

**PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT:  
IAN POULTER & LEE WESTWOOD  
Wednesday, December 11, 2013**



**DAVE SENKO:** Guys, thanks for joining us, Ian Poulter and Lee Westwood, Teaming up for the first time in a team event. Lee, maybe get us started, just talk about maybe how this pairing came together.

**LEE WESTWOOD:** Ian said to me, are you playing in the Shark Shootout? I said, well I might if I'm playing with you. He said, well, I'll play if I play with you, so we ended up playing.

**IAN POULTER:** Ba-boom.

**DAVE SENKO:** Ian, care to add anything?

**IAN POULTER:** Yeah, obviously Lee moved to the States a year ago and I was just asking him what his plans were for the back end of the year. So we've played a fairly similar schedule the last few months and I just said, are you going to go to Sun City, because I know he's played well there in the past. He said no, he's going to play Tiger's event. I said, what are you doing the week after, you know, and he said he'd like to pair up. So it's worked out nicely.

**DAVE SENKO:** We asked Kenny and Sean about this, but what makes an event like this enjoyable for guys, the end of the year playing a team event?

**LEE WESTWOOD:** I think the fact that it's partners and it's quite relaxing, it's a relaxed format. It's quite an aggressive format, you have to go out and make lots of birdies, and it's fun and pretty laid back. It's something we don't get to do, be competitive with a lighter side to it. And we both live in Florida and we can both drive to it.

I never played in it before, this is my first Shark Shootout. Greg was one of the reasons why I started playing golf. He was one of my heroes growing up and I always wanted to play in the Shark Shootout and this is the first year I've actually been able to do it. It's been a long time but finally.

**DAVE SENKO:** Ian?

**IAN POULTER:** Well, I've hopefully nudged Dustin out and brought in -- brought Lee in at the right time. It is quite funny. I like this event. I've obviously won it with Dustin a couple years ago. I would like to win it again. I would like that to be with Lee. You know, it's a good English pairing, it's a strong English pairing and hopefully we can go out there and make plenty of birdies and we can all have some Christmas turkey and

a bit of beef and enjoy five weeks off.

**DAVE SENKO:** Questions, guys?

**Q. Lee, could you elaborate a little bit more? You know, you were mentioning about Greg as far as the influence he had on you. Do you remember watching him on TV or did you get a chance to meet him at an early age?**

**LEE WESTWOOD:** No, I obviously watched him in The Open Championship, was it '86 at Turnberry.

**IAN POULTER:** With that lovely jumper on.

**LEE WESTWOOD:** That was sort of the first time I ever -- no, I saw Greg earlier on in that stage. I started watching golf about that stage when Jack won the Masters, I think Greg was there. I just like the way he played golf, his aggressive style, seemed to go for everything and that's the way I wanted to play golf. I had a lot of good role models to look at when I was growing up especially from a European perspective. I had the likes of Seve and Bernhard Langer, Nick Faldo, Sandy Lyle, Ian Woosnam. They were all at the height of their game when I was just starting to play golf. Greg was, I think he must have been world No. 1 at that stage pretty much. Bernhard Langer in there as well. There were a lot of players to watch, but I just seemed to be able to relate to the way Greg played golf. And I suppose one of the first times I ever met him was down in Australia for the first real time in '97. I played with him a couple of rounds there. I ended up beating him in the fourth extra hole in the Australian Open in the playoff. I'm not sure whether he's forgiven me for that. That was obviously a massive moment for me, one of the biggest moments in my career. Beating Greg, who was an idol, in the Australian Open on the fourth extra hole and he was still world No. 1 at that stage as well, so it doesn't really get much bigger than that.

**Q. Lee, how's your experiment, to use that word, of playing over here full time the last year? How's that worked out?**

**LEE WESTWOOD:** I've really enjoyed it. Certainly it's been a lot less stress on my body, a lot less time zone changes and my schedule feels like it's worked out a lot better this year. I'm not getting any younger. I'm 40 now and I won't be chasing it around the world as much as I once was. He's laughing there. You can do that quite easily when you're sort of 25, 26, 27, but as you get older it starts to get more of a tiring exercise. So it's worked out well. I'm looking forward to getting settled and seeing how it goes next year.

**Q. How will it be playing with Lee compared to playing with Dustin as far as the games go?**

**LEE WESTWOOD:** A lot longer club in.

**IAN POULTER:** It's going to be a lot of fun. Dustin hits it slightly longer than Lee and I. So Lee's game I know an awful lot, I've played more golf with Lee than I have done in the past with Dustin. I'm hoping it's going to gel very nicely. I think the formats work out very well. The first day's the more difficult day of the three and then we can go full guns blazing over the weekend and try and win this tournament. It would be a nice one to win right before Christmas.

**Q. Lee, you've kind of alluded to it, but playing a team event where there is at least some relaxation as opposed to obviously a Ryder Cup or something like that, what's that going to be like? Or Ian, how can you prepare him? I don't know if that's the right word for doing something like that.**

**IAN POULTER:** This tournament's good fun. I think guys use it to wind down towards the end of the year and that means guys are going to be able to seem very relaxed. The golf course sets up for birdies, lots of them, and that's also a lot of fun. So it's always good to see the ball go in the hole and in this format it does that often, so it's very easy to get relaxed and very easy to enjoy this tournament.

