

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
November 29, 2017



MARC LEISHMAN

MODERATOR: Marc, thank you so much for joining us at the Australian PGA Championship. Can I begin by saying congratulations on your Greg Norman Medal award last night.

MARC LEISHMAN: Thanks, yeah. Great to be back. It's an honor to be named the Greg Norman medalist for this year, it was. I wasn't originally coming back but that was probably a little bit of a factor in the decision. Obviously it's great to be back on the Gold Coast and hopefully we can have a great week, I'm sure we will, and try to create a few more good memories.

MODERATOR: You played the pro-am today. How's the course looking?

MARC LEISHMAN: The course is great. I think this is going to be the fourth time I've played it at Royal Pines. It just seems to be getting better and better every year. The grasses are really coming in and the greens are pretty receptive this year, which is good. The course is in the best condition I've seen it and it's setting up for a really good week for the whole field.

MODERATOR: Questions from the floor?

Q. Marc, it's clear to everybody you've just had an outstanding 2017. How would you assess it in your own words?

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, that's one good way to put it. It was successful. I don't know, it was just satisfying, I guess. Probably the best word would be satisfying.

I feel like I've been playing well for a few years now and just haven't -- getting close more frequently but not winning. So to get a couple of wins on the board this year was just really satisfying. I've known I've been a good player for a long time but just haven't been able to get on a really good run and put stretches of good tournaments together and this year I did that, which was really pleasing.

On the golf course it was an awesome year. Off the golf course it was an awesome year. So all around it was just a fun year, and I think golf's a lot easier when you're happy off the golf course and you're not thinking about other things, you can just concentrate on that. If things go well, awesome. If they don't go well, you can go home and your family still loves you, so I think that perspective is key this year, too.

Q. Obviously a fantastic year for you. What kind of confidence does that give you

heading into 2018 and what are your expectations for next year?

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, a year like that definitely, it definitely gives you confidence. Golf's a funny game. You think you've got it, which I've never -- I've thought that once and I said to myself I'm never going to do that again because it really can give you a kick in the butt pretty quick and put you back into place. Yeah, confidence is high, game's in a good spot. Next year just hope I can do everything like I did this year, just try and improve on a few little things.

Goal-wise, I don't really set like result goals. I try and just do everything right and let the results take care of themselves. That's what I did this year and it worked pretty well, so I'll try and do the same.

Having said that, to contend in a major and hopefully win a major would be the main goal. A lot of things have to go right to do that. There's only four majors every year. You've got to play well on the right week. So if I can just keep playing the way I have been, play well more consistently, I feel like that gives me my best chance to try and contend and win majors.

So, you know, I think my whole career's been baby steps. I started out on the Von Nida Tour here and worked my way to Korea and then onto the Web.com Tour and the PGA TOUR and won the Travelers and worked up to a European Tour event and Bay Hill and a playoff event, so I feel like the next step is to try and win a major. So I'll do everything I can to try and do that, try and keep the balance really good in life and golf and I feel that gives me my best chance.

Q. The Presidents Cup, had a baby (inaudible.) Can you just talk about how much of a season that was for you? It's great that you're here obviously.

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, with Tiger's tournament in the Bahamas, it's only a short flight from my house. I've thought about it, I've thought -- I was there last year when Jace won the award, the Greg Norman Medal. With my form I thought I had a pretty good chance of winning it, I just really didn't want to -- I just wanted to be there if I was to win. It's something that hopefully I will get another chance to win it and hopefully I will win it again, but I think if I hadn't had come back and won it and wasn't there to accept the award, I would have regretted it. I try and avoid having any regrets.

My wife was pushing me out the door pretty much. She's like, "You've really got to go." To not come back to Australia for a year is hard, it's hard for us. We've got families in America and all that and of course we want to come back, but sometimes you've got to put your family first. But when you've got the support of your wife to do it, that was a big thing along with obviously the medal.

Q. Leish, good to see you back home. Mate, how was the day out there? What do you think's going to be the big holes for you this week that you think you can really capitalize on?

