



**TEAM AUSTRALIA TELECONFERENCE**  
**ISPS HANDA Melbourne World Cup of Golf**  
**September 16, 2018**

**MARC LEISHMAN**  
**CAM SMITH**

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**MICHAEL BALIKER:** Good morning, everybody. Again, for those in Australia, I'm Michael Baliker, communications manager with the PGA TOUR.

We're pleased to be joined today by two very special guests, Marc Leishman and Cameron Smith. They're going to be Australia's representatives as Australia takes on the world here in the ISPS HANDA Melbourne World Cup of Golf at the Metropolitan Golf Club, 21st through 25th of November.

Guys, I'll just start out and ask you a quick question to get things rolling here.

Marc, you played in this event in 2016 when it was in Melbourne. Can you just talk about the opportunity to get to go back down there and represent your country in Australia and in a place that means so much to you?

**MARC LEISHMAN:** Yeah, man, it's a huge honor to represent your country anytime, whether it's the Presidents Cup or World Cup or as an amateur. Yeah, to go back down there and play on one of my favorite golf courses, it's going to be a lot of fun. I've got a great partner in Cam. I'm sure we're going to enjoy ourselves and enjoy everything Melbourne has to offer. Play some good golf as well, that's the plan. So it would be nice to win the World Cup in our home country, I think that's certainly a goal of both of ours. There's a lot of great players playing, but there's no reason it can't be us lifting that trophy at the end of the week.

**MICHAEL BALIKER:** Absolutely. And Cam, just real quickly, give us your initial reaction when you did get that phone call from Marc about being the guy and your initial thoughts on being able to really play golf and represent your country at the same time.

**CAMERON SMITH:** Yeah, well, it's a first time for me representing Australia as a professional. Yeah, really should be an awesome experience. All four of us get along really good. We'll have a lot of fun out on the course. Like Marc said, playing golf in Melbourne, as well, is never bad, and I'm just really excited.

**MICHAEL BALIKER:** With that, we'll take questions.

**Q. Leish, good to talk to you. Actually, Leish, if you don't mind, I'm going to ask this to you. It's been a rough year for Aussie golf in terms of losing a couple legends, and I know you would have seen Peter Thomson on the first tee at Kingston Heath a couple years ago, and obviously your tight links to Jarrod. Does it mean any more with two guys who meant so much to Australian golf not being able to be part of it this year?**

**MARC LEISHMAN:** Yeah. I mean, obviously there's a lot more reasons to why we want those boys around than the World Cup, but certainly. I mean, it's two huge losses. Peter Thomson, five Open Championships, countless other events, and Jarrod Lyle, who I was good mates with. Yeah, obviously it's been a sad year for Australian golf. Peter Thomson lived an awesome life, as did Jarrod but Jarrod's was cut extremely short, so leaving a young family behind, that's pretty rough for him and his family. Probably not that we need any more incentive, but certainly it gives you a little more incentive to go try and win that trophy. It would be nice to have it be for him out of that tragedy, for both of the boys, but Jarrod in particular, having known him so well and knowing how much he enjoyed it.

**Q. Leish, just wanted to get your thoughts, mate, on being the highest ranked player coming to the World Cup, and if you saw any of the backlash back in Australia from the fact that there are no golfers in the Top-20 playing. Just wanted to see if you saw any of that and sort of how you would respond to that?**

**MARC LEISHMAN:** I didn't see any of that. I guess I kind of assumed there would be something happening there. Probably a little bit disappointing, but I guess the timing with it being the week of Thanksgiving, particularly with the American guys, that's a tough one for them to leave home for. Yeah, I mean, me personally, I'm not going to let that put a damper on the tournament or hopefully any success that we have there. It's still going to be a great field on an unbelievably good golf course. So hopefully they'll have the course nice and firm and it will play like the Melbourne Sandbelt, and I think the field's going to be good enough that the week of the tournament no one's going to be talking about it.

