

**TONY FINAU**  
**LEXI THOMPSON**

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**DOUG MILNE:** Like to welcome the team of Lexi Thompson and Tony Finau to the interview room here at the QBE Shootout. You guys are back together again for a second year coming off a tie for 4th last year. Just a couple of opening comments about being back here as a team, and obviously for you, very special being back given last month. So just a couple comments, we'll start with you, Lexi, about being back and being paired with Tony.

**LEXI THOMPSON:** Yeah, it's just great to be back. Obviously a lot of great memories here two weeks ago. But to be able to be paired with Tony again, it was so much fun last year getting to see him bomb the ball off the tee and just to watch his game. It's just a huge honor to be able to play in this event with the men and just to be invited back.

I'm looking forward to this week. Supposed to be good weather and the course is in great shape for us, so we'll have a good time out there.

**TONY FINAU:** Yeah, no doubt. I look forward to teeing it up with Lexi again and having another go. We played well last year. I think we enjoyed playing together, so here we are again this year. She's obviously in good form and so am I, so I look forward to competing this week and just enjoying ourselves again here a year later.

**Q. So there's some different formats like the three days. What have you guys learned from last year about sort of strategy and how to approach this thing? It's not like your normal stroke play event.**

**LEXI THOMPSON:** Well, it's the same as last year, so.

**TONY FINAU:** Yeah, it is the same format as last year.

**LEXI THOMPSON:** Yeah, it's the same as last year.

**Q. What did you learn from last year on sort of how to tackle those different formats?**

**LEXI THOMPSON:** Well, scramble's pretty easy, we both just play as we would but get to pick the best shot. That's always the fun day. Modified alternate pretty happy about, so I get to tee off and he doesn't have to play my ball on those certain holes, but it's always an option.

Yeah, it's more of strategizing maybe sometimes with the modified alternate and more of the last day as well, but we're just playing our ball out for the best ball. So I would say it's mainly

the second day on strategizing. And scramble, you know, he can always just go for every shot and I can get one in play.

**TONY FINAU:** Yeah, from what I remember from last year, she made it pretty easy for me off the tee when we played scramble, she was always in play. She hits it very straight and plenty far. From what I remember, there's not much that changes in my game. I stay pretty aggressive, I think we both play pretty aggressively off the tee for the most part.

**LEXI THOMPSON:** He hits it very straight --

**TONY FINAU:** I hit a lot of drivers today --

**LEXI THOMPSON:** -- so you can just bomb it.

**TONY FINAU:** I hit a lot of drivers today. I don't know how much strategy goes into it. We both, you know, know what we're doing as far as when it comes down to our game and know if we play well, then hopefully at the end of this week we can have a chance to win. If we don't, we're going to have a good time no matter what.

**LEXI THOMPSON:** Exactly.

**Q. Just thoughts on your respective seasons? And Lexi, what's been the last couple of weeks like to come off a win like that? And Tony, just your season overall, just the performance in the majors and making the Ryder Cup?**

**TONY FINAU:** It's been a great season. I learned a lot about myself throughout the year and happy with the results I've had as of late, especially in the majors. Anytime you can play well in the majors and have the consistency that I've had, I think you can carry a lot of confidence from that. I look forward to that next season. I've learned a lot about myself and about my game and feel like things are on the up and up. That's all you can ask of yourself I think each season is see where you can improve.

I feel like I've improved a lot in different parts of my game that I've been prying to improve on and the results have shown that. It's pretty cool for me, this is going to be my first week as a top-10 player in the world, which is something that's pretty special for me. So I'm going to enjoy the results that I've had and look forward to just as a team and see what we can do to see what we can improve on this next season. But as I look back, it was pretty special.

And then to make the Ryder Cup team with those 11 guys and the captains and to be able to just play in that atmosphere and play some good golf is also a confidence booster, but to be able to hang out with those guys and just to be part of that team was very special for me, something that I'll definitely remember for the rest of my career.

**LEXI THOMPSON:** Yeah, for me it was a little bit of an up-and-down year. I played some great golf. Hard to compare to my 2017 season, but I had some great tournaments. I've

really just been working on my game the last few months and it's been coming around. I knew it was very close, so having the win at CME was a huge sign for me that just my hard work was paying off.

As a lot of people know, I had to take some time off in the middle of the year. It was just a little emotionally draining, so I just needed some time for myself. It was very needed. But overall it was a great year. I had some great finishes, so just going to work on my game in the offseason and hopefully continue to just keep on improving for 2019.

**Q. Tony, one of the things we talked about this week on Golf Central is the fact that you seem to be enjoying yourself, so many top-10 finishes, but you don't get down on yourself if you miss by a stroke or finish runner-up. What does that tell you about yourself and some of the things that you mentioned that you learned about yourself?**

**TONY FINAU:** Yeah, I've played a lot of good golf throughout the year and I think you always have to take positives. I've always been that way and it helps me just -- my attitude always to be on the up. I never -- I try to never allow myself to think that I can't get the job done or whatever the case may be.

So I've had some great finishes, I played some good golf. I do feel like my time is coming, so just keep getting better. And again, that's all you're trying to do as a player is try and improve. Every part of my game has improved the last few years, so there's nothing that I can say that will bring any kind of negativity to my game. I feel that way. And physically I'm in better shape than I've ever been in, so there are a lot of things that I've improved on and that I've wanted to these last few seasons.

