

RBC Canadian Open

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Hamilton Golf and Country Club

Luke Clanton

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone. We are joined here with Luke Clanton, who will be making his professional debut this week at the RBC Canadian Open. I'm going to open it up to you for some comments.

LUKE CLANTON: I have some things written down. I didn't want to forget anything. Today my dream becomes a reality, a professional golfer on the PGA TOUR.

Before I say anything about my future, I want to say something about my foundation. I'm a proud son of David and Rhonda Clanton. I'm a grateful brother of Ray and Abby Clanton. I'm a product of their love, their belief, and their sacrifices. They laid the groundwork for this moment and hopefully many other big and major moments in my life and career. Family is everything. So Mom, Dad, Ray, and Abby, thank you for everything.

To my coaches and mentors, thank you for your guidance, your honesty. You challenged me and encouraged me and trusted me when it mattered the most.

To my FSU teammates, I've been lucky to share a locker room with you. We developed a bond that will last for a lifetime, and it will mean something special in my life for always. I'm so proud to be a part of it.

I've been blessed to compete and play in events around my home state for my entire life. Those opportunities came at an early age, starting with U.S. Kids, then the South Florida PGA, then the Florida Junior Golf Tour, then AJGA. I'd like to thank those organizations for creating and hosting events from a young boy in Hialeah.

Florida had a chance to develop and both fail, succeed, and ultimately fulfill his dream in the setting here now as a professional on the PGA TOUR.

Lastly, but most importantly, I want to thank my Lord and savior Jesus Christ. My faith over the last three years has been incredible. Without trusting in Jesus and without trusting in the Lord, I wouldn't be here no matter what case, no matter what situation.



I know the professional game is a new world, and I cannot be more excited for this moment. I'm ready. Thank you.

Q. With that, this has been a very exciting and emotional week leading up to this. What's it been like to prepare for this day that you knew was coming?

LUKE CLANTON: It's been incredible. Like I said, it's something you dream for always, constantly. To kind of now be here and to call myself a professional is a little bit -- honestly, a little bit weird at first because I've always been an amateur.

It's amazing. I'm just excited to come out here and compete. It's not about the money. It's not about any of the fame. It's about competing with these guys on Tour. It's something I've chased for my whole, entire life, and especially my family.

Q. You just mentioned a lot of great people that you were thankful for. Have you had time to reflect since kind of closing the chapter of your amateur career and starting your professional career this week?

LUKE CLANTON: A little bit. It was hard definitely after Nationals when we lost. It was a hard one to kind of wrap up. Kind of coming back and hanging out with the guys for the last couple of days was definitely a bit rough.

Kind of leaving them and understanding that my amateur career is done, it was hard, but it's something we all chase for to become a professional. It's a happy cause, but I'm just so excited.

Q. You've had a decorated amateur career and already a great start as an amateur here on the Tour with runner-up finishes and crossing that threshold at Cognizant. What goals do you have as a professional?

LUKE CLANTON: My only goal is to stay process oriented as much as I can. You can look very far into the future and say I want to win majors and PGA tournaments. Obviously everyone wants to do that. To me, it's staying connected to my team, staying connected to my family, and staying connected to the process as much as I can. It's a very



generic answer as everyone says, but it's something true.

I think I fault to that a little bit occasionally where you try to go out and try to win an event, which normally doesn't work. So I'm going to try to stay in my process and understand that golf is literally one shot at a time. It's nothing else.

Q. Obviously it's an emotional time. Is there anything that surprises you about the level of emotion you feel this week? Is there a moment that it hit you? What do you think Thursday will be like?

LUKE CLANTON: I think the moment it hit me was when we were flying to Canada. We had to bring a passport and everything. I remember I got on the flight, and I was like, dang, this is my first PGA TOUR start ever.

It still hasn't really hit me because we're out here competing and practicing and getting ready for it, but I think once that first round comes around, it's going to be exciting. I think not really nervous, just more excitement to get out there and play.

Q. With this being a National Open, there's going to be a lot of young Canadian pros and amateurs living their dreams or with big dreams. What do you remember as the toughest parts of your journey, and you're pretty young to be giving advice, but what advice do you have for kids like that?