MARC LEISHMAN: Well, I mean, they're all very important. I think driving the ball's extremely important around here because the greens are pretty penalizing and I think it's important to be hitting to the greens off the fairways. If you're getting yourself onto the right level of the green, they're pretty flat and you can make birdies. But if you're not hitting your irons great or coming in from the rough, it's going to be really tough to get it on the right level and then you're struggling to two-putt for pars. So I think driving the ball, and then you've got to make the putts if you give yourself those opportunities, so they're the big ones.

Par 5s are important definitely. They're all reachable given the right wind conditions, so you've got to make a score there so you don't have to be too aggressive on the rest of the holes. If you're missing greens in bad spots, things can start going south pretty quickly.

Q. Marc, you mentioned once before it's dangerous to think you've got the secret to golf. When was that that you thought that you had the secret?

MARC LEISHMAN: Honestly, I can't remember. Maybe after -- probably after a really good round and then all I remember thinking was I'm never, ever going to do that again. You can go out -- that's the great thing about the game, you can go out and shoot 60 one day and you can go and stand on the first tee the next day and you're no more entitled than anyone else to shoot 65 or 85.

That's the good thing about it. It's a really grounding game. It can bring you back to earth really quick. Yeah, I just remember thinking that, but I can't remember exactly when it was.

Q. I know you like to get down to Warrnambool when you come back. Have you been down there, have you been to Warrnambool Golf Club? I know you love getting back there and saying g'day.

MARC LEISHMAN: Not yet, I haven't been back. Flew straight into Brisbane, got here Sunday and then I'll head back there for a few days next week. I'll probably take the clubs. Well, I'll definitely take my clubs with me, better not forget them. Yeah, I'll probably have a game next week. It's always fun to go back there and play the course where you grew up on, learnt the game on and just brings back a lot of really, really good memories. And I've got a lot of friends down there, too. It's good to have a game with them.

Q. What do you think it will take to win this week, and secondly, how much would it mean to you to break through to get a top level win here in Australia, one of the few holes in your resume?

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, it is definitely. Certainly that was another reason why I wanted to come down and play, to try and tick this tournament off the box, I guess.

You grow up and these are the tournaments that you watch as a kid and you see your idols playing them and winning them and you want to win them. I'm no different. I've seen my

friends win them now and I would love to hoist the Kirkwood Cup up on Sunday, but you've got to play really good golf and just hope that someone else doesn't play better than you.

As far as the score goes, it's really hard around here because you can -- you know, the wind this year, the conditions are perfect. They're really lush, so the fairways aren't running as far so it's probably going to play a lot longer. I'm not sure if that's going to make it easier or harder. Greens are a little more receptive. Yeah, it's hard to say really. I think you would probably have to get to double figures under par but how far under, I don't know. Just depends how everyone plays and what the weather does.

Q. Marc, you mentioned the four majors but now there's only two big Australian tournaments plus the rest. Have you got any theories yourself on how perhaps they can get a couple of other big events on the Australian calendar, and I guess that plays to the disappointment that the Australian Masters disappeared?

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, it is definitely disappointing. The courses on the map in Melbourne Sandbelt are some of the best in the world and it's disappointing that they're not there. But I'm not familiar with all the business side of golf. I don't know enough about it to really make an intelligent comment I would say.

I would love to be able to help but I don't know how I would do that. It's just a hard one for me to get into really, not too sure -- you know, leave that to the businessmen I guess that are looking after the tour.

Q. Marc, with the wins you've had this year, can you talk us through what a Marc Leishman celebration night is after that, are you talking beers and pizza or big barbecue or --

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, that was another thing pleasing about winning this year is after I won the Travelers in 2012 I went straight to the next tournament and I didn't really celebrate it properly. I made sure I celebrated these ones properly. Get all my friends around at my place, cook a heap of steaks on the barbie, drink some beer out of the trophy. Just do stuff that normal people do to party. I'm no different than anyone else.

Q. Imported BV was it?

MARC LEISHMAN: What? No, it was actually Leishman Lager. It fit seven cans of Leishman Lager in it, the BMW trophy. Yeah, it was just fun. I passed the trophy around and ate some good steaks, drink some nice beer and tell a few stories, same thing.

Q. Marc, obviously you've said that you prefer (inaudible) by these stakes to get to where you are now. What do you think has been the biggest breakthrough, the mental self belief or maturation within your game and self, and what do you see as the critical ingredient going forward for further development of your game?

