

ROUND 4 INTERVIEW
January 26, 2020



MARC LEISHMAN (-15)

SHARON SHIN: I would like to welcome in the champion of the 2020 Farmers Insurance Open, Marc Leishman.

Marc, congratulations on your fifth career PGA TOUR victory, and of course on Australia Day, how special was it out there for you?

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, pretty amazing, particularly all the problems that have been happening back in Australia with the fires and, you know, people losing their lives, firefighters. Just devastating really. So if this can bring them a little bit of joy, that's a big win for me personally and then for them as well. So I hope, yeah, this can bring them a bit of joy.

SHARON SHIN: And a big come-from-behind win today, it came down to the very last few holes. What were you feeling when you were watching Jon Rahm coming down the last and you were hitting balls on the first tee there?

MARC LEISHMAN: I was just listening to the crowd noise actually. I knew that putt was going to be pretty important on the last hole, the one of mine, but I putted that before he birdied 17, so I didn't know that he was within two or whatever it was. Yeah, I knew that was a pretty important putt because he's a very good competitor and that pin on 18 is pretty conducive to an eagle, especially with that forward tee.

Q. Do you putt the poa annua well? Do you enjoy coming out here? I think at Riviera you putted the poa annua well. It seems like you putted well here. I mean, 6 under, 7 under, what do you say about putting today, the last couple days?

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, it was pretty nice to see them go in, to be honest. Holed a big one on the first and then --

Q. That's a lot of putts.

MARC LEISHMAN: -- and it just continued all day. So it was funny because I drove it really well early in the week and then clearly I didn't drive it well today. But my iron game was really good and then the putter. I holed some really good par saves there on the whole back nine really.

Yeah, a bit of extra practice early in the week on the putting green. Kind of had a good feeling, but you never know what your week's going to be like. So found something on the putting green early in the week and run with that. I grew up on this grass, I grew up on

kikuyu fairways, poa greens. It's very -- I mean, it's hit and miss, you either putt great on it or you putt terribly, so I'm just glad it was a great.

Q. Leish, there were five years between wins No. 1 and 2 on the PGA TOUR. In that stretch did you ever see yourself as a five-time PGA TOUR winner and what do you feel you can accomplish after this?

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, I mean, my first few years on the tour, you're just hoping to keep your card, just have a job. Once you get that first one, you never want to be that guy with one PGA TOUR win. Not that you never want to be that guy, I shouldn't say that, that's a bit harsh. But it kind of validates it if you can get two and then you can get more, so then you think about winning more. I didn't really ever imagine I would be a five-time tour winner, to be honest. I just wanted to play on the tour, any tour really, play golf for a living. To do it on this tour is pretty amazing and to do it successfully is even better.

So I feel lucky. Just, you know, this is a pretty sweet victory just because I've come close here a few times. From my first year on tour I felt like this is a place I could win at and then to finally do it my 12th year on tour is really satisfying.

Q. Mate, you've been saying that you could win here, like you said, for a decade and you've been proving that might come. How satisfying is it to finally do it? And also on top of that, are you a believer in like karma or the golf gods? You and Smitty were a driving force between trying to help out Australia in the fires and you both won in the first couple weeks of the year.

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, it's really satisfying. I mean, to have come close and not won and then to win, that's very satisfying.

Yeah, I think karma's a thing, but you can never bank on it. I think if you do good things for long enough, not all the time but most of the time you'll get paid off for it. Whether it's winning a golf tournament or just being a nice person, I think that's just a good thing to do.

But yeah, you're not reading anything into it really, you just hope you can do the right thing.

Q. Marc, what were your expectations starting the round, coming from seventh place, I think, four shots back?

MARC LEISHMAN: I just wanted to play well really. Play well. I knew if I played good, I could give myself a chance, but if the guy's out ahead, if they had their best stuff, I wasn't going to win obviously. To get off to the start I did, I was 3 under through four and I missed about a five-foot birdie putt on three, so could have easily been 4 under through four. That's the start you want to get off to.

I saw that the guys out front didn't get off to the best start and then that really got my determination up. Not that it wasn't already up, but that got me right into it. I think I've led

here early in the last round maybe once or twice and let it slip. I was very determined to not let that happen again.

