

US Open Championship 2016

Friday, June 17, 2016

Lee Westwood

Round 1 Quick Quotes



Q. How would you sum up the two days?

LEE WESTWOOD: It was good. I've been playing really nicely. I've been playing well. Really looking forward to coming back to Oakmont. I had a good experience here the last time, albeit everybody found it tough. I like a challenge. This golf course is certainly a challenge. It tests you mentally. I sort of picked up where I left off at the Masters and the last three weeks I've played.

I hit the ball well, a lot of fairways, a lot of greens. I hit it close quite a lot, 26 putts. Made some nice putts out there, and I'm pleased with the start. It's a good way to start this championship. You don't really want to be shooting a lot over par and having to chase.

Q. Having to go back out there, what a great way to finish up with a birdie at the end.

LEE WESTWOOD: Yeah, you stand on that 6th tee, which we had four holes to play. The 6th tee, you're not really looking at too many birdie chances in those holes. To walk off 2 under par for those four holes was obviously very satisfying and a great way to finish the round off.

Q. Concentrating yesterday -- you got to watch the football. We saw you there. Was it tough to stay focused?

LEE WESTWOOD: No. I think professional golf, you should be able to switch off, switch on, switch off, switch on whenever you can. We're doing that between shots. So if you have to switch off two or three hours, you're in a rain delay, so be it. It's part of the job a lot of the time. It's not the first rain delay we've all encountered. Just got to grin and bear it and get on with it and have another coffee.

Q. Do you think your game was benefitted in a strange way, having not played that much?

LEE WESTWOOD: At the start of the year, yeah, I'm probably a little bit fresher than most of people. I've not played that many tournaments this year. So, yeah, sort of inadvertently, I'm fresh in starting the middle part of the season, like it would be January.

Q. What a tough week (no microphone)?

LEE WESTWOOD: Yeah, I'll probably cut down on the gym sessions and save the energy in my legs. Obviously, I've been out here a long time now, 23 years or something like that. I'm realizing what to do and

what not to do when it's conditions like this.

Q. How did you play 10?

LEE WESTWOOD: Yesterday morning, I had a decent tee shot down the left-hand side and a rescue off the tee, and then a 9 iron to the back edge. Then a decent putt. There was more break than I thought, and then ended up rolling about 3 1/2, 4 feet for par, but you have to do that a lot out here. These greens are some of the trickiest you're ever going to encounter.

Q. Among the many challenges out there -- and there are many -- what is the most challenging, most demanding to you?

LEE WESTWOOD: I think the greens are the biggest challenge. You come to a U.S. Open, you expect you've got to hit a lot of fairways to be in contention and a lot of greens, but that's when the challenge really starts on this golf course, on the greens.

Q. What do you make of (No microphone)?

LEE WESTWOOD: I feel like -- I've got to be careful here because my mom's -- a lot of my mom's family are Welsh. But I will say that I should not be biting my nails with 15 minutes left, thinking can we get a winner against Wales?

Q. I think you're in trouble.

LEE WESTWOOD: Yeah, that wasn't careful at all. I've gotten myself in trouble with a few people there.

Q. What did you make of the decision not to have a warmup after that initial delay? Did that bother you?

LEE WESTWOOD: It was strange, but I Rolls Royce it a lot of the time now. I'll go and play golf when I'm at home on a Saturday morning or a Sunday morning. I don't hit any balls to warm up. So now when we're not hitting balls, I don't stiffen up or anything like that. Being the finely tuned athlete I am, you wouldn't expect that, would you? (Laughter).

Q. Would you say that was one of your great U.S. Open golf rounds?

LEE WESTWOOD: Yeah, it was good. One of the best starts I've ever had. Yeah, I felt confident out there and hit a lot of good shots. I was shaping it both ways, which you need to do in U.S. Opens to get at a lot of the flags. Yeah, I'm pleased with the start, no doubt

about that.

Q. Was it the long shot that (inaudible)?

LEE WESTWOOD: Well, if you take out the one, that hold on 14 yesterday, I'd say the 16 iron into the 9th hole there was pretty good. That's one of the hardest flags on that green, and you don't really want to bail out left because you can put it off the green from left, and you don't want to miss it right obviously because it's thick rough down there.

So it was a good time to hit the perfect shot on the perfect distance.

Q. How far did you leave yourself for the birdie putt?

LEE WESTWOOD: Probably 3 1/2, 4 feet. But I had a great shot into 8 as well. I drew a rescue in there to about 9 feet behind the hole. I'll have to admit, I pulled it slightly. I was looking 20 feet right of the hole, and it nearly went in.

Q. This is the major you most like, isn't it?

LEE WESTWOOD: Yeah, people have always said that because I drive the ball pretty straight and my irons are pretty accurate. But if you look, I suppose, I've had more chances at the Masters. At first, I didn't think that would be a course that suits me, but I've gotten used to that.

I think I've had my chances at the Open, but I think, if you did look at my game, I suppose the U.S. Open should suit me more than others.

Q. How energizing is the rest of the season after going to Augusta?

LEE WESTWOOD: Yeah, it gave me a big boost, a big shot of confidence. I haven't contended in a big tournament for a while. So it was nice to get up there and hang about and give myself a chance.

The chip in on 15 on Sunday was a real buzz. It was nice to feel those emotions again.