**Q. Just to follow that up, would you accept the title of favoritism between you and Cam, is that something fair to say?**

**MARC LEISHMAN:** I mean, I don't know about that. I guess being the highest ranked player, I guess you could maybe think about that with Cam's form as well leading into it. But like I said, there's so many great players playing. It doesn't matter if you're a favorite or not a favorite, you've still got to play good to have a result and that's what we're going down there to do, is try and play as good as we can, and hopefully that's good enough to have a great week. If it's not, we'll know that we'll have given it our best shot, and great players will win.

**Q. Hi, guys. Just a question to Cam if I might. It's been a big year for yourself, mate, and there's a lot of things, your priorities change as you sort of moved up the rankings and you had good performances. Can I just ask, it seems from some of the comments I read that this World Cup was a bit of a priority there for most of the year. Was it there in the back of your mind all the time thinking that you're probably going to come out to play some golf and you wanted to play in the World Cup?**

**CAMERON SMITH:** Yeah, that was basically it. I knew it was a World Cup year obviously. I was playing some really good golf towards the end of last year with the stint in Asia and then the win back at home. It was one of the -- one of my priorities was to get into the Top-50, to get into that Masters field and then secondly was to get on this team. To tick both of those off in one year, it's just been an unreal year basically.

**Q. You've had a victory in a team event as well. Does that give you some sort of good preparation for this as well, obviously playing with a different partner, but you've won a team event. Do you know how it all works?**

**CAMERON SMITH:** Yeah. I mean, we grew up playing team golf basically in Australia, playing the Interstate series and playing the local Pennants golf. It's always kind of fired me up. Yeah, whenever I'm in a team environment, I always seem to just, you know, step up a notch. Not that I'm not giving it my best every week, but yeah, there's something inside me that changes.

**Q. And just one to Leish, if I might. It gets harder and harder to come home every year with the schedule getting more packed and priorities changing. How much of a priority does it remain for you to make sure you come home every year to play?**

**MARC LEISHMAN:** Yeah, for sure, definitely a priority. I feel like that's something that I haven't ticked off yet is winning one of the big events in Australia. The longer it goes, the more it's going to get talked about and the more I'll think about it. It would be nice to, well, obviously play. It would be nice to win.

It's certainly a priority of mine to be there and not only support the Australian golf, but that's cool, I remember going to the events when I was a kid and watching Greg Norman and Ian Baker-Finch play, and Wayne Grady and all the guys came back. I'll never forget that and that's something that I want to give the kids as well, the guys that they see play on TV play in America every week, I think they need to see us play in person. Being one of those guys, I'll certainly play as much as I can in Australia. With three kids at home, it's hard sometimes, but I'll certainly do everything I can to get home.

**Q. And what's your schedule beyond the World Cup? Have you locked in any other events here, the PGA or the Open, obviously a week on the side?**

**MARC LEISHMAN:** Yeah, I'm playing the Australian PGA, so I'll play a few events in Asia before in the wrap-around schedule and then come back to the Australian PGA and the

World Cup, then we'll have Christmas in Australia.

**Q. Cam, the same thing, obviously you're coming back to defend at the PGA. Have you thought about the Open as well?**

**CAMERON SMITH:** Yeah, I'm definitely coming back down to the Gold Coast. I'm going to do the same thing as Leish, play a few in Asia and then I'll see myself in Sydney as well, I think.

**Q. Good morning, guys. Leish, I guess a question for you. Your thoughts on Metropolitan, and have you thought about maybe the different challenges of foursomes and four-ball?**

**MARC LEISHMAN:** Yeah, it's an unbelievable golf course, one of the best conditioned golf course, if not the best conditioned course I've ever seen. Looking forward to getting there, playing that.