MARC LEISHMAN: I think it's a combination of both. I felt like the years where I didn't win, really my whole career, I haven't felt like -- until the last -- well, this year in particular I felt like I haven't driven it well enough to contend regularly enough to win tournaments.

That was a massive step for me this year, to drive the ball well, and I did drive the ball really well. So that's a big one. If you're driving the ball well, then you're giving yourself more opportunities to fire at flags and hopefully in turn more opportunities to make -- or give yourself makeable putts. At the end of the day you've still got to make the putts, but I feel like the driver was the start of that.

You know, with everything that happened with Audrey with her health, I feel like that was -- as hard as that was to go through, I feel like I came out of that a stronger person. We both -- a lot of good has come from that and I think that's made us -- we started a foundation and helped a lot of families. That makes you feel good to be able to help people. It makes you happy, and when you're happy it's easy to play good golf.

So yeah, I think the perspective thing is big. You know, realising that golf's just golf, it's not life or death. We've been through that and that's not fun. So at the end of the day, you know, if you've got a chance to win a tournament, like for instance, a few weeks ago in Korea it was probably a one in 10 shot I had in regulation on the 18th. I think it was 260 yards into a strong wind over water and I'm like, well, I'm not going to win laying up.

So it was probably nine out of 10 chances I hit in the water but I didn't want to go to bed at night thinking what if I did go for it, I wonder what would have happened. I never want to do that. Like I said before I never want to have any regrets and I would rather go down swinging and hit it in the water than not knowing that I gave it my all.

I feel like the mental side of it has become a lot better since we went through that situation with Audrey. It's a combination of both. I think I've got to keep developing as a golfer and as a person and that's going to help me in the majors as well. The more chances I get, get myself into contention, the better I'll -- the more chance I'll have at winning.

Q. Adam was just in here talking about juggling a family, a young family, practice and playing golf. You seem to have that down pat. How long did it take you to work that out and get the balance going?

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, it took a fair while, I guess. We had our oldest son in start of 2012, so he's nearly six. I guess I'm lucky in the respect that I don't generally do a whole lot of practice on my weeks off so it makes it pretty easy. I like to just get away from it and then when I get to the tournament I like to be fresh and want to play golf and get out there and get into it.

Yeah, that's what I've found works for me, that's my recipe. If things aren't going well, then of course I'll practice and try to play myself back into form. I've been lucky this year I've been playing well and haven't had to really juggle it too much. On tournament weeks when

Audrey and the kids come out, she's so good, she knows I've got to do what I've got to do. I'm lucky I've got her support. But on off weeks it's pretty much family, all family, which is great.

Q. Leish, I have a two-part question. First of all, your good friend and coach Dennis got an award as well. He's pretty much been through the journey with you pretty much from the beginning, that would have been pretty special. And the second part I guess is great to have Paulie and Mattie and everyone there to celebrate with you last night?

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, it was, definitely. Yeah, Dennis had a great year. We've been together 17 years. That's half my life. We've become really, really good friends. You know, he's one of the people that he's in -- well, he won his award and I feel he was a part of my award as well. You just try and surround yourself with really good people and he's one of the ones that I've been lucky enough to meet over the years and really helped me, along with my mom and dad and Mattie and everyone that was there last night. Yeah, you know, lucky. I'm just glad everything came together with all the hard work we've put in over the -- well, half my life with Dennis. Great that he could win that Coach of the Year award, really happy for him, deserves it.

Q. Might be top secret but what are the critical ingredients of Leishman Lager?

MARC LEISHMAN: I don't know. I think there's Australian hops in them. I don't get into the recipe, I just tell them how I like it to taste.

Q. And drink it?

MARC LEISHMAN: And drink it. Yeah, it tastes fairly similar to Carlton Draught actually. It's got -- yeah, it's a nice beer. Same color as Carlton Draught, similar taste.

Q. What's the alcohol percentage?

MARC LEISHMAN: A bit higher than I would like. I think it's like 5.3. Trying to convince them to get it down a little bit, but it's not happening. I don't drink it too often just because it's a little potent.

Q. It's just a brewery in the local area?

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, it's Back Bay Brewing, they make it. They're actually building a facility at the moment which they're expanding, so hopefully we'll eventually be able to make a lot bigger distributor into more places and have more people get to enjoy it. It's become really popular in the Virginia Beach area, so it would be nice if we could make it a little bigger around America and hopefully eventually to Australia.