LUKE CLANTON: I was going to say I'm 21, so it's still young. I think the toughest part of it was expectations, obviously. Everyone's so good at golf. No matter how good you play, no matter how much you compete, it's still hard to win.

I think the biggest thing is just staying in your path. Don't try to be different just because one dude's doing something else. I fault to that a little bit in my junior career where I tried to copy other guys and tried to obviously take advice from better players and maybe try to work off of that.

But staying who you are as a person is the biggest thing. I think that's something I've learned over the last six, seven months is staying connected with who I am as a person.

Q. Your mom retired a couple days ago officially.

LUKE CLANTON: Yeah, she retired, I think it was about a month ago. It's pretty cool.

Q. Was there a retirement party?

LUKE CLANTON: (Laughter). No, she actually -- I told

her, you're not going to have to work a day in your life. She's like, no, I'll just work for you. Thanks, mom, I appreciate it. She's helping out with hotels and Airbnbs.

It's amazing to see my mom and dad take a breather and understand they can enjoy the experiences with me and have a good time. It's something that every kid chases for is to retire their mom and dad and help them out with everything. It's amazing.

Q. Between the homeschooling and your mom working and flying, and your dad working three jobs, I guess it's a broad question, but how do you think they did it?

LUKE CLANTON: I don't know, simple answer. I really -- there's a lot of mom and dads out there that work very hard for their kids, and I know that. My mom and dad is one of those people. You put me in that situation, I don't know if I could do it.

What they did for me, and what they did, not just for me, but my two older sisters as well to get us through everything, it was incredible. Again, my mom and dad are two hard working people, and they'll never, ever take credit for it, which kind of pisses me off sometimes because they did everything they could.

It's amazing to see what they've done and amazing to see how they raised three children the way they did.

Q. Another one that could go any way, but what's one thing that you like about yourself?

LUKE CLANTON: About myself? I've got a strong mentality, very strong mentality. I think that's something I'm very, very strong about, and I think something that is created with my team as well. It's not all about saying how good I am, it's more about how much we work. I think it's something that I'm pretty proud of.

Q. Where do you think that comes from, like throughout life slowly built, or is it something that you were kind of naturally --

LUKE CLANTON: I think it's something my dad created in me. I've talked about this a couple times with people, but what my dad did at an early, young age created me to be the person I am now. My dad took that step of pushing me to my limits when I was a kid and making me train as hard as I can and hit golf balls in the dark with a flashlight. Those kinds of things are created to make a person mentally hard, mentally ready for these kind of big moments. Again, it's just amazing.

Q. The statement you gave at the top, that was awesome. What inspired you to do that, to kind of write that out? How long did it take to you write that?

LUKE CLANTON: A couple days, not that long.

Q. Congratulations, obviously, first and foremost. You fast forward to a week from today and you look back on your debut, what does success look like for you?

LUKE CLANTON: Success looks like I stayed in my process as much as I can. I think, if I go out there and play well and bring home a win, that would be amazing. Again, it's just going to be a lot of process.

It's my first pro start. Again, I have 13 starts under my belt, which is amazing to have, especially coming on the PGA TOUR. But, again, I think it's something where we're just going to try to stay in our zone as much as I can.

There's a lot of great players in this field obviously, and to be able to compete against them as a pro, it's amazing. We're just going to stay in our process, and if it comes out with a great finish, it would be great.

Q. Question about LIV. Did they ever make an offer to you or try to negotiate with you? If so, what kind of went into your decision to pick the PGA TOUR?

LUKE CLANTON: I want to play the PGA TOUR, pretty simple. I want to play against the best, I want to compete in majors, and that's it. Simple.

Q. There's been a lot of success with the PGA TOUR. Have you been able to pick the brains of Ludvig or any other players about that transition from amateur to professional?

LUKE CLANTON: I played with Ludvig at RSM. Gosh, he hits it good. It was so cool to see. I was trying not to bother him because we were playing a PGA TOUR event. It was really cool. I had my best friend on the bag at the time, and we were admiring his 8-iron on 8. I remember it pretty well.