Yeah, I've thought about it a little bit; not that much in foursomes because it's been a while since I've played there so I can't really remember too many of the holes. Yeah, I know that it depends on how it plays also. If it plays like Kingston Heath did in the last World Cup, very soft, it's not going to be too much of an advantage and not much like Sandbelt golf, but hopefully it's firm and fast like we all know that Melbourne Sandbelt to be.

A bit of strategy comes into it. There's going to be a lot of irons off tees, and then you've got to position yourself on the greens, particularly with the bunkers being cut all the way up to the greens. It's pretty punishing if you short-side yourself around there. Maybe, particularly if it's firm, it's going to be probably fairly conservative, I would say, even both foursomes and four-ball.

**Q. Do you and Cam use the same type of ball? And if not, who gets to choose which type of ball to use in foursomes?**

**MARC LEISHMAN:** We don't use the same type of ball. That's something we'll have to talk about next week at the TOUR Championship. I'll give him some of my balls, I'll steal some of his balls out of his locker and we'll play around with that, but that's something that's going to be pretty easy. I play a Callaway ball, he plays a Titleist ball. We've still got a couple months until the tournament. We've got plenty of time to play around with that and see if we need to change anything or see which ball we're going to use.

**Q. You mentioned the TOUR Championship this week. I'll quickly ask your expectations for that given, obviously, your position in the FedExCup rankings, makes it a little bit difficult?**

**MARC LEISHMAN:** Yeah, it makes it very difficult. I'm pretty much going there not even thinking about the FedExCup, just thinking about trying to win the tournament. It's basically

zero that I'm going to win the FedExCup, but there's still \$9 million and a trophy at the end of the week. I'm going to go there and have the best week I can have, try and walk away with a trophy, and hopefully Cam can play good and walk away with the FedExCup.

**Q. Cam, the same question for you, your expectations going into this week?**

**CAMERON SMITH:** Yeah, I mean, the same as Marc. I think a lot of stuff is going to have to go my way as well to get my hands on the big trophy. I'm just going there and trying not to think about it too much. Just go there, treat it as a normal golf tournament and do my prep and hopefully everything falls my way during the week.

**Q. Just wanted to ask you, Leish, first up, how difficult was the decision in terms of deciding between Adam Scott and Cam, and did you go off more than just the world rankings?**

**MARC LEISHMAN:** It was pretty difficult. You know, obviously great mates with both of them. Cam had played extremely well leading up to the selection. Obviously Scotty had played pretty good as well, he had a great PGA and then played good at the Northern Trust.

So yeah, it was a tough decision with Scotty picking me in the last World Cup as well. It was a tough phone call to have to make to him, but like I said to him, I'm lucky that Cam's played too good for me not to pick him. I feel like as hard a decision it was, Cam made it a quiet straightforward one.

**Q. If I can ask both of you, where does the World Cup rank in terms of trophies available in World Golf?**

**MARC LEISHMAN:** Yeah, it's a big tournament. Anytime you can represent your country at any level it's an honor and you want to do your country proud. You know, I wouldn't say it ranks up there with the majors, but any tournament you play you want to win. To play a team event and win it, as a pro, I've never done that. (Inaudible) losing Presidents Cup team, it'd be nice to win an event and have a mate to celebrate it with, and we're going to do everything we can to do that, and try and make Australia proud.

**Q. Cam, your thoughts on that?**

**CAMERON SMITH:** Yeah, I mean, it's pretty big. Being in Australia as well, I think, would just make it even more special if we could knock it off. Yeah, we're going to just go there, try our best and just try and have a good time. Like Leish was saying before, I think if we go down there and have a good time, I think we'll just end up playing well. Yeah, I can't wait for the week.

**Q. Last question I have for you is foursomes. Is there any particular strategy you're going to take? It's a pretty quirky format. Any strategy do you think you'll take to try and get the best out of it?**

**CAMERON SMITH:** Yeah, I think that's probably something we're just going to have to figure out when we get down there, you know, what holes we feel comfortable on, wind direction, firmness of the golf course. Everything's just going to have to wait until that week, I think.