Q. So you've got a part share in the operation?

MARC LEISHMAN: No, no, it's just they help us out with the foundation. Eventually we could possibly do that, but yeah, it's just a -- it's a foundation thing at the moment. I don't get anything out of it myself.

Q. Leish, you've mentioned the driving improvement a couple of times. Is there something you put it down to, the driver change at the start of the year or something that you and Dennis have worked on particularly or just your confidence, you know you're driving better so you drive the golf ball better?

MARC LEISHMAN: I think it's all of the above. The work I've done over the years with Dennis has been a slow progression of getting better, getting into better positions to be able to not hit the wide ones, which of course you still do occasionally, but the driver is very forgiving and Callaway did a really good job with the design of it and the look of it.

My body's feeling better. I've had some back issues over the last few years and they're finally managing them, which is nice. So I think my swing speed has gone up three miles an hour from last year, so I guess that's confidence. Just I guess the mindset as well. Just swing it and do the best you can and then if it goes straight, great; if not, go find it and hit it again. It's knowing that not steering it, not worrying about where it's going to go, I feel like that's how I play my best golf. Just do the best you can and go from there.

Q. Marc, last week Jason Day indicated that if he gets the opportunity to play the Olympics, he would jump at not having had a chance last time, or not having the opportunity last time. Just a few moments ago Adam Scott indicated that his position was essentially the same as it was previously that I guess he was saying that he doesn't agree with golf in the Olympics. I think you turned it down because of the Zika thing, I think. What's your stance on it now?

MARC LEISHMAN: I would love to play the Olympics, yeah, no doubt. If I'm on the team, I'm going. That would be -- actually goosebumps there right now to say that. It would be cool. Anytime you can represent your country, it's great.

I've always been one to put family first and at the time we were, I can't remember if Audrey was pregnant or if she was -- we were trying, so it was just not in the best interests of our family to put her health or our baby's health at risk. We've got -- who knows what would happen if I had gone, but probably nothing but there's that chance and I wasn't willing to take that chance. Yeah, I would love to go to Tokyo in three years' time and represent Australia.

Q. Question about the beer again. How does that come about, do you go to the local pub?

MARC LEISHMAN: So the people that run our foundation or help us with our foundation, not run it, they're like, "So what are your interests?" Audrey told him what her interests were, I told them what my interests were. I think I like gardening and grilling out and beer.

And they're like, "Well, that doesn't give us much to work with," because they like to try and -- I feel I'm a pretty personable person and they want to keep it like how about a foundation that runs the same as our personality, I guess. So they went to a local brewery and they were all over it, they loved the idea. So it's not only a really good beer, it's raising money for families who are going through toxic shock syndrome, sepsis or acute respiratory distress syndrome.

There's probably I don't know how many families the money from that would have helped but it would probably be over 100 families. So it's a pretty cool thing that's happening and hopefully it can get a lot bigger and it can benefit our foundation a lot more and it can benefit Back Bay Brewing a lot more, too.

Q. (No microphone.)

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, so because they're only a small facility at the moment, I think they make -- their vats hold 70 kegs. I think it's 70, so they do that at a time, that many kegs at a time. So they get it to as many places as they can. There's a few places around Virginia Beach that have it, that sell it and they have it at their taproom as well. Yeah, it's pretty good thing to be involved with.

Q. (No microphone.)

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, a few people come up to me and say that. I mean, like I guess they know who I am, but I've been living there 10 years now. Yeah, it's funny, when I went into the -- to the brewery for the first time, they have to call it a tasting room and it went up and it was pretty weird asking for a Leishman Lager and the girls had no idea who -- the bar people behind the bar didn't have a clue. It was kind of nice because other people are like "Oh, can I have a Leish, please?" It was a pretty cool feeling.

Q. Is your picture on the label or what?

MARC LEISHMAN: No, I've got it on my phone actually. It looks a little bit like the Australian coat of arms, I think it's an emu and kangaroo on there. I'll show you guys after. Yeah, it's a good logo. The people drew it up and it was perfect the first time.

MODERATOR: Excellent. Thanks so much for joining us today, Marc. Best of luck this week.

MARC LEISHMAN: Made me thirsty.