

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
18 December 2019



CAMERON SMITH

MODERATOR: Ladies and gentlemen, it's a pleasure to welcome the reigning back-to-back Australian PGA champion, Cameron Smith, here today. He's going to be the first person in more than a hundred years to contend for three in a row, a remarkable achievement.

Cam, it's been a pretty significant last fortnight coming on the back of a successful Presidents Cup singles match for you. Going for three in a row, how is this week, this buildup compared to previous attempts to capture the Joe Kirkwood Cup?

CAMERON SMITH: Probably a little bit more stressful. Last week was a big week on and off the golf course. Still a little bit tired, but in saying that, I'm sure that tomorrow will hype me up and I'll be ready to go.

MODERATOR: Do you feel the pressure or are you comfortable in your own game now after the stellar performance you put in on Sunday that that will carry you in good stead for this week?

CAMERON SMITH: Yeah, I feel pretty confident in my game. It's probably the best I've felt with my iron play all year, and to do it on such a challenging layout last week, you know, against some of the best players in the world was quite good. Yeah, I can't wait for this week. I'm feeling good.

MODERATOR: And why do you love playing the Oz PGA so much? I know it's an important week for you to be around family and friends, it helps you relax. Why is it that you enjoy playing it so much?

CAMERON SMITH: Yeah, I think -- I don't know. I like the golf course obviously. I play well around here. But like you said, it's just such a good week for me off the golf course, lots of family and friends and everything. One team of members come down, so the support is really good throughout the week. I don't know, it's just a good kind of cruisey week. I don't do much off the golf course and just go and hang out. Yeah, just feel relaxed.

MODERATOR: Questions from the floor?

Q. Cam, do you take a slightly different mindset into this week? You were probably the underdog with the Internationals last week and this week you're one of the favorites, going for three in a row. Is it a slightly different mindset?

CAMERON SMITH: Yeah, for sure. I think last week was very team oriented, which was great, I love being around the team. It was a great atmosphere we had. I embraced -- I

know the whole team embraced the underdog mentality last week.

But for sure I've got a good record around here. Yeah, I just can't wait to start. Like I said, I'm feeling really confident where my game's at, so yeah, I can't wait.

Q. Scottie doubled down at sunrise this morning, I think he said there's a hundred guys gunning for this week, I think he sort of said the same thing at the dinner last night. Has there been that friendly banter with him leading up to tomorrow?

CAMERON SMITH: Yeah. As soon as we were done on Sunday afternoon last week, he said, "I'm coming for you next week."

Yeah, Scotty's a great guy. He was a great guy to be around last week. I learned a lot off him. And this is 150 guys this week that are all saying the same thing, so it's going to be tough to get that trophy on Sunday.

Q. Have you just played a round this morning? No, of course you didn't. So did you play any holes yesterday?

CAMERON SMITH: No, I didn't play any holes yesterday.

Q. Okay. I was going to ask you the question if you saw any differences in the setup of the golf course, but if you haven't seen it, can't answer the question.

Just another question. This tournament's played really close to Christmas, the closest it's ever been. How does that work for you in that regard?

CAMERON SMITH: It actually worked out pretty good for me. My girlfriend and I swap Christmases and with it being so close to Christmas, I got two in a row. So that's good for me, I guess; more time with the family.

Yeah, I mean, anytime I get to spend with my family now I love. I don't get to spend much time with them. Yeah, it definitely worked out better for me, for sure.

Q. Cam, you spoke after your last match on Sunday about the highs and lows in a 10-minute period. What about Monday and Tuesday compared to backing up normally week after week, how's the emotional letdown been and when will you know you're back up again?

CAMERON SMITH: Yeah, obviously, personally last week it was great. I knew they needed the point on Sunday afternoon and to get that done was awesome. Then, you know, in the space of 10 minutes Kuch holed that putt on 17 for us to lose, so it was quite gut wrenching.

It still kind of hasn't sunk in yet, I guess. I don't know, just the disappointment, I guess. We all tried so hard, we all played for each other and it was an awesome week. Kind of not to

get the result we wanted was quite difficult to take. But yeah, don't know really. It still hasn't -- I still haven't even, you know, got to think about what's happened on Sunday.

Q. Do you feel like your energy levels are where they would normally be this time of the week?

CAMERON SMITH: Probably not. I had quite a big Sunday night, so basically all of Monday was a travel day and a bit of a washout, and then I drove down here yesterday from Brisbane.

