

Luke Donald

Press Conference

JOHN BUSH: We'd like to welcome our 54-hole leader at RBC Heritage, Luke Donald. 2-under par, 69 today.

Luke, if we can get some comments on your round.

LUKE DONALD: Yeah, very happy with my score today. I thought the course played its most difficult as it has all week. The conditions were very blustery, the greens seemed to be getting firmer and faster. And it made for some tough golf out there. Some pins were very hard to get to, almost impossible to get to. You had to really be patient on certain holes.

But very happy with the way I played in general and felt like I hit a lot of good shots.

JOHN BUSH: You've led going into the final round on Tour 10 times, including your last three all came at this event. What can you draw from 2011 and 2014 to help you win tomorrow?

LUKE DONALD: I know I'm going to have to go out there and play a good, solid round. I can't sit back on my heels. Usually -- I haven't seen the score, but usually it's pretty bunched around this place. There's always someone that will come out of the pack and shoot a low round. It happened to me in '11 with Snedeker going pretty low teeing off pretty early. It's possible, wind conditions are going to be a little bit more favorable tomorrow. And usually someone will go low and post a number. You can't sit back and make pars. I've got to go out there and be reasonably aggressive and shoot a good score if I want to win tomorrow.

Q. I apologize if you covered this in your opening comment, but I don't know if it was the windiest day so far, but it seemed like the wind really changed from hole to hole. It would be up. It would be down. Can you just talk about the variance today?

LUKE DONALD: It was the windiest day, for sure. It was forecast to be windy yesterday, but it didn't really materialize as much as they thought. Today was as windy as they forecast, probably 20, 25 miles an hour at certain times. New greens are always firm, and this wind is just making them firmer and faster. The fastest and firmest I've ever seen these greens. It makes certain shots very difficult. Almost impossible to go at the pin. 13 was impossible to get it close. And on 17.

It was just difficult out there. And at times I felt like a U.S. Open in a way, you know. The greens were hard and crusty and fast. I haven't really seen this place play as difficult as it did today for a long time.

Q. You're going into the final round with a lead. Do you think this is more challenging now or any different for you since it's been a while since you've been in that position compared to if you'd been in this position many, many times, like you had been for several years?

LUKE DONALD: I'm sure it will be challenging tomorrow. Probably nervous. I haven't been in this position as much as I would have liked the last couple of years. But certainly have been in this position many times, and I'll draw from that. I know especially around this place I think if there's one tournament I've been in this position the most, it would be this one. And I kind of know what to expect. And hopefully I'll go out and play a good, solid round tomorrow and give myself a good chance.

Q. You say you know what to expect, having been in this position at this tournament. But it seems like guys from the back of the field made charges to come get you when you were in this position. Is there anything you can take from what happened those other times here?

LUKE DONALD: Yeah, as I said, I mentioned that earlier, there's usually someone that comes out of the pack. I've got to go back out there and be aggressive. I can't sit out and think pars are good enough. I have to go out and shoot a good, solid round, especially if what they say, it's going to be a little bit calmer tomorrow. A little bit calmer, maybe put a little water on the greens, who knows.

I think the early starters, or the guys in the middle of the pack can go out and shoot a low number and post something.

Again, I remember a couple of years ago when Kuch won, I think I felt like I was playing okay. I was maybe even par through 6. And there was I was two or three back, because he was 5-under through six. Someone's going to come out and play hard and make some birdies. So I can't sit back and think par is going to be good enough.

Q. I was out for a few holes today and it seemed like the wind was not as gusty on like 1 and 2 and 3, in that area. But out 10, 16, 17, are there some holes that are more protected and some that are --

LUKE DONALD: You certainly feel the wind on 16, 17 and 18. There's just not as many trees around them, not as protected. Once you get in the meat of the golf course where there's lots of trees it's a little bit more manageable. The wind is blocked by some of the trees at that point. But as soon as you get to some of those open holes like 5, 16, 17, 18 or 10, you really feel the wind.

Q. How much of your play this week do you attribute to being very comfortable here and how much of it do you think is something you may have found in your practice in preparation for this tournament?

LUKE DONALD: I think it's a combination. I think even though my results haven't been exactly spectacular the last few months, I feel like I've been making a lot of progress. I've been working hard on my game. I've been very close in certain events where I felt like I was playing a really solid tournament. Even in Hawaii I finished with a couple of bogeys. If I finished 1-under for the last three, I would have finished 6th or 7th instead of 30th. That happened again in another event, I can't remember which.

Certainly I feel like my golf is trending in the righted way, in the right direction. And coupled with a sense of familiarity and success that I've had in the past at this event, I think both of those together are why I'm playing well this week.

Q. Obviously with so much success you've had here, I was wondering if you recall, I guess, your first time here and if you particularly felt comfortable, and I guess going off that a bit, how your strategy --

LUKE DONALD: Well, my first time here was my rookie year in '02, I think. And I nearly missed the cut or finished last. I remember the first three years I missed two cuts and finished down the field. I was a single going out Sunday on my own one of those three years, first out. And for that reason I just didn't play very well. I wasn't very successful here and I took a few years and obviously came back and somehow figured it out.

But my first memories of here weren't that positive. But certainly the last six or seven years have been very positive.

Q. When you think about this place, do you think, you know, I play well here, I've won a lot of money here, it's a fun place to be or do you feel this place owes me some things after what I've gone through

the last few years?

LUKE DONALD: Probably a little dangerous to say a place owes you. But certainly I've been knocking on the door many times at this event. I would love to put that Tartan jacket on tomorrow. I've come very close. And again, I put myself in a great position. And that's all you can ask. Hopefully the chips will fall my way tomorrow.

Q. Obviously you were top ranked in the world, is that still a driver for you, how often do you think about it?

LUKE DONALD: It's something I'm always very proud of, very proud of now, being No. 1 for 56 weeks in total. I enjoyed the limelight. I enjoyed the attention. I enjoyed playing well during that time.

Is it a goal of mine to get back to No. 1? I wouldn't say so. I'm not in a position really to challenge for that right now. I certainly feel like I can work my way back towards that quite a bit.

But my goals really are just to continue to play solid, get myself back in the top 50, hopefully win some events again, and get back and compete in majors and having chances to win.

Q. How important will determination be tomorrow, if you're determined to make a good start?

LUKE DONALD: How important is my determination?

Q. Yes.

LUKE DONALD: I think being determined is always important, but I've got to approach this as a good opportunity and see it as a challenge and hopefully I'm up to that challenge.

JOHN BUSH: Luke, best of luck tomorrow.