Those kind of moments are awesome. What he does so well is he's so locked in on what he's doing. It's not whatever anyone else is doing, it's what he's doing. It's something I'm trying to learn as I go, and it's pretty cool.

Q. Do you consider yourself a golf fan? Growing up, enjoying watching golf?

LUKE CLANTON: Big time, yeah, for sure. No doubt.

Q. In terms of the top two in the world ranking currently, Scottie and Rory, kind of following them and watching them, what kind of impresses you about them? How would you say are there any ways that you compare and contrast to them in terms of being similar or being different?

LUKE CLANTON: I think what Scottie and Rory do so well is, when they're coming down that final stretch to win a golf event, they know how to handle themselves well. They've been in that moment multiple, multiple times now obviously. It's just amazing to what we they do. I think Scottie and Rory are icons of this game, and to be playing against Rory this week is pretty cool.

Again, in similar ways, I'm still learning. I don't know how I'm similar to them yet, even if I am or not, but I know that I'm a pretty good golfer, and I know I've got a good mentality and it will hold me strong throughout my career.

Q. Is there anything about them that you feel like Rory does something one way and Scottie does it. I guess, if you have to pick one difference on how they approach the game from what you've observed, what would you say?

LUKE CLANTON: I think what they do so well is their emotions never get too high or too low.

Again, Scottie, last week at Memorial, if you watched him play, threw one fist pump, and he was leading the event. He was so locked in on what he was doing. I'm a massive golf fan, so I watched the whole back nine obviously. He hit it great. He gained like 15 shots off the field in irons. That's unbelievable.

He's just different right now. That's it. Pretty plain and simple.

Q. You mentioned your process and sticking to your process. Is it easy for you to stay in the moment, or do you sometimes find your mind wandering and have to dial it back to the moment?

LUKE CLANTON: Early, early on, yeah. I think even now it's still hard. Again, I think it takes time. I think it's -- you're going to learn every single week, even if you don't play well, you're still learning. I think that's something that I'm getting used to.

Again, yeah, your mind wanders a lot obviously. It's how to get back into the moment again as quick as you can.

Q. What's one thing you do to keep yourself in the

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

moment?

LUKE CLANTON: Me and my caddie Jason talk about a lot of basketball. We try to stay focused in on the golf shot, but then when we're done with the golf shot, we don't try to stay too focused in because your mind can't really stay focused in for 5 1/2 hours. We've learned a good technique to bounce it in and out, and it's good.

Q. Who's your basketball team?

LUKE CLANTON: I'm an OKC fan. I've been an OKC fan for 12 years. Let's make that straight.

Q. I just want to check a fact. You brought up the passport thing, and you kind of laughed. Had you been so Canada before?

LUKE CLANTON: Never been to Canada. This is a first.

Q. The OKC, where did that fandom come from?

LUKE CLANTON: One of my good buddies when I was super young, we used to watch basketball, and obviously Kevin Durant, Russell Westbrook, James Harden were on the same team. I'll just stick with that. Obviously Miami Heat was really good during that time, with LeBron James, Dwyane Wade, and Chris Bosh, but I have been an OKC fan.

I'm from Miami, and everyone might hate me for that, but I love OKC, and I love where they're at right now. I think they might sweep. I'll just be honest.

Q. Have you been to a game?

LUKE CLANTON: Not in OKC, no, but I've watched OKC play.

Q. Ahead of your professional debut, we have a special message from a fellow FSU alum. Wouldn't mind you pressing play on this video and get some reactions from you.

LUKE CLANTON: No way.

(Video played.)

LUKE CLANTON: Wow, that's unbelievable. Man, I don't even know what to say. I've watched him -- I've watched all his highlights through his whole FSU career and watched him in the NFL. That's unbelievable, wow. Thank you. I don't even know what to say.

Hopefully I get to meet him in the future. That's a big goal

of mine. He is one of the funnier dudes and also a big believer in Christ, which is unbelievable. It's really cool to see that kind of support.

Thank you, man. I appreciate that, dude.

Q. Who was it?

LUKE CLANTON: Jameis Winston.

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