

U.S. Senior Open

Flash Interview

Friday June 30, 2017

Tom Lehman



Q. Talk about your day. You moved up the leaderboard pretty well. You're in hailing distance of Kirk right now.

TOM LEHMAN: Well, you know, it's the kind of course where you just have to deal with what's in front of you. It's easy to -- I think it's kind of easy to just stay in the moment because every hole is tricky, every hole has something that demands something. So it kind of makes you stay in the moment.

And that's obviously the way to play good golf. You start thinking ahead of yourself and thinking about what's coming up the next two or three or four or five holes, you're in trouble. You do it out here, you're really going to suffer. So this course doesn't really allow you to think ahead too much.

Q. How do you take the two birdies in the first three holes and say, okay -- you're still going to look at it the way you just described it.

TOM LEHMAN: Look, you have a game plan. Part of that game plan is keep it below the hole. If it means keeping it 50 feet below the hole is better than being 20 feet above it in the rough or something.

So, to me, that's the whole issue is when you get those green lights, where you have a really good situation where you can get really aggressive, then you do. But, otherwise, you just be happy with a par.

I had a couple lies in the fairway and divots where I had really good situations today and really couldn't be aggressive because I had a terrible lie, and just 105 yards and just keep it below the hole, make a par. Typically, those situations, you're really taking dead aim. I feel like I left a couple out there because of that.

But by and large, I think anybody who's playing this tournament would tell you that, if you shoot 68 every day, you're going to be pretty happy when the week's over.

Q. Get a little trickier with the winds picking up?

TOM LEHMAN: It was not a gusty wind. As you guys all know, those gusty winds that change directions are the ones that are so difficult. This was pretty constant all day long from the southwest, and it didn't really blow hard. It didn't really blow easy. It just kind of kept a steady little whatever it was going.

So it was easy to -- kind of easy to judge, I thought. If you simply kept your eye on where southwest was, you're probably going to be pretty close.

Q. So how are you hitting it? How are you playing?

TOM LEHMAN: I'm driving it really well. I've driven it beautifully the first two days. Obviously, if you put it in the fairway, you're going to have a lot more opportunities when the day is over.

Q. Is that sort of the story of your U.S. Open, U.S. Senior Open careers? You've always been a good driver of the ball, keep it in play and give yourself chances. I looked at your Senior Open record.

You've never finished out of the top 25.

TOM LEHMAN: Is that right? I didn't know that. Well, yeah they're all kind of the same. There's no secrets about them. You have to do everything well.

So, typically, when you do everything well, you have a chance to win. If you do most of it well, you finish fairly high. And if you do one thing really well and another thing really bad, you finish 25th or whatever it might be.

But that really is the issue. You've got to put it in the fairway. Then you have to just hole some putts. There's no secret to golf. You have to make putts.

Q. What element of this Championship or the regular Open is just great? Where you know you're going to get the odd short side or the bad break, being a divot, and you've got to fight through. What element --

TOM LEHMAN: I think a lot of it is it's a big tournament and a lot of guys want to win. So handling your emotions, and that's why I say the course kind of -- is the kind of course which forces you to stay in the moment. Every shot to me is so tricky out there.

That's how you play good golf is just one shot at a time. So if you continue to do that, then you add them up at the end, usually you're somewhat happy.

Q. Is this the tournament you want to win most in your career?

TOM LEHMAN: I think every one is a good win, but if you had to rank wins that would be bigger than others, this would be one of them.

Q. I'm just thinking your whole, entire U.S. Open, U.S. Senior Open record, like I said, you've been a good U.S. Open player.

TOM LEHMAN: My game suits. I'm typically a very good lag putter, and I typically drive the ball well. So I don't have a fear of 50-footers. I don't have a fear of putting a driver in my hands. I don't really have a whole lot of fear with hitting a shot.

Don't really have a lot of fear of putting either, but I'm not as confident, typically, with putting. But I have been working with my putting, and I am putting better, and I do feel like I've made some strides putting. So I feel better about that.

Q. The numbers look good.

TOM LEHMAN: I've made a couple little changes, which has allowed me to get my head more still, which has really allowed me to kind of approach putting like I approach my ball striking, which is just the process of it. Not be too worked up about a miss.

Q. I read something about you were trying not to think about the result but just the stroke.

TOM LEHMAN: Yeah, just the stroke. How to do that is difficult, but sometimes -- kind of come on something which is so kind of easy and simple that you say, well, I can do that, which then that allows me to kind of take the emotion out of putting. Just do that. So that's what I've been working on.

I wouldn't say I'm going to make every putt I look at, but I hit a lot of really good putts. A lot more on-line putts than I used to.

Q. So you don't worry about it if it doesn't go in? You know you hit a good putt?

TOM LEHMAN: Yeah. It's just did I hit it the way I wanted to? Yep. So I trust my caddie a lot to tell me where it's going because the effort of trying to stay still, I'm not watching the ball roll very much, especially inside of 10 feet. I'm trying to just keep -- the old Nick Faldo thing, you know. So, anyway.

Q. Have you won anything with your son on the bag?

TOM LEHMAN: No, I have not. I've had some good finishes with my kids, but never won. It would be kind of cool. Yeah, it would be very cool. He'd like that. The bank account would be very happy.

Thanks, good to see you guys.