



ANIRBAN LAHIRI

Q. Anirban, a late, late, late entry to the CIMB Classic. How happy are you to be back here in Kuala Lumpur?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: I'm quite relieved actually. I made my plans in the offseason assuming that I would play, so I kind of expected myself to be playing so it came as a bit of a surprise. It was funny actually. I played a round with Brendan Grace back in Florida the weekend before Napa, so like 10 days ago. Brendan's the one who told me like (inaudible.) What are you talking about? I hadn't even looked because it's always gone down past 100, comfortably past 100. Like what do you mean? He was like, no, no. He was looking for himself because he's first alternate for Korea. He said, I was looking for myself and I'm alternate for Korea and I was looking at the CIMB list and I saw you're not in. That's when I checked. I said oh, shit, but it's already too late because they usually go about four weeks before the event.

I didn't bother asking for an invite because I didn't think I would need it. If you make it to the second Playoff event, you're pretty much guaranteed to play here. Apparently not.

So it basically -- so Monday last week I was still fourth alternate. Wednesday afternoon Ollie Schniederjans was one ahead of me, got in. So I was first alternate from Wednesday afternoon onwards and it did not move. I was waking up every morning expecting -- you know, didn't move. Come Sunday -- so I missed the cut. Then there was more confusion because I tried to call the tournament director to find out if I could travel here as a first alternate because obviously this week the tournament takes care of the players coming and staying. So he says yeah, yeah, you can come, but if you don't get in, it's on you going back.

That doesn't put me in a very comfortable situation because if I don't get in, then it will be even worse because I've come all the way and I don't get in, now whatever. I said okay, I'll wait until I get in. My original flight was Sunday night, Sunday midnight. Another charter, all the players flew on Cathay actually because it's a Malaysian airlines, OneWorld thing. So I had a 12:30 a.m. Monday, just past midnight on Sunday flight booked and I actually booked 11:30 p.m. redeye to Florida from San Francisco because I said if I don't get in, I'm just going to go back to Florida. If I get in, I'll fly from Miami the next day and get here tomorrow. Or no, get here today.

So I'm sitting at the airport. This is actually what happened. I'm actually sitting at the airport and check-in counter 8 is Cathay Air, counter 10 is Jet Blue. I actually sent an email at 7:30 p.m. -- I was just sitting there between the two counters. I sent an email saying I'm going to walk in and check in to my Jet Blue flight at 10:00 p.m., so if something changes, tell me, I'll

cancel that. So about 20 minutes later I got a call that Andrew Landry had withdrawn. So I had to leave like -- I was at the airport, I go this way or I go that way, I had two flights within an hour of each other. It was not fun, not fun.

Q. I'm sure a lot of it not just being a big event here in Malaysia but at a venue where you've won before, you've had lots of success at the CIMB Classic before that, must have been a bit pull for you to want to come back?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: I worked very hard. I had two, three weeks off. I went to Napa. I was still in my practice mode, a little rusty even though there was a short break.

Then on Friday afternoon I actually started playing a little better on the back nine and I felt more comfortable. I felt okay, now I'm beginning to get the rust off, I'm ready, I'm going to play the weekend this week. It doesn't matter, but I'm going to familiar territory, I play well there, I know what to do, I know the golf course, the weather, how far the ball's going to go, pin positions, great.

Then I'm like, oh, maybe I'm not going to play. And I have plans the next couple of weeks where I'm not playing any golf, so it would have ended up like a month of no golf.

Yeah, it was important for me to come here and play obviously for the reasons you said, but even otherwise. It's important to get off to a good start and I haven't done that last week. The last three years I've usually played well in the fall. It's important for me to get off -- get out of the blocks a little and this week's a good week for me to do that.

Q. Have you seen some of the changes to the golf course? Have you played?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: No, I just got some practice in now. I was talking to some of the guys and they said that it's pretty much the same except for the grass. I think they've improved the drainage is what they said. The ball's running out a little bit, but it's okay, I'll figure it out.

Q. Talk about comfort levels, going back to a place you're so familiar with.

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: It's going to be a difficult one this week. This is the first I'm coming here as a vegetarian, so I was thinking to myself I'm going to have to order the stir fry garlic bok choy instead of my favorite dim sums.

Q. (Inaudible) coming back home to the Asian Tour where you started?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: Yesterday I got here and I went straight to (inaudible) room and we were sitting and chatting for like two, three hours just catching up and that's fun. I miss that obviously. So that's what it's like coming here. Even now I'm just walking around, I know so many familiar faces, just catching up and saying hello. It's become like a yearly affair where I kind of catch up with everyone. Obviously when we have the Eurasia Cup, that's the other time that you usually come to KL.

Q. At the end of this new season is the Presidents Cup. Obviously that must rank somewhere among your top goals for 2019?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: Of course.

Q. How important, how much do you really want to get on to Ernie's team and what does Ernie actually bring as captain of the International team?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: I think Ernie is obviously himself with the best credentials. As a match play player, he is probably the greatest among the internationals of all time without a doubt. And also he was the vice captain last year at Liberty. So I've known Ernie a long time now and we're neighbors in Florida as well. I know how badly he wants us to win the cup back.

Q. Does it rub off on you?

ANIRBAN LAHIRI: Of course. It rubs off on all of us. He was there when obviously the historic Presidents Cup in South Africa where him and Tiger played into the darkness, but he was also there at Royal Melbourne the last time we won 20 years ago. So it's obviously special. Any Presidents Cup is special, but this time we're going to be playing on home ground, on home turf rather, and I think it's going to be different than Korea in terms of the support. I think it was a very -- it wasn't as vociferous as you think it would be for an international venue when we played in Korea. So to be playing in front of the Aussie crowds at Royal Melbourne under Ernie playing against Tiger's team, you can't have a better setting to actually win the cup back. So why not be a part of that? It's very, very important, yeah.