

Cognizant Classic

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Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, USA

PGA National Champion Course

Luke Clanton

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome Luke Clanton into the interview room here at the 2026 Cognizant Classic in the Palm Beaches. This is kind of where it all started for you, full circle in a year. Just talk about what the last year has been like after you earned that 20th magical point to become a PGA TOUR member at this event last year.

LUKE CLANTON: Yeah, it was great. Obviously to get it done here was really cool with all my friends here and family, and everyone was able to make it. After at Waste not making that last putt, to come out here and make the cut and get my card was amazing.

The last year has been amazing. The learning and experiences that I've gotten from all these guys, from the top players in the world, has been incredible, just to watch them play. I keep kind of having to pinch myself a little bit. I am 22 years old and still learning. I have big goals and big things I want to do, but it takes time. So I'm starting to learn that.

I'm just excited with the prep that we've been doing and how I've been working, and it's been awesome.

Q. The learning experience, has that contributed to the start of the season this year with you? Missed a couple of cuts, had a withdrawal, probably not up to the standard that you're expecting, but is that kind of what's been the problem?

LUKE CLANTON: Yeah, obviously it's good golf and bad golf; you're going to play both. Having to withdraw because of illness was rough, obviously, because I wanted to play that week. But again, at the end of the day, it's golf. You're going to play well; you're going to play bad. Obviously I'm learning, and obviously I want to play well and win. It's not like I'm out here not really caring.

But it just takes time. I think patience is the biggest thing, and I actually said that last year. I remember that pretty vividly, just talking about patience, and it's just a full circle again, just the opposite way now.



It's cool. I've prepped really well over the last couple weeks, and obviously I want to be playing in those events, so inside me it's hurting a little bit to watch. But it was awesome to see Jacob Bridgeman win, as well. That was sweet.

Q. Since you came on TOUR, you've pretty much been known as one of the better drivers of the golf ball on the entire PGA TOUR. Coming to a venue like this where you have so many clubbed-down opportunities, is that frustrating for you as someone with that kind of weapon, or do you feel like you can maybe push the limits where other guys can't this week?

LUKE CLANTON: That's a good question. We played the back nine today, and obviously you can kind of force it up the fairways a little bit, but out here it's a lot of placement.

It doesn't frustrate me. I feel like I'm pretty good with every other golf club in my hands, so it's been good. Obviously I would like to hit driver a lot more, but again, I think out here the biggest thing is just placement, not missing in the wrong spots, and making sure that you're not short-siding yourself on these greens and in this rough.

With the overseed now instead of the Bermuda, it's a little bit different, so we've kind of been preparing for that, and it's been good.

Q. What do you think has been your biggest adjustment from the amateur ranks to the PGA TOUR, and can you talk about perhaps any players who have been great mentors or who have kind of helped guide you along the way?

LUKE CLANTON: I think a big one was probably not taking any tests anymore. That was pretty nice.

Obviously it's different no matter what you try to say and do. Now it's kind of your job. I think the travel is a little bit more difficult than I thought it was going to be, and going four or five weeks in a row, your body starts to give out that fourth and fifth week if you're not careful.

I think eating right, working out right, getting the right trainers, and obviously now I have a great team behind me



that's been super supportive. Obviously early in the year I got a little bit sick, so it was a little bit rough to go through those couple weeks.

But again, I think we've just built on what we've been building on over the last couple months: Putting on a little bit more weight to try and get a little more speed and then to be able to control it. So it's been good.

Q. Have there been any players outside your immediate circle who have --

LUKE CLANTON: Yeah, Camilo Villegas is one of the big guys that's a massive help. He's a great dude. Obviously a lot of the younger guys, we all hang out and everything.

Yeah, I think all these guys out here have been a massive help. They've all kind of come up and gave me a few pointers and a few tips.

Obviously I can talk about Scottie and Rory and playing with Rory and watching him play and the tips he give me. It's really cool to see that and how -- obviously I watched Rory hit his 5-wood here in 2014 to that right pin. I was, I think, 10 years old. To be back here playing now, it's pretty cool.

Q. You just mentioned being here in 2014. As a South Florida guy, how often did you come to this tournament, and I'm sure you played here in junior events. Did you ever think you'd be here on a professional stage?

LUKE CLANTON: Yeah, I don't want to sound rude, but I definitely thought I could be here and playing. Yeah, I played the Junior Honda when I was younger. I think I was probably nine when I first played out here on the Fazio, and then I played probably until I was 14, and then we played high school events out here, too. It was pretty cool. It was when it was Bermuda, so the chipping was really dicy out here. It's not fun.

