

**ROUND 1 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT:
CHARLES HOWELL III & JUSTIN LEONARD
Friday, December 13, 2013**



DAVE SENKO: Maybe, Charles and Justin, each of you could just talk a little bit about your day and then we'll go through your cards and then we'll get some questions and send you on your way. If you want to start off, Charles.

CHARLES HOWELL III: Well, today we chose Justin to hit first and that was great for me because he drove it in the fairway every time and I could swing away at it. The golf course, it still has a few shots out there where you have to suck it up and hit a shot. It's still an alternate shot format, it can get away from you a little bit. Justin hit a lot of fantastic irons and wedges and we got the momentum going, and then obviously next two days it's all about making a lot of birdies, right, so you've got to keep it going.

JUSTIN LEONARD: You know, it was fun being able to hit Charles' tee ball today. You know, I need to go to the putting green and work a little bit on my putting because I didn't putt. Charles made a bunch of putts today. I had a couple tap-ins, but for the most part he made most everything. Being able to play from where he was driving it today was really fun for me. It's something that I don't get to experience very often unless I'm playing in a pro-am and playing an up tee. So to be able to hit so many wedges on this golf course was fun and we were able to take advantage of it.

DAVE SENKO: Birdies, 7, 8, 9, do you remember what the shot sequence was or who made the putts?

CHARLES HOWELL III: On No. 7 Justin made a great putt for birdie. We had made six pars in a row and he got us going there. He made a long one there, he made about a 25 footer there. And then 8, Justin hit a nice shot up there and I had a short putt for birdie. Then 9, Justin once again hit a great wedge up there to about four feet. 10, Justin hit another good wedge up there to about six feet, we had birdie there. Yeah, Justin put me in great spots there, but he really got it going when he made the long birdie putt on 7 for sure.

JUSTIN LEONARD: You know, the putt you made at 8, that was 12, 15 feet, that was a good putt. Then to make the two putts at 9 and 10 that, you know, you're supposed to make. Still, even on those there's grain moving, you have to hit a good putt. To be able to pour those two in and get some momentum going into the back nine really kind of propelled us through the rest of the day.

DAVE SENKO: 13, 14?

JUSTIN LEONARD: 13, Charles drove it a mile down there, I had 50 something

yards and hit a wedge to about three or four feet. 14, Charles drove it so far down there it was through the fairway so we had to take my drive. He hit it in the front bunker, pretty basic bunker shot and was able to get it in close. And then made a nice par at 16, we both hit it in the left bunker and I hit a pretty ordinary bunker shot out, Charles made a nice seven-footer there for par. And then 17, he drove it so far down there I had an 8-iron in. Then Charles hit a great putt from just off the green that did almost a 90-degree lip-out, so that could have easily fallen for eagle. Same thing on 18, he drove it a mile down there and I hit a decent wedge about 15 feet and then Charles made a great putt.

Q. How did this pairing come together? You guys have played in this event a few times and you've usually been with Scott and you've been with a few guys. How did you guys end up getting together?

CHARLES HOWELL III: Well, I guess I can't keep a partner. I've actually played this with Justin before, so we've played once before. I first met Justin when I was 15 years old. I got a sponsor's exemption into a TOUR event at Callaway Gardens, the old Buick Open, and he was nice enough to play a practice round with me, so I've known Justin forever. Obviously a Big 12, he played at Texas and myself at Oklahoma State. We talked about it earlier and he was nice enough to put up with me for a few days.

JUSTIN LEONARD: It's pretty easy to do that with Charles.

Q. Charles, how good did that putt at 18 feel? You guys had a wonderful round, but in this tournament every shot counts. To be able to finish the day like that?

CHARLES HOWELL III: Well, I actually misread it and Justin came in and corrected the read. I had it read a little bit low and it did snap a lot at the end as he thought. But you're right, this tournament, especially from this point forward so many birdies are made that every shot does count and it's nice to get through today with a low one because today I feel is the toughest format.

