part of the team and then there's bad blood there, it doesn't bode well for the team. I'm all about Team Europe and the Ryder Cup, and I'll do everything in my power to be a part of something that will be special in September.

Whether there is lads involved in it or not, if we're standing there with the Ryder Cup trophy on Sunday, I'll be a happy, happy man.

**Q. Having moved down here, I don't know if -- you probably don't play this course during the year when you're practicing, but playing the courses down here, does it help playing here?**

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, it's funny, when I started coming here to the Honda Classic back in -- I can't remember what year I got my first invite, but obviously it's Bermuda and quite grainy and I hated it, and now that I moved down here and I play on it every day, I'm used to it, and I like playing on Bermuda now, and I don't mind it at all.

I've gotten used to the style of golf, and I quite like playing Florida golf now. Yeah, like I said, I feel like it's a course I can compete at because I'm used to being here and the types of conditions that we have around here, so yeah.

**Q. I'm always kind of curious about the golf. Your words, you were surprised you didn't play well at the WMPO and next week at Genesis which is a difficult golf course you played well. Was there something that happened in between?**

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, my coach arrived in on Sunday night of LA, the Sunday night before LA, and by basically -- yeah, I was a little bit off with my alignment on my setup and it led to bad shots, and the way Phoenix was playing, it was playing quite firm and fast, so if you were a little bit off, it kind of really showed up in your game.

I felt miles off, but as soon as I got hitting shots with my coach last Monday in LA, it started to feel a lot better, and it still felt a little bit uncomfortable as the week went on, but as the week went on further and further, I played better and better and got into the tournament better.

Yeah, just purely setup and purely keeping an eye on things that way. I felt maybe I got a bit complacent in Phoenix, where my game has been pretty good for a long time, where my iron play has been pretty good for quite a while, and it was as bad as I've played for a while. So it was a bit of a shock to the system, but it was nice to get it back and get a bit of confidence in LA last week, and hopefully I can take that into this week.

**Q. Can you talk about your schedule this month and how many weeks in a row can you play before you need to take a break?**

SHANE LOWRY: I'm like the iron man of golf. This is my third of five in a row. Then I played three before that, so I'm playing eight out of nine weeks to start my season. I feel like Sungjae Im. Yeah, I'm playing a lot of golf. But this is like obviously with the field here this week, this is the obvious week for people to skip, to take some time off to get ready for THE PLAYERS and the Masters and whatever, but I feel like I live here, I like the course, I feel like I can win around a course like this. I want to play here. I like this tournament.

That's the reason I'm here this week, and that's why I'm playing. I get to sleep in my own bed every night; that's another reason. I'm playing a lot of golf, but then I feel like I should be -- it's important for me to take my days off, like I had an early pro-am today so I'll relax this afternoon. Had a bit of an off day yesterday, played a pro-am on Monday. It's up to me to kind of manage my time away from the golf course quite well over the next -- well, especially leading into the Masters and leading into April, I think. That's going to be very important for me. But yeah, I'm playing a lot of golf.

**Q. What is your approach when you get to the Bear Trap? Is there a number you'd like to be? Is there a hole of the three that you prefer? As they continue to build up to the 17th, is it approaching Waste Management 16 with the fans there getting a little more excited?**

SHANE LOWRY: Your approach is to try and keep your ball dry. I think, yeah, look, 15, 16, 17 is quite a difficult stretch, and obviously, like you said, 17 is quite -- I was late there last night on Saturday and Sunday and it's quite boisterous there. Waste Management is all right because it's a 9-iron or a wedge with no trouble around it. But 17 is quite a difficult tee shot.

Yeah, the crowd do get a little wild there, but it's all good fun. It's people out here to enjoy themselves, as well. But I don't really have a number in my head. You just try and hit the best shots you can and keep it away from the water and manage yourself around those holes. If the pin is tucked, you just stay away from it and try and make pars. They are literally par holes. If you make three pars around the Bear Trap, you are pretty happy standing on 18 tee. You kind of want to finish par, par, par, birdie. If you finish that around here, you're pretty happy.

**Q. You said a minute ago that this is kind of -- the way the schedule is set up, this is kind of a logical week for some guys to skip. This tournament has been fighting that fight for a while. Do you worry about that tournament? Do you feel like something needs to happen to make this place a little more attractive for some guys schedule-wise?**

SHANE LOWRY: Look, I think the schedule this year, it's different than it has been over the last number of years. But yeah, Honda has always seemed to be in a date where it's always struggled in the schedule because it's after LA and before THE PLAYERS. It's a struggle to get that top, top field.

Do I worry for it? I don't know. Like next year I think hopefully the schedule is going to be a little bit different. It

is going to be a little bit different. I don't know what it is going to be like yet. But hopefully it can be in a nice date because look, I think this is a proper test. It's a proper championship golf course, and it deserves a good field, and it deserves a good tournament. That's why I'm here playing. Hopefully going forward it can get that.

**Q. As it applies to the schedule, obviously you just explained why you would be in the field this week; it's a home game. Next week is a designated event, then you have THE PLAYERS after that. In your mind are you going to take one of those designated events off?**

SHANE LOWRY: I already --

**Q. What did you miss?**

SHANE LOWRY: Maui Tournament of Champions.

**Q. That was always the plan going into it?**

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah.

**Q. You'll play all the rest of them?**

SHANE LOWRY: Yes.

**Q. Just one word to describe the Bear Trap.**

SHANE LOWRY: Tough. Yeah, it's just tough. It's tough -- but it's the whole course, it's not only the Bear Trap. I would argue that the 5th hole is probably tougher than 15 and 17. The 6th hole -- 5, 6 and 7 is probably a tougher stretch than 15, 16, 17. It's just the whole golf course is quite difficult.

But it's set up very well this year. It's in great condition. The rough is a nice length where you can -- it's going to entice people to go for greens out of the rough, and there will be mistakes made around here, but it's important just to make as few mistakes as possible and make as many birdies as possible when you get the chance.

THE MODERATOR: Shane, as always, thank you for your time. Best of luck this week.

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