But I came here since I was probably eight years old with my best friend. We used to come here I think it was every Friday and Sunday. Our moms used to drop us off, and we'd go run around and be a bunch of idiots, but it was a lot of fun.

Q. You mentioned how Camilo is a good influence on you. Is that allowed, this Gator-'Nole --

LUKE CLANTON: Yeah, we've gotten into that battle. But I think we're both not great at football right now. Hopefully we get better. That's kind of the goal right now. But Mike Norvell is doing work. I know that, so we're getting better.

Q. What is it worth? Obviously you have a lifetime of good memories out here, fond memories, being idiots, if you will, and the 20th point and all that stuff. What is that worth over the course of four days, do you hope?

LUKE CLANTON: Yeah, I think about it a lot. I watched -- there's a YouTube video of my Friday round on YouTube or something like that. I watched it for the second time ever yesterday, and I was just kind of going through it, and I was like, man, that's really cool stuff.

When you're doing that, you're not really realizing what you're doing, so to kind of take it back how I was hitting it and how I was reacting to the golf shots, too. I think that's something with me that I've been working on a little bit is the expectations and being okay with a miss.

I think I became so vivid on trying to hit great golf shots all the time, which sometimes don't work out in golf.

I think I'm starting to adapt a little bit more to being okay with a miss, and I think watching that round kind of helps me out a little bit with that.

Q. Making this jump so young, just kind of talk about what life has been like adjusting on TOUR.

LUKE CLANTON: Pretty much the same, yeah. It's a little bit easier, obviously, I think to train. I think I have a little bit more time on my hands, which is new.

But yeah, again, I think I've just done a great job and I have great people around me that are a massive help. My agent, my coach, everyone is down here to help out.

I've been -- it's been great. Just really golf in the morning for five, six hours' practice, work out, go to the beach. It's a pretty nice life.

Q. There's been a big crop of you guys, Nick Dunlap, Gordon Sargent, David Ford. The list goes on. Have you talked to each other and kind of commiserated on your situations, or what's it like being here with other guys in your same situation?

LUKE CLANTON: Yeah, we all talk about it all the time. It's really cool. We all played junior golf and amateur golf against each other. To kind of be out here and playing on the PGA TOUR is great but we all have really big goals what we want to do.

We talk about it here and there, but at the same time, we know we can compete out here. We know we can win, so it's really cool.

Q. Par used to be a really good score out here, but the last two years there's been a lot lower scores. Do you envision that happening again this year, and do you see yourself playing a little bit more aggressive knowing that lower scores are out here?

LUKE CLANTON: Yeah, I think we have a game plan set. I don't think it's going to change much.

Again, I don't think it's going to be -- last year obviously was pretty low. I think there was a lot of good golf played. But I think this golf course still can be tough with wind and tough with certain conditions. If it gets a little bit baked out on the weekend, it can be definitely pretty difficult.

But obviously I think you've got to play a little bit aggressive to try to win a PGA TOUR event, so I think we'll keep it aggressive but also polite.

Q. The Optum Challenge, I followed you at that. Talk about that experience of being with Rory and Scottie and the pressure and all those crazy shots you had to hit.

LUKE CLANTON: Yeah, the Optum Games was awesome. The first event we did was the long drive, and I remember they told me I'm going last, and I had to wait 30 minutes and watch them all hit drivers. Rory was hitting high draws 330. It was really cool to watch.

But again, it's something that we all look forward to is that kind of moment, the pressure of it and the feeling of something that you can do something really cool.

I think those kind of Golf Channel Games was a pretty cool way to kind of showcase a little bit more talent and obviously a lot of fun, like the one-hole challenge and the speed golf. That stuff is a lot of fun. So it was kind of cool to do that for the younger generation.

Q. Talk about the pro-am yesterday, actually spending time with amateur golfers who have donated to charity and still get a chance to work on your game.

LUKE CLANTON: Yeah, obviously I was an amateur, too, so I kind of get it. But I love it. I love playing with new people and learning about them and all that they do. Obviously it's cool for them to play with us and play with pro golfers. It's kind of a cool trade-off, and I enjoy it.

Q. About the college golf experience, there's so many college golfers out here, it's become sort of commonplace to have your teams and talk about football and Norvell and everything, and I'm sure

they're talking about next year's teams and those things.

LUKE CLANTON: Yeah, we still keep up in the group chat a lot at FSU. It's never really about golf. It's really about everything else. No, it's cool to have that team chemistry and lifetime friendships. It's really cool.

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