



Q. Martin, 4-under 68 today. Obviously tough conditions in one sense. Just a few comments on the round today.

MARTIN LAIRD: Yeah, I played really nicely. Drove the ball excellently, which you've got to do around here. It's a long golf course and if you're in the rough, especially early in the morning when the rough's wet, a lot of the par 4s you can't even get to. I would say that was kind of the main point for me today, I got in the fairway a lot. I just played really solid. I had one hole, made double on the par 3 getting a little cute with the chip. Apart from that, it was a tidy card and gave myself a lot of looks. Made some of them and was very happy.

Q. (No microphone) here at this golf course has changed a lot over the years. How much different is it now versus when you started coming here?

MARTIN LAIRD: Yeah, it's completely different. I remember when I first came here there was maybe four or five, maybe even six par 4s where I hit 3-wood or maybe 2-iron or 5-wood off the tee and now it just pretty much feels like you hit driver all day. I think I hit two 3-woods and then the rest are driver. It's definitely stretched out.

You know, there's some holes that I think set up a little better for me now like the first hole because I like to cut it. It sets up great for a driver. But then there are some holes that changed that I feel I have to work a little harder to get the ball in play.

So, I mean, when it's in this condition it's hard to beat this place, the course is immaculate. It's the best I've ever seen it. So I'm always a fan of places where the greens are firm, so I'm enjoying being here.

Q. A lot of people wonder about playing in team events. You had a good showing last week, a three-time winner on Tour. When it's a little bit more laid back and you're trying to get back to the winner's circle for the first time in a while, does that give you a boost even though you have a partner?

MARTIN LAIRD: I mean, yeah, we had a fun week last week. It's a fun tournament. I hadn't been playing great going in and me and Nick, we played well. It is a little more laid back, but sometimes melting a shot is less laid back because you're feeling a little extra pressure to let your partner down, too.

Yeah, we played really well on Sunday and I definitely came out of the tournament, even though it was alternate shot, coming here on Sunday with a feeling of confidence and coming off a good week.

Yeah, I think you're right. It's pretty much a laid-back week for the most part playing as a team event. You can definitely still take confidence from it even though you're not out there yourself and it carried over to this week.

Q. Did it help with the confidence?

MARTIN LAIRD: It definitely did. Yeah, yeah, like I said, we played really well last week on the final two rounds. My game kind of got better as the last couple rounds went on last week. You know, carried that over. Sometimes it's nice, like you said, in the four-ball last week feeling a little -- when you know you've got someone there backing you up that's maybe already hit it in close or in a good spot, you kind of free up a little bit. I would say that's what I took from last week, just kind of free myself up a little bit. I probably played a little looser having a teammate and I did that again today. I felt like I just kind of picked my shot and let it go today. I definitely hit it better.

Q. A lot of golfers are wearing green ribbons today. I wonder if you can talk about that decision.

MARTIN LAIRD: Yeah, well, as soon as I saw it on the tee, I definitely put one on. I used to live about 45 minutes from here for six years, so obviously it was horrible news to hear yesterday. Kind of count myself as kind of a local. So yeah, I think it's great they did it and obviously all our thoughts are with everyone affected by what happened.

Q. Do you know who came up with that idea?

MARTIN LAIRD: I have no idea. I just saw they had them on the tee box when we got there. My caddie lives in this area, too. It definitely feels kind of like a home tournament, so definitely try to show some support.

Q. Martin, you put up a good number today in your first round, but obviously with you having to tee off in the afternoon tomorrow, how much do you pay attention to what the conditions will be for some of these guys out here this afternoon?

MARTIN LAIRD: I won't really pay any attention at all, try to get away from it. I won't even really look at scores. I know tomorrow the greens, if anything, will get a little firmer, but they're pretty firm already. It's not like they're soft right now.

You know, the ball will probably be going a little farther tomorrow afternoon just because it will be a little warmer than when we started at 7:20 this morning. That's the only adjustment I would make starting out. But apart from that, as I said, the course is in great shape. I don't expect it to change too much between this morning and tomorrow afternoon. It's already playing firm and fast.

Q. So putting it in the fairway then becomes a premium then?

MARTIN LAIRD: I mean, around this golf course being in the fairway is a premium at all times. It's such a long course, if you're driving it in the rough, as I said, there's some par 4s you can't even get to. That's what happened on my last hole there. I drove it in the left rough and I had to kind of lay up short right and get up and down for par because I didn't really have a shot to get it on the green.

Q. 4-under 67, anytime you're in red numbers on this golf course that's a good thing. Nice par save by the way at 9 to stay at minus 4. Your thoughts on how you played today?

MARTIN LAIRD: Yeah, I played really nicely. I had one little hiccup on the par-3 13th where I missed it short-sided, got a little cute with my chip and ended up making double. But with the exception of that hole, I played really, really nicely.

You know, 18 was -- my last hole there, No. 9, was the only other hole I really was scrambling all day. I hit a lot of greens, which is important around here, and I gave myself a lot of looks and made some of them. So overall very happy with how I played. I drove the ball really nicely and this is a demanding golf course. It's tricky when you're in the fairways, so if you're missing the fairways around here, it's really tough. So hopefully I can keep hitting the ball in the fairway the rest of the week and have a good week.

Q. The Green Mile you played 1 under. You had a couple of pars, you had the birdie at 17. When you start on the back and that's kind of like the midway point in the round, is that better than thinking about that all day?

MARTIN LAIRD: I mean, it -- the hole doesn't change whether it's your front nine or back nine, but, you know, I knew I was hitting it well and I hit a really good drive on 18. You know, I like to cut the ball and 18 sets up for a draw. The wind was off the left a little bit, so that probably was the best drive I had all day, really hit a good one down there. Hit it in close and didn't make it. I was really pleased to walk off of 18 with a tap-in par because, like I said, that's kind of a tricky tee shot sometimes. Anytime you play those three -- it doesn't matter when it is, anytime you play those three holes under par you're going to be happy and I most certainly was.

Q. Finally, give our listeners an idea of the course conditions out here because they hear you guys talk all week about how great the golf course is. What's it like out there now that the tournament has started?

MARTIN LAIRD: It's in fantastic shape. It's maybe the best shape I've ever seen it. The greens are firm, and this is a long golf course. As I said, I drove it really well today, so I was -- even some of these par 4s, if you hit a really good one down the fairway, you're still coming in with a 5- or 6-iron. If you're in the rough, you could have really no chance to maybe even get it to the green.

Like on 9 I drove it in the left rough. I couldn't even get to the green, I had to lay up short right and I got up and down for par. That kind of sums up this course. If you're missing the fairways off the tees on a lot of these par 4s, you're then trying to position yourself not even on the green, just to give yourself a chance to get up and down. It's not like you go up and just grab a 9-iron and just wedge it on the green. That's what makes this so demanding.

And then the par 3s around here are hard. There's not one of them that's kind of a normal one, they're all tricky and pretty long. I would say the firm greens are what's keeping the scores kind of high right now. It's hard out there.