JUSTIN LEONARD: If you don't play well today you're really behind the eight ball as many birdies as guys make these next two days. So like any tournament, but especially here, it's important to get off to a good start the first day, whether you're leading or not but being right around there because it's very hard to play catch up in the next two formats.

Q. Justin, just listening to you on the Golf Channel, you almost sounded giddy as you're describing the day because of how well he was driving and then you were mentioning how often you were using wedges?

JUSTIN LEONARD: Yeah, it was fun, and tomorrow's going to be a difficult transition

for me hitting my 6 and 7 irons back there where I normally play from after today. But, you know, still looking forward to Sunday and playing back up there with a bunch of wedges in my hand. You know, it was fun. I think one hole we both missed the fairway and still had a decent birdie putt on the par 5 on the front. But then really there at 7 I made a nice putt there and then it just seemed -- when Charles made the putt at 8, there's a huge difference between making a birdie and parring the next hole and kind of continuing that momentum. I think when he made the par at 8 and we were able to get it in close at 9, you know, really kept us from having to try and force things on the back nine and we could just, you know, play our games, I guess. But when somebody's driving it and putting it like Charles is, I think it would make anybody look good doing what I had to do.

Q. I was just wondering a little bit, we've been talking to different guys about their dream shot. When you won your major, was there a shot, first of all, that stuck out for you that had you convinced that you were going to win?

JUSTIN LEONARD: You know, probably the 3-iron at 17. I wasn't real certain where I was. I made about a 15-footer for par at 15 and then about a 10- or 12-footer for birdie at 16. 17's a pretty long par 3, I think I hit a 3-iron, just kind of hit it in the back center of the green and then made about a 30-footer there. And when I made that putt, I knew I was right there and I was, you know, going to be pretty hard to beat. Granted, I only had one hole to play, being able to hit it on the green and two putt. I guess Jesper at the time was closest to me and my caddie, as we were walking off 18, told me that he had bogeyed 17. I mean, there are so many shots during the week, but really toward the end of the tournament I think hitting that 3-iron and hitting it in the middle of the green and being able to make that putt at 17.

Q. How about you, Charles, have you had a dream shot in your career or have you envisioned what you would like a dream shot for you to be?

CHARLES HOWELL III: Well, I've yet to win a major. A shot that stands out in my mind was the first tee shot I hit at the Masters, being from Augusta and the first year I played there was '02. I had no comprehension of the nerves. Having watched the tournament so many years outside the ropes, you know, with a coke and a hot dog in my hands is a lot different than actually playing. Yeah, that shot there, just how nervous it was and everything, just the whole situation.

Q. Well, Jerry Kelly said his dream shot would be to make a putt to win the Masters. I would think that's got to be somewhere along the lines for you?

CHARLES HOWELL III: Oh, for sure it would be. I'd like to win that tournament more than anything, but unfortunately so would a lot of other few hundred million people in the world as well.

JUSTIN LEONARD: But you've got a better chance than most people. I kind of like

your odds.

CHARLES HOWELL III: Yeah, it would be that, growing up there. You know, there and right there with it slightly behind is the British Open. It's the Open, it's known around the world as just, you know -- the first British Open I played as well, just everything, but yeah, it would be phenomenal.

Q. Have you ever gone to the point where you've envisioned maybe like holing out a bunker shot at the British Open because obviously the bunkers are what they're known for. I mean, have you ever put through your mind a scenario of what a dream shot for you would be?

CHARLES HOWELL III: I've never gotten past the 18th at Augusta, to be honest. It always seems like the people make a putt on 18 from just long right of that front left flag on Sunday to win, right? I mean, O'Meara did it and Adam Scott did it this year. So yeah, that would be it, right, about a 20-footer from there. Ideally I'd have a five-shot lead, right? But yeah, to make a putt from there would be incredible.