Yeah, Leish, do you have anything?

**MARC LEISHMAN:** No. Really, it's all -- I remember the golf course, but I don't remember specific holes. I haven't really thought about which holes each of us is going to hit off, but like Cam said, it's pretty much where you're comfortable. I think it's a fairly conservative format if the golf course is firm, but if it's soft like Kingston Heath was, I think you have to be a little more aggressive, just the scores at Kingston Heath showed that. And it's a day-to-day thing, see how you're feeling. Hopefully, we're both feeling really good and we can feel confident going at all the pins and making lots of birdies.

**Q. Cam, Jim Tucker sends his regards. He couldn't be on the call today. I just wanted to know what your thoughts are about the Presidents Cup and how important this event is to impress Ernie on the International team. You're leading the standings at the moment. It's very early, though, but you're in a good position.**

**CAMERON SMITH:** Yeah, I mean, I wouldn't say I'd be a kick-in if Leish and I went and knocked it off, but like you said, it's still really early. We've still got a year and a bit to go until there and it's definitely something I've been eyeing up for a while, so it's definitely going to keep me motivated all next year.

**Q. And second question from him was how much experience have you had playing on the Sandbelt in Melbourne as an amateur?**

**MARC LEISHMAN:** We used to play the Aussie stroke play, the Aussie amateur, the Vic Open and stuff like that down there. The Aussie Masters was obviously there. So I played a fair bit down there from age kind of 15 through to 19, 20. Haven't been down there for a while. Obviously the Masters hasn't been around for a few years now. I think I've played Metro once or twice, I can't really remember the golf course. But yeah, I love the style of golf down there, I love playing down there, and I just love playing back in Australia as well.

**Q. Leish, just a question for you on Jason Day. Obviously he's not going to be there, I understand he's expecting a third child around that time. Have you had a conversation with him in the past couple of weeks? Did he sort of express disappointment that he's not going to be able to make the trip out?**

**MARC LEISHMAN:** He didn't actually -- I was with him in a practice round at the PGA and he was still undecided then. He was trying to do everything he could to go down there, leaving as late as possible.

But yeah, he was disappointed. Playing in a World Cup, the one time he played with Scotty. He may have played another tournament, I don't remember. Yeah, he really wants to be down there. Just with kids and schedule, it's hard. He left it until the last minute to let me know that he wasn't going just to give himself the best chance.

**Q. Did he say that it was just family reasons why he didn't eventually decided not to play?**

**MARC LEISHMAN:** Yeah, family reasons. Anytime your wife is pregnant, you've got another baby on the way, it's something you never want to miss. I think it's obviously a very big tournament, but yeah, he was disappointed. It was family reasons.

**Q. Cam, what's clicked for you in the last month or so, mate?**

**CAMERON SMITH:** Not much, really. I felt as though I've played really good all year, not really changed. Just golf, I guess, through the middle bit of the year, it just felt like kind of nothing was going my way on the golf course. Just certain times, I don't know, it's hard to explain, but I just got back to what I know, spent a lot of time around the chipping green, putting green the last kind of month or so and that's just kind of taken a lot of stress back off my long game and that's allowed that to free up. If there was one thing I would put it on, it would probably be that, or just due to probably the lack of effort, I guess, in that department.

**Q. Have you looked at the math going down to East Lake or no?**

**CAMERON SMITH:** What was that? Sorry?

**Q. Have you looked at the math going down to East Lake, like what you've got to do and what needs to happen?**

**CAMERON SMITH:** No, not really. Just I know a few things have to go my way to get my hands on the FedExCup. I'm just going down there and just preparing as if it's another Tour event, just put in everything I can and if it happens, it happens.

