

ROUND 4 PRESS CONFERENCE
July 30, 2023

LEE HODGES (-24)



MARK WILLIAMS: All right, Lee Hodges, congratulations, 2023 3M Open champion.

LEE HODGES: Thank you.

MARK WILLIAMS: Sounds pretty good. First victory on the PGA TOUR. Just express how you feel right now.

LEE HODGES: Elated. It's just a dream week, the whole thing. I mean, I played -- honestly, from Monday to Sunday I played really good golf, even in practice rounds. The pro-am I made a bunch of birdies and then I made a bunch of birdies in the tournament with not many bogeys, so it was just one of those weeks.

MARK WILLIAMS: It's your 65th start on Tour, so you've done it pretty early in your career. You've moved to No. 33 in the FedExCup rankings, so got yourself secured in the Playoffs. Coming in here No. 74, I think.

LEE HODGES: Yeah.

MARK WILLIAMS: That was a goal obviously and you've achieved it. So going forward, what does it look like for you in the next three, four weeks?

LEE HODGES: Just get ready for the Playoffs. I think we're as ready as we can be. I'm playing some really good golf. I'm excited to have the opportunity to do some special things in the Playoffs now. I mean, anytime you win, you really set yourself up for some special stuff.

My caddie was telling me on 18, I honestly didn't even think about it, we get to play Augusta next year. That's something else. That was probably the coolest thing I heard all day. Yeah, I'm just really thankful.

MARK WILLIAMS: Another cool thing is you set a number of records this week. You're the first wire-to-wire winner of this tournament in tournament history, it's the lowest score in tournament history. What does it feel like to achieve those things, not just win the tournament but have those things on top of it?

LEE HODGES: Yeah, just icing on the cake, man. It was a dream week from start to finish. I couldn't be happier. For whatever accolades came with it, I couldn't be happier.

Q. Lee, you mentioned last night that you didn't think there would be any stress



overnight. You said it's just golf.

LEE HODGES: Yeah.

Q. Is that kind of how the night played out for you? Was it pretty low key, and do you think that was a big factor for how you played today?

LEE HODGES: Yeah, I feel like I have a good attitude about golf in general because it is just a game. I mean, I'm super blessed to be able to play a game for a living, man. I mean, there's a lot of people that would trade to be in my shoes.

I think I have good perspective. And yeah, last night me and my wife, we ate dinner here and then we went to get some ice cream and I slept like a baby. Yeah, it was a pretty nonchalant night.

Q. Yesterday you kind of vowed to be aggressive, you felt like you learned at the AmEx that you couldn't just settle in and get some pars.

LEE HODGES: Yep.

Q. Do you feel like you did that the way you wanted to today?

LEE HODGES: Yeah, no doubt. I thought I was super aggressive. Anytime you hit two 3-woods inside 10 feet you're being pretty aggressive. Those were two of the greatest shots I ever hit., Wish I maybe would have been a little less aggressive with my putter, I ran a couple by there late, but whatever, it all worked out.

Q. Just can you kind of reflect on growing up in a small town in Alabama? I know there are a bunch of them out there to watch you today, your college coach out there to watch you today. Just kind of what this journey means and kind of commenting on just all the people back home as well?

LEE HODGES: I'm just really grateful to be from Alabama, especially Ardmore. They announced me on the first tee from Athens, but if anybody asks, I'm from Ardmore, Alabama.

So I'm super proud to be from there and represent those people. Man, I'm sure there is a party going on in north Alabama right now.

Q. Did you know your coach was flying in?

LEE HODGES: I didn't know anybody was flying in except for my agent, Jeff Stacy. Everybody else was a surprise.

Q. When did you find out?



LEE HODGES: I looked up on 18 when I was about to putt and saw him.

Q. Your coach said today you're unflappable, like you almost always are except maybe during Alabama football games.

LEE HODGES: That's a fact. Man, I live and die by the Crimson Tide, especially on the football field. Wish I didn't sometimes. I've gotten better about letting it affect my mood, but I used to really let it affect me.

No, I'm proud to be a Crimson Tide and I'm proud of going to the University of Alabama.

Q. You talked about two of the greatest shots you ever hit. Can you just take us through those 3-woods on 6 and 12 and what you were thinking?

LEE HODGES: Just kind of seems like one of those things that happens when you win.

I had an absolute -- the exact same number both times and in the exact same wind. I just had to hold a little 3-wood. And it was 257 both times. I just had to get it up in the air and hold it and I did it pretty well.

Q. When you hit the one on 12, is that kind of when you let winning enter your mind?

LEE HODGES: No, not really. I mean Postman's an unbelievable player, he can birdie every hole out there.

No, I thought I did a really good job this week of, I wouldn't say -- I'd say the first time I actually let myself think about winning was after I hit the third shot on 18. Other than that, I was just completely focused on what I was doing out there, which is probably why I played some nice golf. Probably should try and do that more.