**LEE WESTWOOD:** And we've played together a lot, you know, practice rounds and we've seem to have been drawn together a lot in the last few weeks as well, so we know each other's games pretty well, which can only help.

**Q. (Inaudible) the Seve (inaudible) is there any ideas that could do something because he was also I would take it one of your idols when you guys --**

**LEE WESTWOOD:** Yeah, sure.

**Q. Any ideas of how they could resurrect that?**

**LEE WESTWOOD:** I think the main problem with the Seve Trophy was the scheduling of it, especially after coming off a long season over here having played the FedEx Cup events as well, to come straight afterwards made it tricky to go over when you're trying to sort of reach the end of the season when all the European TOUR stuff starts to begin. I think it's mainly a scheduling problem. The calendar now, when do you put it in?

**IAN POULTER:** It's difficult. I mean, you know, with the PGA TOUR season being as condensed as it is up until the end of the FedEx Cup and then all of a sudden the new year starts early, European TOUR has such a fantastic back end of the year, their final series, which we all play in, it's so difficult to be able to play the right amount of events, to compete in the right amount of events, not be tired when you need to compete in the big event. And not saying that the Seve Trophy isn't a big event, but it's a bad scheduling date and it's very hard on the guys that live in America

to go all the way back over to Europe so they can go back to America for a week off to then go to Asia for a month.

I don't think people give us enough credit when we are planning our schedule and just assume that we have to play every event. We can't do that. We have families and we would like to see our family as much as we possibly can. So it's not that we're ever disrespecting the fact that it's the Seve Trophy. It just comes down to it's very, very hard to play and keep crossing the Channel so many times. It just doesn't work in a lot of guys' schedules, so that's why it struggled this year.

**LEE WESTWOOD:** I find it quite upsetting and insulting sometimes as well when people say you're disrespecting Seve by not playing, because I think we'll all agree that we respect Seve almost as much as any player that's ever lived really, and certainly since he passed away I think we've both been asked to do things with his charity and foundation, we've done things like that. It does get to you quite a bit when people say you're disrespecting Seve just when you don't play in the Seve Trophy and I get quite angry about that.

**IAN POULTER:** I mean, you know, it's very easy to sit back and write an article in the paper how guys don't attend and how poor it is on their behalf, but they're not the ones that are having to play all the events all around the world. I think certainly the Ryder Cup last time out, I think you saw what it meant to the European players to have Seve on the arm and Seve on the bag. And as Lee said, guys do not disrespect Seve at all. I mean, they give him the utmost respect. He's been incredible for Europe and it frustrates and angers the guys that are told you're not there and you should be there.

**Q. Change the subject. Lee, do you tire of hearing that best player to never win a major? Does that wear on you?**

**LEE WESTWOOD:** It's great. Every time I hear it, I think really? It's always nice to be the best player to have done something or not done it. I'll hit the next person that says it.

**Q. Ian, you once said that you thought that he would win a major?**

**IAN POULTER:** I still think he will, yeah. He's got more than enough game, he knows it, and I'm sure he gets frustrated with all you guys saying he hasn't won one yet.

**LEE WESTWOOD:** Those are some amazing stats they keep putting up on the Golf Channel. Sixteen Top 10s without winning a major, most majors ever played without winning a major, most Top 3s without winning a major. I've got all those categories completely.

**IAN POULTER:** They're quite difficult to get, the majors. The guys that haven't won one, trust me, they'll try to print you out to make sure you do win one to make you guys disappear for a while.

**Q. I asked the last two that were in, so when you were picking your Player of the Year this year, Stenson won the Race to Dubai, the FedEx Cup and then the major wins, who is your choice?**

**IAN POULTER:** Stenson, Stenson flat out.

**LEE WESTWOOD:** In Europe we're talking about?

**Q. No, Player of the Year.**

**IAN POULTER:** For me it was Stenson.

**Q. So winning a major is -- doesn't come --**

**IAN POULTER:** No one's won both FedEx Cup and European title. For me the way he played golf the back end of the year was simply sensational. His consistency was incredible. He delivered when he needed to deliver. He had done it at the FedEx Cup and he had done it in Dubai, and to win both those events when he had to, very impressive to me.

**LEE WESTWOOD:** I thought the Player of the Year over here was Tiger and I thought the Player of the Year in Europe was Henrik and I think probably just the Player of the Year worldwide was Henrik.

**Q. That's interesting.**

**LEE WESTWOOD:** It's not really that interesting actually.

**Q. Well, you have to have a major before you can be Player of the Year.**

**LEE WESTWOOD:** Well, the answer's in the statement you just made. It's not Player of the Majors, is it?

**Q. No, Player of the Year.**

**LEE WESTWOOD:** Player of the Year. So you have to base it on the whole year. I actually don't know what Henrik did the first part of the year. I can only think it through from maybe the Scottish Open he played quite well. So the Scottish Open onwards he played fantastic, he never seemed to be off the leaderboard, never off the Top 5. Maybe it's not fair to say Henrik was the Player of the Year because in the first part of the year he didn't do so much but the second part of the year he exploded,

but Tiger was dominant in the first part of the year and then the second part of the year, although he probably didn't play that much, he didn't seem to win that much, either. It's been a strange year, it's almost been a year of two halves.

**MODERATOR:** Thank you, guys.