Q. I think you first came here at 17 for Junior World, right? At that time had you traveled much to the States before that? What was your experience? And did San Diego and Torrey Pines kind of leave an impression on you because of that?

MARC LEISHMAN: That was my first ever time out of Australia, so I came over here by myself, which looking back on it was a pretty good thing of my parents to do, just put me on an airplane and send me to San Diego.

Yes, I've got great memories here already. Stayed with Pete and Linda Coe. Awesome people, still friends with them now. I was supposed to be having dinner with them tonight, but that's probably going to be postponed.

Yeah, great memories. I didn't play well that week, I think I missed the three-round cut, but just loved San Diego, loved La Jolla. Pete was the head pro up there, we played golf up there every day, just had an awesome trip. You know, when you've got good memories like that, I feel like if you've got, you know, any sort of game, that can rub off a little bit if you're playing well.

Q. Just to follow, the close finishes you had, you can be at courses you really love and just not quite get it done. Has it always been a feeling of coming back here that, man, I really can get it done here at some point?

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, I learned a lot from when I didn't pull off those wins. I think I played too aggressively. I played a lot more conservative today, or had to on the back nine because I was in the rough on every hole.

Yeah, just playing conservatively, taking out the big numbers, it worked, I guess. If I'd, you know, mid back nine I'll say if I wasn't to win, I didn't want it to be because of me, I wanted it to be because someone made a run, which Jon did. I'm just lucky that he didn't do it a hole earlier.

Q. Two things, Leish. Everyone kept talking about there's always a hot round out there on Sunday. Was there any indication that it might be you either before you started or early part in the day?

MARC LEISHMAN: There was. I was driving it really well early in the week and then, you know, I think I might have only hit two or three fairways today. It just left me a little bit. So yesterday was signs, but the thing that was trending in the right direction, that wasn't because of that, it was because of the putter. I just found a feel on the putting green earlier in the week, which actually I said to Matty, when I had the putter in my hand, feels like it did in Malaysia a couple years ago when I won there, which it's nice when it happens like that occasionally. I wish it could be like that every week.

You know, just putting well on these greens is important. To know that you're more than likely going to make a three- or four-footer coming back if you miss your long putt, that takes so much pressure off those long putts and you can think about holing them rather than lagging them. I would say the driving and the putting, but the putting is what came through.

Q. Secondly, of the three par saves you had on the back nine, which did you find to be the most significant or important to you?

MARC LEISHMAN: Probably 12. I think I bogeyed that hole I think both days I played it, I believe. That was a big one. But then 15 was a big one as well. Yeah, or was it 16? Fifteen? I'm not sure, 15. It was only about -- where I got up and down from the front of the green, that was a big one, yeah, but they were all big coming in. Any one of them don't go in and we're probably still on the golf course now.

Q. Marc, I hate to bring up a tragedy on such a happy day for you, but the death of Kobe Bryant sort of put a shadow over this day. I'm wondering if you're a basketball fan and what your thoughts were on hearing of his passing?

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, it's devastating news for his family and the whole basketball community. It's horrible to see someone who's so successful die in a tragedy like that. Yeah, I just give my condolences to his family and everyone who knew him. It's a very sad day.

Q. I just wanted to ask you about Olympic aspirations. Obviously this helps with that.

MARC LEISHMAN: Olympic?

Q. Aspirations.

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah, I have them. I would love to be there in Tokyo July there, early August. Unfortunately, I couldn't go to the one in Rio, but this is a priority for me. I would love to represent my country and hopefully win a medal for my country.

Q. Leish, how much confidence does this give you going into the majors this year?

MARC LEISHMAN: Yeah. I mean, playing on a major golf course really, it was pretty tough out there this week. Definitely gives me confidence, but long way before the first major. My game's in a good spot. I mean, it's got a bit of fine tuning to do obviously off the tee especially, but that's a goal of mine is to try and win one of those this year, or at least contend. It's been a little while since I've contended in a major and something that I would like to do this year.

SHARON SHIN: All right. Congratulations again and thank you for your time.