**MARC LEISHMAN:** You've got a lot more chance than I do.

**Q. Leish, I just wanted to ask you one last thing. Have you figured out what you don't know yet?**

**MARC LEISHMAN:** My brain was like -- so my thinking when that was happening was like, am I really, really dumb and that's just a simple question, or is she messing with me? That's what she asked. (Inaudible). But that's what she asked. There was nothing lost in translation. It was just a completely (inaudible) question, as you can probably tell from the video. That was an interesting one.

**Q. Leish, just couldn't hang up without the obligatory Richmond question. Any**

**chance have you looked at it, if they make the Granny, any chance you come home to have a look or is the timing all wrong?**

**MARC LEISHMAN:** Yeah, I would love to be there. Hopefully they get there. Yeah, I've probably no chance of getting back. The time between tournaments now, I'm pretty busy with sponsor stuff. Yeah, I've got things lined up and unfortunately I won't be able to make it back if they get there.

Hopefully I'll be able to -- I'll definitely watch it this year, though. The last year I wasn't able to watch the Grand Final because we were at the Presidents Cup, we had 36 holes on the Saturday. Hopefully this year they can get there again and I'll sit up and watch it. I'll watch it even if they're not in it, but obviously it would be a lot more fun if they are.

**Q. How about this week, the Collingwood game, have you got somewhere you can watch it or does it interfere with tee times? What's the time like?**

**MARC LEISHMAN:** It will be on -- it's a Friday night game, right? So it will be on at 5:30 on Saturday morning. It depends on if our hotel's got the channel. Actually, Fox hooked me up with the thing so I can watch it online now. I might even do that if I'm awake and all that. Yeah, we'll see. Normally I'll just wake up in the morning and check the scores.

**Q. Fair enough. Did I see you send Aaron Finch a Tweet during the week when he made the Test squad? Is that a Western District thing or do you know Finchy?**

**MARC LEISHMAN:** I don't actually know him. We've kind of spoken a little bit and just sort of happy for him. It's good that he can make his way into the Test squad and hopefully he'll tear it up over there.

**Q. I was just going to ask the same question as Russell. I know Jack Riewoldt already put his hand up, Marc, to play with you in the pro-am. You'll be a popular guy, I'm sure, so we'll have to wait and see whether he goals for you in the Grand Final.**

**MARC LEISHMAN:** It would be good.

**Q. Just a final question about playing for your country. It's so rare in golf, the next three years are great opportunities to play team golf with the World Cup, Presidents Cup and the International team, and then also the Olympic Games and there will be a stampede to Tokyo.**

**Cam, for you, just recap what it will mean to stand alongside Marc and play for your country at the World Cup?**

**CAMERON SMITH:** Yeah, I mean, it was pretty unreal really when Leish rung me the other morning. He had his boys on Facetime and they all congratulated me, so it was pretty cool. I said a few inappropriate words in front of his two boys there. Yeah, just stoked that I got in,



something I wanted to do all year and to tick the box was pretty cool. And then obviously playing with Leish as well helped me out a lot over here, someone I've looked up to for a while, so we should have a good time.

**Q. And Marc?**

**MARC LEISHMAN:** Yeah?

**Q. Just again your thoughts on that again, the opportunity to play for your country in front of home fans.**

**MARC LEISHMAN:** Yeah, it's going to be awesome. Had a taste of it at Kingston Heath a few years ago. Unfortunately, we didn't play the way we would have liked, but still a great experience, great fun. As you said with the Presidents Cup next year in Australia also and then the Olympics in Tokyo, it's a big few years for team golf. Again, Presidents Cup is a goal obviously, as it is every two years, and the Olympics. I wasn't able to go to the Olympics in Rio, but it's something that really is a priority for me to try and represent my country in the Olympics and become an Olympian. I'll jump all over that if I can do that. Yeah, like I say, it's nice to be able to represent your country, it's something that makes me very proud.

**MICHAEL BALIKER:** With that, we'll go ahead and close it. Thanks to everybody for calling in. And Marc and Cam, really appreciate it. Go get them this week at East Lake. We appreciate it.