

Justin Timberlake Shriners
Hospital for Children Open
TPC Summerlin
Las Vegas, NE

October 18, 2009

INTERVIEW OF MARTIN LAIRD

Final-round quotes

THE MODERATOR: We welcome the 2009 champion of the Justin Timberlake Shriners Hospitals for Children Open, Martin Laird. Congratulations, sir, in a playoff dough, no doubt. Why don't you take us first to the playoff and what's going through your mind right now.

MARTIN LAIRD: You know, I don't know whether it was because I had a nice long par putt on 18 to get in the playoff. But when I got in the playoff, I'm surprised I just kind of chilled out a little. I was nervous the last two or three holes in regulation. Once I got in the playoff I kind of relaxed a little more. It was a tough tee shot for me on 18 with the wind off the left. I hit a cut. When I was stood out there on the first playoff hole, just strike it right in the middle, it was perfect way to start a playoff.

THE MODERATOR Questions?

Q. You were 125th on the Money List. Have you thought about it in the last few minutes, the journey, I guess?

MARTIN LAIRD: No. You are out here every week trying to wind. That's the goal. I was trying to come into the fall finish. I knew I really liked this golf course. It kind of sets up better for longer hitters because can you get the par-5s. I try to come in here, and I have been playing really well and not really think about it too much and just go ahead and try to win the tournament like you do you every other week. It worked for me last year, not really paying attention to where I was on the Money List, and it's worked again for me this year.

Q. Maybe it's coincident, you seem to play pretty well here in the state of Nevada?

MARTIN LAIRD: Yes, someone said that to me is this morning. My coach, Mark McCann, said to me you should move to Nevada.

Q. No taxes here by the way?

MARTIN LAIRD: That was the first thing I said back to him. I don't know why it is. I guess the tournaments we play in Reno is altitude. I went to college at Colorado State. I don't mind the ball playing 10 or 15 perfect extra. I lived in Scottsdale, very similar to here. I play about five or six percent farther here. When it warms up, I go farther. It's probably more than a coincidence. I'm comfortable in the altitude and the temperatures here.

Q. You had a few minutes right before we got started with the interviews, what were you thinking about?

MARTIN LAIRD: I was standing there thinking, you know, is this really happening right now? I was out there. I felt great all day. I know I'm good enough to do it. I kind of went into it with the thought if I don't play great today. It's the first time I'm ever in the finally group. It's the first time I'm really in contention in the last round. It's a learning experience. And I was really proud how I played. I hit it just as well today as I have any other day. Even though I was nervous coming down the stretch, my second shot on 16 was probably the best shot I ever hit. I had to hit it perfect to get over the water. The wind is to the left, I tend to hit a cut. It was a tough shot for me to start out left and not lose it too far right with the water. That was a do or die shot. To pull it off, and it was probably the best swing I ever made, that was a big moment.

Q. How did you handle your game in the wind on the back 9?

MARTIN LAIRD: Yes, 13 I've been hitting iron there. Today you couldn't go with a cross-bunker. It definitely changed the golf course. I felt pretty good in the wind. 13 and 16 were the only two holes that made a big difference. 2 par 5's, I'm couldn't really get to 13. I've been hitting 7 and 8 irons into 16. Today I hit a 3-iron. I've been driving the ball great all week. That's what made me win the tournament. I don't know how many fairways I missed with my driver, it wasn't more than four or five all week. On this golf course if you drive it well you are in perfect condition.

Q. You started out with a 63, then you shot 67 Friday and Saturday, you are not going the right way yet, you are still in this thing and today you shoot 68, and you wind up winning the whole thing. Is there any way to explain why hitting the wrong direction would find the right way home?

MARTIN LAIRD: I wasn't heading the wrong direction. Yesterday I probably played -- I had a 4 putt on 12 yesterday. I 3-putted from a foot and a half. I shot 4-under yesterday. Yesterday was the best I played all week. Yesterday and today was the best two ball

striking rounds. The course got tougher. Thursday the greens were soft. There was absolutely no wind and everybody goes low. Everybody fires at the flags. If you look at the scores there wasn't as many 62's and 63's, the greens get tougher. I know my scores were higher but I definitely wasn't going backwards.

Q. You said the playoff you felt relaxed. The first time you come up on 18 in regulation were you feeling more stress?

MARTIN LAIRD: Yes, the first time it came up in regulation I kind of got surprised I had been hitting driver off that tee every day because the tee box was way back and it sets up perfect for me. The way I've been driving the ball, I hit driver down the left. I hit wedge or sand wedge. They moved the tee box up 25 yards. I can't hit driver now. I'm not going to lie, it wasn't a comfortable tee shot on 18. The wind was blowing hard off the left. I'm pretty comfortable that I'm not going to miss my driver left. But my 3-wood has a tendency to go left sometimes and left on that hole is no good. That's probably why I was right. From there it was not an easy spot either. The tree was in my way. Unfortunately I hit that. I got up and down and holed that putt. That was huge.

Q. What about 17, you bogeyed it the first time. It looked like you are in an identical situation in the playoff and you come here and par it?

MARTIN LAIRD: Yes, you know, I hit it too good in regulation. It was 215 yards to the flag and I hit 7-iron. I don't think there was a chance I could hit it over and I flushed it and it went over. It barely went over. That was kind of one of those, I was thinking about putting it. I missed the hill and ended up making bogey. We felt like the wind died down a little bit. I said to my caddy, I can't hit it that far between. I hit it further in the playoff. It went over the green. I wasn't mad. What? There was a sprinkler head for my chip. I didn't have an option. I had to flop it on the green as opposed to bump and run it. I was probably more comfortable.

Q. Yes, because you played the chip you played the second time?

MARTIN LAIRD: Yes.

Q. We thought you learned, we also saw the sprinkler head, we thought putting was an option?

MARTIN LAIRD: Yes, putting was an option. I could have putted it but played it 3 or five feet right. Coming from Scotland you think I would prefer bump and runs. I look high first, and then look down in terms of my chipping. It was probably a shot that made me feel more comfortable with.

Q. How does someone from Scotland find himself to Ft. Collins?

MARTIN LAIRD: Good recruiting. I like the Coach. I've never been to America before. I said I'm going to go over and try it out.

And see what it's like. If I like it I can stay. If not I will try something else.

Q. Who recruited you?

MARTIN LAIRD: It really came down to between Rice and Colorado State. Some interest from Vanderbilt and a few other East Coast schools and other bigger schools. In the end, a lot of it was money. A good scholarship offer from Colorado State. That was kind of what took me there.

Q. If you had to write a story about the week, what was the key or any memories that you take away from it?

MARTIN LAIRD: I don't know. I felt relaxed all week. I've been having a good time. My girlfriend and I are going out to dinner, do a little gambling. Her parents came in for a couple of days. I was taking it easy, went to the concert last night. I said I want to go and have a nice dinner and went to the concert. I didn't thing about golf for a few hours last night. I don't know. It's a fun place to come for a week and play some golf.

Q. What will the celebration be?

MARTIN LAIRD: It's going to be big. I can't tell you what it's going to be. I'm sure I will have a headache for a few days.

Q. Will you play the rest of the year now or take time off?

MARTIN LAIRD: I'm definitely going to play next week. I live in Scottsdale. My parents are up from Scotland, so that's going to be fun. They are over there right now. I'm definitely going to play next week. I have to look and see about the rest of the year.

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