I think a huge part of that is my attitude, always try to stay as positive as you can. We live in a world where so many people are always focused on negative things, and I try not to ever do that and have kind of trained myself to try and stay positive no matter what. Again, things seem to be on the up and we'll continue to try and just get better, myself and our team, and see what we can accomplish in 2019.

**Q. And to go along with that, how have you been able to maintain that kind of consistency? I mean, even the ankle at the Masters, you were able to get through that. What kind of mental toughness does that take?**

**TONY FINAU:** Yeah, I think a lot of mental fortitude this past season. And again, I've learned a lot about myself just being in that situation at the Masters, it was quite crazy. But the takeaways was exactly that, the mental fortitude I had just to continue to play and just have that never-giving-up attitude, I've always had that and it's served me well in my professional career but also in my life. So I think you have to overcome things throughout your career. I've learned that about myself this year, you can overcome some obstacles, and hopefully it will continue to serve me well.

**Q. What's one thing you feel that you guys have learned from each other from this**

**partnership?**

**LEXI THOMPSON:** That's a good question.

I mean, I feel like I learn just a lot just from watching his game. I grew up with two older brothers, so I grew up always watching their games and playing with the guys, but to watch how far he can hit it and just the height that he can hit shots, it's pretty remarkable. I see one flight and that's like low usually (laughs.) So it's great to watch his game, just the shots that he can hit and work it into pins. I know if I see him pull off any shot or chip around the greens, I can ask him, oh, what did you hit, or how'd you do it, and he can always just let me know.

It's great just to watch their games just in general, but Tony's -- I asked him about one drive and he was like, "Yeah, that was just a fairway finder. I have like 30 more yards than that." I'm like, "Okay, so we'll be using your drive."

But it's very impressive to watch. Even growing up with two older brothers, it's just remarkable just the distance and just the talent. And watching him all year just kill it, yeah, happy to be a teammate.

**TONY FINAU:** Thanks, Lexi. I look at it the same way. I don't know how much she's learned from me, but I've learned just how good she is. It's cool to see it up close. Obviously one of the best players in the world, and to be able to see it up close, she hits the ball very solid, she hits it far, she can chip and putt. There's no weaknesses in her game.

Here we are back again a year later. Obviously we enjoyed playing with each other and I look forward to just doing it again this year.

**Q. Is it going to be a family affair with both of your caddies this week? Tell us a little bit about that dynamic.**

**LEXI THOMPSON:** Well, I have my brother on the bag again, Curtis, so he'll be right out there. I already warned him. But yeah, it's great to have my brother again on the bag. He was here two weeks ago as everybody knows. He's one of a kind, he'll keep us laughing, that's for sure.

**TONY FINAU:** Yeah, no doubt. I know Curtis just from the few times I talked to him, so we're going to have a good time.

I have my cousin on the bag this week, (indiscernible.) He's pursuing a professional career, so I figured this would be a good opportunity for him to come out and see some of the guys, some of the best players in the world and just learn. Yeah, I guess it is a little bit of a family affair.

**Q. And what tour is he playing on this coming year?**

**TONY FINAU:** A lot of mini-tour stuff. He's going to try and get on the Web.

**Q. Tony, you just cracked the top-10, and Lexi, you've been ranked No. 1 in the U.S. before, top-5 in the world. As we know, Greg was No. 1 for 331 weeks. You both had spectacular years in the past, but can you give us an idea of just how hard it is to maintain that top ranking?**

**LEXI THOMPSON:** I would say it definitely is a little difficult, but I think for both of us we just have to focus on our own games. As athletes, if we focus on other players or about their rankings, it will just get into your mind and drive you crazy.

So you just have to keep on working on yourself and on your game and just keep on trying to improve on the things that you want to improve on on and off the golf course. Whatever happens, happens. All you can do is control your attitude in life and how your game is. Once you start worrying about everything else, it just gets to you and most likely you won't succeed.

**TONY FINAU:** Yeah, totally agree. You can only control what you can and not anybody else.

As far as Greg Norman, pretty remarkable to be that consistent and be the No. 1 player in the world for had a long. I know he's -- outside of Tiger, he's the guy next that has held that No. 1 position the longest. That's really remarkable and really tough to do, to be the best player in the world for that long and for that type of span, so that's pretty incredible.

I think we both aspire to be the best player in the world in our game, but to be able -- I have a ton of respect for someone that can do it for that long. Obviously Tiger is someone that I've looked up to, and to see the consistency that he's had is something that I try and strive for. To have that type of consistency and play well on a weekly basis is something that I definitely strive for.

**Q. Any of the rules changes that either of you are looking forward to or have an opinion on, the ball moving on its own or --**

**LEXI THOMPSON:** I have no comment about any rules, sorry. I don't have any comment. I'm not getting into it, sorry.

**TONY FINAU:** I don't know all the rules that have been changed. I know a couple of them, I know you can keep the pin in.

**LEXI THOMPSON:** I just learned that one today.

**TONY FINAU:** That will be interesting to see how many guys actually utilize that because I don't see many guys leaving the pin in when they putt.

But I think fixing ball marks or fixing really anything on the green, I think you're going to see a lot of people start to fix around the cup and any kind of spike marks, so I think that's probably going to be the biggest change. Hopefully that doesn't slow down play. Guys will be cleaning up the hole for a minute. I think those are a couple of the bigger ones and we'll see how that plays out.

**DOUG MILNE:** All right. Lexi, Tony, thank you guys and best of luck this week.