Q. Lee, your former Alabama teammate Davis Shore got it done for the first time on the Canadian Tour.

LEE HODGES: Did he?

Q. How cool is it to share your first win like that?

LEE HODGES: I actually saw this morning on my phone that he had a lead. That's awesome. What a day for Alabama. D-Shore's a great kid. He was a freshman when I was a senior. We treated him like a freshman, but he's a great guy and an unbelievable talent. He'll do a lot of good stuff for a long time.

Q. I was talking to Savannah, she was saying you're a bit of a local celebrity back at home.



LEE HODGES: (Laughs.) Well, I am from like 1,500 people, so...

Q. Does it mean a little bit more to come from a small town where maybe there aren't these big athletic accomplishments and you can kind of set one?

LEE HODGES: Yeah, no doubt. I mean, again, I'm super proud to be from Ardmore, Alabama. Like, you know, I feel like people could be like, oh, you know, you're from a small place.

No, I own that and I am from Ardmore, Alabama, and I love everybody there. I loved growing up there, loved going to school there. My mom and dad still live there. My dad announces basketball and football at the high school, so he really loves Ardmore. But no, it's -- I'm super proud to be from there.

MARK WILLIAMS: Lee, I think it was yesterday that we asked you at the end of the round whether you and J.T. had played together before on the Tour. You said you couldn't recall, you probably did, but you couldn't recall.

LEE HODGES: Yeah.

MARK WILLIAMS: It turns out you guys played together in the last round here last year.

LEE HODGES: Yeah, we actually talked about that.

MARK WILLIAMS: I was going to ask you, did you recall that when you were out there?

LEE HODGES: Yeah, yeah. My caddie was actually not feeling great last year and we had -- and we had like a funny moment about him running off and stuff like that Yeah, I honestly forgot I was playing with Postman.

Yeah, Postman's a great guy. Could not have thought of a better guy to play the final round with today, super comfortable pairing. And man, he's a talent and he'll win a lot of times on the PGA TOUR.

Q. Is it true your fans back in Ardmore can cheer you on with one foot in Tennessee and one foot in Alabama?

LEE HODGES: Yeah, that's a fact. Main Street runs right through the middle of town. On the north side is Tennessee and south side is Alabama. My step-grandfather's actually the mayor of Ardmore, Alabama, not Tennessee. There's two mayors for Ardmore, one for each side.

Q. In the scrum or when you were embraced there in the walkway, someone yelled out that there's still a teller opening position at the bank if you need it. Was that ever a



career option?

LEE HODGES: No. My dad's a banker and the guy that actually yelled that is a banker also, he was just giving me a hard time, I was never going to work at the bank.

Q. Explain the milkshake on the 18th green.

LEE HODGES: Yeah, so Coach Seawell, that's our Alabama thing. Anytime we won a tournament he would take us to get milkshakes. So that was incredible that he was here and that he brought me a milkshake. I mean, you can't even make that up. That's super special, something I'll remember for ever.

Q. In a different world, maybe you're not competing in this event, would you have made an appearance at the National Sports Card Show in Chicago being an avid card collector?

LEE HODGES: I don't know how you got that, but yes. I love cards. Me and my buddy Kyle, we wheel and deal on the cards. It's super fun, something to get your mind off everything, just a super fun hobby. That's awesome.

Q. Just wondering this win, first one on Tour, you said you learned a lot from AmEx, now I'm sure you learn a bunch from this. Do you feel like this is just a confidence boost to keep achieving bigger and better things?

LEE HODGES: Yep, no doubt. I mean, I played some outstanding golf today and all week. The process I went through, yeah, I'll take this week forever. I'll just try to keep replicating this week every time I show up to a tournament.

Q. Did it seem like maybe the par putt on 11 calmed you after a couple -- seemed like you pulled a couple left on 9, 10, 11, that seemed to steady you, and then you hit the shot on 12 for eagle?

LEE HODGES: Yeah, no doubt. Yeah, I just maybe got a little quick and you didn't want to miss those right. Yeah, yeah, probably. That was a nice putt. I thought the par putt on 13 was huge after I kind of gassed that one by. I thought the hardest shot I had all day was the second shot into 14. That's just such a scary hole, but just to get that one dry was super nice.

MARK WILLIAMS: I'll just wrap it up by saying how do you plan to celebrate tonight?

LEE HODGES: We're going to have a lot of fun. I'm not sure what that entails right now, but we're going to have a lot of fun.

Q. With this win you're hoping to get in the Playoffs, now you're going to be going to Maui. You always see at the beginning of the year you play Sony, but what does it



mean to be able to go to Sentry now?

LEE HODGES: Everything that comes with a win is unbelievable, all the majors, Sentry. Yeah, I'm super excited just to have got this done. Looking forward to starting the year there, it will be something.

MARK WILLIAMS: All right. Lee, appreciate it. Congratulations once again, enjoy the evening.

LEE HODGES: Thank you.