Yeah, a little bit, I guess. Being such a stressful week, it always takes it out of you. Just like being in contention, I feel like the next week I'm always a little bit slower and a little bit down on energy. But in saying that, I'm sure that the crowd will be good tomorrow and I'm sure I'll be up for the challenge tomorrow.

Q. What did about Uncle Trev's bacon, is that the secret to success?

CAMERON SMITH: Yeah, I think he's going to cook that tomorrow morning. I don't know, we might have to start cooking that about 2:30 in the morning for a 6:00 a.m. tee time. Yeah, it's been the secret recipe I guess the last few years. It's worked out good so we're going to keep it going.

Q. As a rugby league fanatic, are you filthy with Adam Scott that he got to play with Johnathan Thurston today?

CAMERON SMITH: Yes, I mentioned that to him last night. I think one of the guys up there yesterday said that he was playing with him and I said I've never wanted be him so bad. I mean, I've wanted to be him my whole life and then now to play with JT, yeah, that's a big loss in my books.

Q. Cameron, obviously this golf course really does fit your eye. Are you able to explain what it is about it that suits your game or that your game suits it?

CAMERON SMITH: I think you have to be -- I think you have to be pretty, you know, pinpoint with your irons into the greens. I think it's -- it's not difficult off the tee, the fairways are quite generous if you're smart, you can be the big guy and hit the drivers and stuff if you want, if you're feeling good. But I think you have to really control your irons and into the wind around here, as you know, it's always windy around here. So I think that's been the big thing the last couple years is I've just been able to hit those three-quarter shots and those low shots and stuff and control them.

Q. Would you say that your iron play is a strength of your game?

CAMERON SMITH: I think it was at some points through the year. It kind of went out the window a little bit, but like I said just before, I'm starting to feel really confident with that

again. When my -- typically when my irons are on, I play really good golf, so it kind of takes the stress off, you know, the putter and the driver knowing that you're going to get chances. Yeah, it's just easy golf, I guess. It's not stressful at all.

Q. Cam, last year was a 36-hole shootout between yourself and Leish really. Your relationship with Adam, how is that different to Leish and how do you think the atmosphere would be different compared to Leish if you two were going head to head over the weekend?

CAMERON SMITH: I don't think the atmosphere would be any different. I think Leish and I, as good of mates as we are, we both still -- you know, we both still want to win, we're still competitors. You know, the talk on the last nine holes last year was pretty minimal. Yeah, I mean, we're all here to do the same thing, and it got -- I mean, it didn't get intense, but it definitely got a little bit different on that back nine on Sunday, for sure.

Q. Just quickly, playing with Cameron Champ and Ryan Fox tomorrow, are you happy to be first away on the second shots?

CAMERON SMITH: Into the greens, yeah. I don't know if I'm going to play with two longer hits ever again, to be honest. I played with Cameron a few times and with Foxy a bunch over the years and they just hit it miles. I mean, it's so impressive to watch.

Yeah, I mean, I'll get to put the pressure on them going into the greens, so it will be good.

Q. And Cam, what's the goal next year? What would you like to tick off?

CAMERON SMITH: Probably the same as last year. I didn't quite get to the top-20 in the world. I wanted to do that all year and didn't quite make it. I think I got down to maybe 25 or 26 or something like that at the start of the year. But I definitely want to get in there. I feel like that's the next kind of big step. But it's a lot of hard work and it's a lot of good results, but I'm willing to do that.

Q. History, 112 years, is it important to you, your place in golf history and I guess what you can achieve this week?

CAMERON SMITH: Yeah, for sure. I mean, especially being in my backyard essentially. It will be really nice. I haven't really -- I don't really like thinking about, you know, "what if." I'm just kind of going to try to do my job to the best of my ability and if it happens on Sunday, great. But if not, you know, I've given it my all and it kind of is what it is.

Q. Just quick, do you think there will be any residue from the Presidents Cup -- I mean, there was a fair bit of bitterness there during the week, wasn't there -- when you get back on Tour in the States?

CAMERON SMITH: I don't think so. I think I was just passionate last week. I just wanted

the -- I wanted the home crowd to really get behind us and they did, they were great all week. I think those guys understand. I mean, they get it when they're in the States, so why shouldn't we have it? It was a really good week and I think they understand and they kind of respect everything that happened, so it is what it is. I'm sure we'll move on and next year will be next year.

MODERATOR: Thank you, everyone.

TEESCRIPES