

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
September 20, 2017



MARC LEISHMAN

EMILY TILLO: I would like to welcome Marc Leishman into the interview room. Marc, congrats on the past few weeks, obviously incredible golf. You put yourself in awesome position heading into the TOUR Championship. Talk a little bit about what your win last week meant to get you into the top-5, that's prime position heading into this week. Yeah, and just what the past few weeks have been like for you.

MARC LEISHMAN: Firstly, obviously very exciting last week to win the BMW, especially after what happened at the Dell two weeks before. Had a chance to not only win that tournament but probably guarantee me a spot in the top-5 with a win. To not do that was disappointing in a lot of ways, so it made last week even more satisfying to fight back the way I did, get straight back on the horse and have some good scores and get back into that situation where there was a chance to win the tournament and come out on top. So really erased some scars I think that I had from the Dell, and moving on to this week it's a great spot to be in, in that top-5. That's the goal at the start of the year. You know, when you get to this tournament to be in that top-5, haven't been here for a long time, so to be here is great and then to be in that top-5 is even better. So hopefully I can continue my form, keep that putter rolling and see how we end up this week.

EMILY TILLO: You got in that top-5 at just the right time. We'll go ahead and open it up for some questions.

Q. Marc, you talk about not being here for some time. What's just the general sense of accomplishment when you pull in here and see this 29 other guys?

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, it's certainly a great spot to be at the end of the year. The first year I got in I wanted to make a habit of being here and I didn't, so it's nice to be back here this year. I feel ready to play well. Golf's a funny game, it can change very quickly. Certainly not entitled to anything but feeling good with how I've been playing. Just a great city, nice to be back at East Lake and excited for the week.

Q. Marc, a couple age questions. You're a married guy with kids and certainly a lot of life experience. Do you look around at some of the guys you're playing against here and feel like you're on the other end of a generation gap or anything?

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, when I first got on Tour I think I was 24 or 25, felt really, really young. Now that I'm 33, that was the guys that were 33 were still sort of young guys, a lot of the guys weren't hitting that peak until the mid 30s. Now that's not the case.

I guess at the start of this year I thought to myself it's time that I need to pull my finger out

and do something before it's too late. I've managed to play well and get a couple wins this year, which is really satisfying. I guess I do really feel like one of the older guys on the Tour now.

Q. Once upon a time you were Rookie of the Year out here. I don't know, if you look around and see what some of these younger guys are doing, does it surprise you at all how much success they're having at such a young age?

MARC LEISHMAN: Not really. I think things have changed ever since I was a junior golfer, just the technology and the things that junior golfers and college golfers have access to. It's pretty cool that they're really taking advantage of that. It's not surprising at all to see Jordan, Justin, all those guys, Hideki doing those things. Hideki doesn't feel like a young guy anymore but he's still only really young.

Yeah, it's not surprising. I think when I won the Rookie of the Year I was the only rookie to get into the TOUR Championship and hadn't won, hadn't done anything and won that award reasonably easily, I think. But now you've got to win a few times to have a chance at that award.

Q. You talked about being inspired to get things done because you were 33 years old. What did that entail, what steps did you take to try to improve, try to win?

MARC LEISHMAN: Just having three kids now, just practicing smarter. Not necessarily spending more time at the golf course but the time I do spend here I try and be really productive. Try and get as much as I can done in the time that I set. I feel like that's helped me be fresher at the end of the week. My earlier years on Tour I felt like the more practice you did, the better it was. You know, when I did get into contention at the end of the week, you're so tired that you fall off.

So doing that has helped me. I felt really fresh at the end of last week. Even at the Dell I still felt really good. Might not have looked like it but I still felt good. So yes, I think just practicing smarter. We built a new house and I can hit pitch shots in my backyard up to about 70 yards, I've got a putting green in one of the rooms upstairs. Just little things I can do that I might not have otherwise practiced for 30 minutes a day for my putting or little things like that that have made a big difference.

Q. On the years that you weren't here on Sunday of the TOUR Championship, did you follow it at all, did you stay away from it?

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, you always watch it. It's pretty exciting now having the TOUR Championship and the FedExCup decided on the same day. Definitely watched it last year, that was really exciting seeing Rory and I think it was Ryan Moore and Dustin Johnson, I think those were the three guys. If Rory didn't do what he did, Dustin could have won. So I think that's really exciting and I think the PGA Tour have done a really good thing in getting the FedExCup to where it is and I feel like the players really take it very seriously. It's a

year-long race and players, we all want to win it. Whatever they've done has really worked well.

Q. Marc, you mentioned earlier about erasing scars. How important was it for you to get that -- you had the chance to do that so quickly and what did you learn about yourself and your game during that process?

MARC LEISHMAN: At the Dell I felt like I did hit a couple of bad shots at the wrong time. I don't feel like I would make any decisions differently, which that was a positive. It wasn't like I would change clubs I hit or try and play different shots, I would just like to play the shots again, execute them better. So that was a positive. I tried to learn from the bad stuff that happened and really take the positives out of it, so that was good.

