

The Senior Open presented by Rolex

Quick Quotes

Wednesday, 24 July 2019

Tom Lehman

Q. Can you tell me how special last week was for you?

TOM LEHMAN: Well, it would have been more special if I would have played well, so the competitor in me was really unhappy with the way I played. Very frustrated with it.

The golfer and the human side of me was thrilled to be able to have my entire family there and have all my kids, my in-laws, my brother and his family, to be able to kind of share that 36 holes with my son carrying the bag and then to kind of finish it off on 18 with all the people I love most in the world right there with me was really pretty cool.

Q. Coming here must bring special memories back from 23 years ago?

TOM LEHMAN: It does. The course is playing differently. The course all those years ago was hard and baked out and bouncy and the ball was flying all over the place.

The course this week is a little bit softer, but still basically the same course. You have to hit the same shots. It's never been an easy golf course. You have to be very precise around here. You have to be smart about what club to choose off the tee and knowing where around the greens you can get away with misses, so it's typical kind of a links course. You know, I figured it out once. Hopefully I can figure it out twice.

Q. When you shot the course record 64 on that Saturday in windy weather, would you say that was one of your best rounds?

TOM LEHMAN: It was definitely one of them from the very first hole that day. You know, it's one of those days where everything is working. My swing felt so good. I hit it in the center of the clubface on every single shot. Putting stroke felt really smooth and with great pace and great tempo. Speed was just right and the ball was dropping in from everywhere. That was definitely, when you think of the best rounds, that was usually Top-10 for sure.

Q. And I suppose it's not easy, you had a six-stroke lead going into the final round with the likes of Els, Faldo, Couples chasing you, it wasn't easy.



TOM LEHMAN: It's never easy, and sometimes I think it's easier when it's closer. Having the big lead -- to me, the mental thing you had to overcome was it was my tournament to lose. If I went out there and lost, it's because I lost. There's nothing anybody could have done, I don't think, to beat me that day. I had to actually lose it.

And so I think you needed to, I had to overcome those thoughts and just find a way to go play the game and just go shoot a score and not worry about the other guys. It's all the clichés that you hear all the time but it really is just playing one hole at a time, one shot at a time, just play your own game and don't worry about the other people.

You know, so it wasn't pretty on Sunday, but it was -- I watched it last night and it was very solid. It was a way more solid round watching it than I remember. Hitting a lot of really good shots, a lot of fairways, a lot of greens, didn't make a lot of putts that day, but it was not easy and it was good enough.

Q. And the birdie on 12 I suppose gave you the two-stroke lead.

TOM LEHMAN: The birdie on 12 was a huge birdie. I had missed some really good opportunities leading up to that, and it's such a difficult hole. Hit a really good 4-iron. Hit actually a fantastic 4-iron and then made a nice birdie putt, which is I think on one of the hardest holes on the back nine. If it's not the hardest hole, it's one of them. To pick up a shot on that hole was a big boost, big, big boost. The save on 15 was equally as big. Hit a nice little save out of the bunker and I think those are the kind of things that kind of lift you and give that you added momentum and confidence when you need it.

Q. And how special was it coming down the 18th to win with your dad there?

TOM LEHMAN: It was the only time my dad ever came to The Open Championship was that week. So when I look at it now and watch the films and watch the video, and to see him back there. Spent the whole night at Tiggis restaurant until about 2.00 in the morning, and he was right there and to have him share it all was unbelievably special. He was my inspiration as a kid, all through going up, he was the one who was my role model. Having him there to share was a really big

deal.

Q. You had a really big celebration that night?

TOM LEHMAN: We watched the sun go down and we watched the sun come up. I don't think I fell asleep until the next night when I got back to Arizona.

Q. How are you looking forward to this week? How is your form?

TOM LEHMAN: My form, I think it's good. I played really well for three straight weeks leading up to The Open Championship. Last week was really poor. My game right now is better than last year but not as good as it was before then. But I still have a day to kind of get back in gear and hopefully when the bell rings tomorrow, I'll be fine.

Q. It's a strong field. I suppose you'd like to play well coming back here.

TOM LEHMAN: Of course. But I think it takes to play more on links courses. Links courses, to me, have always presented a situation where if you can get into the rhythm and you get into the flow of the course, you can play well, but it's sometimes very difficult to do that and it just keeps on punishing you.

So when you find that that scoring stride, you know, where it becomes easier, versus that other one where everything you do, getting punished by a bunker or a bad lie in the rough or a really impossible putt where you're always fighting uphill; so you're trying to get to a place where you're playing downhill versus fight willing uphill.

Q. Is your son caddying this week?

TOM LEHMAN: No, he's a golfer in his own right. He's got in big tournaments coming up. He's practising.

Q. Did you see the videos on YouTube? Did that maybe inspire you?

TOM LEHMAN: They were home. We went out to the Rolex dinner last night for the Pro-Am, so when we got back, they were in the kitchen watching it. I was like, wow, I've never watched it. I've never seen it, so I just sad down. They ended up going down but I watched the whole thing till the very end, which was cool.