Then to obviously get into that situation well all last week really at the BMW, I generally sleep really well. I was nervous Saturday night. That five-shot lead was hard to sleep on. I didn't sleep that much so that was a new feeling for me and I dealt with it pretty well. Rickie started out really well and put some heat on me, and then Rosie at the end there put some heat on me and I responded, which was really pleasing.

Leading into this week, hopefully I'll be in that situation again where I'll either be putting heat on guys or they'll be putting heat on me if we can do the right things and play well. But a lot of things have to happen between now and then to get into that situation, just got to try and do the right things.

Q. As a quick follow-up, there's a lot of buzz about you right now in the world of golf. When you reflect on everything you've been through in your life on and off the course, the world events, the events that we live in today, how have they helped shape you as a person and as a player out there as well?

MARC LEISHMAN: I think it just makes golf less relevant, with all due respect to golf. It's not a life-or-death situation. We've been there and it's not fun. At the end of the day it's a game.

Yes, I make my living out of the game and I want to do it as well as I possibly can, but it's still a game. There's people fighting for their lives all around the world with different illnesses and I'm out here playing golf. So whether I do it well or not all that great, I feel lucky to be out here and I think that's shaped me as a person. I've seen where life can go and where it is now and I'm pretty happy with where it is now.

Q. Marc, when you won last week you said your parents were traveling, they were still in flight. When did you eventually catch up with your mom and dad and how good did that first beer taste?

MARC LEISHMAN: It was very, very nice, that first beer. They got to watch the front nine in L.A. airport, then they got on the plane to fly to Atlanta with nine to go and there was no

wifi on the plane. So they got off the plane and their phone lit up with text messages.

I spoke to them probably about 9:00 I think I spoke to them. That was a pretty good phone call to make. It's just great to be in a situation to make your parents proud like that. I picked them up from the airport in Virginia Beach Monday morning and we celebrated Monday with mom and dad and the family. It's just a good feeling to do that.

Q. You mentioned text messages. What's the phone been like and the emails post this victory?

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, it's been pretty busy. It took me until about 6:00 Monday to catch up to the text messages, I was replying. They were coming through quicker than I could reply. That's pretty cool. You know you've done something decent when that happens.

Q. Any special messages you can perhaps share with us?

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, there's a been a fair few people text messages, a nice one from Greg Norman, Adam Scott, guys that played our golf day, Kevin Sorbo, Kent Bazemore. There's a lot of guys that are actually going to be at the tournament this week that sent really nice texts. So it's just a good feeling to be able to read those and know that people are really happy for your success.

Q. Marc, the TOUR Championship marks the end of the 2016-17 season. When you reflect upon the season, what will be the most memorable moment for you?

MARC LEISHMAN: What will be the most memorable moment? Hopefully the moment that may happen on Sunday afternoon. Like I said, there's a lot of things between now and then. Obviously Bay Hill was a big one, hadn't won for five or six years, five years. And then the wins are always special. Having my baby girl out on the green last week, that was the first time I had won with three kids and they're all there, that was very special. Walking up the 18th green, onto the 18th green at Conway Farms knowing that it was in the bag was very special. Walked up onto the green and they were standing over just on the edge and the boys were giving me the thumbs-up. That was fun.

Q. Marc, the 15th hole here plays two radically different yardages from the short tee and the long tee. How do you prepare for that and what's your basic strategy for the week?

MARC LEISHMAN: Basic strategy, that's can be a very tough hole. Obviously it's very different from the front tee to the back tee. It's a yellow hazard which changes it as well, it's pretty much out of bound if it's in the water, you've got to look at that as out-of-bounds pegs.

I guess my strategy there is just aim at the middle of the green, maybe left center of the green, just commit to a good shot. If you have a perfect yardage off that front tee you're

probably going to go at the pin, but you would take four pars there and get out of there. Especially from the back tee, it's a really strong hole.

Q. Do you remember how old you were when you first beat your dad in golf?

MARC LEISHMAN: Probably 12. I beat him in the club championships when I was 13. That was a big occasion, yeah. It was stroke play and four rounds of stroke, so I won the club championships there when I was 13. Then started beating him more consistently after that, but before that it was I'd have to play really well and he'd have to play pretty badly for me to beat him.

Q. Did he take second in that club championship?

MARC LEISHMAN: No, he didn't, which made it more credible. No, he came in third or fourth.

Q. Leish, is it true that you've won a 30-man event before?

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, I won the Nedbank in 2015, yeah, by six. That's good stuff to put in the memory bank. Hopefully I can make this number two.

Q. Obviously less players, but what did you notice about competing against a much higher quality, smaller field, how does that change what you do?

MARC LEISHMAN: I don't think it changes anything. When you're playing against the best players in the world, it doesn't matter if there's 10 guys or 100. To win you've got to play really, really well. If you don't play well, you're not going to have a chance at winning. I don't think you do anything differently, you've just got to do what you do, try and shoot the best score you can and see where you end up at the end of the day or the end of the week. It's pretty simple stuff.

EMILY TILLO: Marc, thank you, appreciate the time. Good luck.