

PODS Championship  
Innisbrook Golf Resort  
Copperhead Course  
Tampa Bay, Fl

March 9, 2007

Second-round leader quotes

### AN INTERVIEW WITH STEPHEN LEANEY

JOE CHEMYCZ: 4-under par 67 today for Stephen Leaney. 12 of 18 greens, 26 putts. You started off very well, 4-under on the front. Just talk about your day.

**STEPHEN LEANEY:** It's another tough day. The golf course wears you out. There is no easy holes. There is no holes, apart from the first hole and the 11th hole, where you really feel like you got great birdie chances. I'm sure Heath and everyone else is seeing, you just got to put it in play, and pick your moments, pick out flags. That's what I have been doing. The only difference is this week I've been making putts, and that's the only way to get to 6-under is to hole your fair share, and I've done that

Q. What's your patience level if you can talk just about that.

**STEPHEN LEANEY:** My patience level is very good. It is probably one of my strongest attributes I've been struggling with the putter for the first five weeks. I am able to stay patient enough that when I finally came around this week, you start to hole putts. I've been working really hard on it. I've just been waiting for it to happen because I know I've been playing well enough. The results haven't really come because I really haven't been anything above ten feet. You really can't win or play well out here if you're not making your fair share of putts. Last week the first round I holed a total of 38 feet distance in the first round. You can't play doing that. Where as this week I think I'm up to 300 feet already for two days.

Q. How are the greens rolling, are they about standard for Bermuda?

**STEPHEN LEANEY:** They are very good, yes. They are a little slow yesterday morning early which is a bit of a shock. But once they sort of dried out, they have been very, very fast. Especially on the back 9 I had a couple of really downhill ones, downgrain, that you really don't have a lot of control over. You really have to be weary of where you lay your ball. It's just one of those weeks where it's kind of like a Major, you have to put it in certain spots and just take your 40-footer and not try to hit it close. That's what I've done.

Q. Most of the attention on you, in this country comes from Olympia Fields. What did

that do to your expectations? How has it gone since then?

**STEPHEN LEANEY:** I guess I put a lot of expectation on myself. I put a lot of pressure on myself, more internally, I didn't say I would start doing big things. When you play that well in a Major you kind of expect to keep playing that well. I had a good start the following year in the Match Play, and really haven't played well since. I think the hardest thing about playing here is watching on TV for so long you think you got to change your game and the way you play. I think I've been guilty of that a little bit. But coming to a golf course like this is so much like playing in Australia, where it's bouncy, and you got to play certain holes with the right angles, if you got shot into a certain hole. Where a lot of weeks it's not like that, it's just bombs away. You don't have to land on the right side of the fairway, hit the fairway, you know, just stand there and smash it. And that's really not the way I play my best golf. I play my best golf where you really think yourself around a golf course properly, and I think that's why I've played well here the last couple of years.

Q. You had a pretty serious health scare with the blood clots?

**STEPHEN LEANEY:** That was a long time ago.

Q. What was that ordeal like, how did it affect your game?

**STEPHEN LEANEY:** That was at the end of my first year. '93, I had a blood clot which is life threatening, but they cut the first rib out of my shoulder er and the blood clot is gone. I guess that hurt me for a couple of years, but that's so long ago now. At the time it was pretty devastating because the doctor said I wasn't going to play golf again, because of the nature of the injury. It was also a good thing as well because I realized I wasn't working that hard in my first year, I wasn't doing what I needed to do, and it gave me a kick up the backside, and I've got a talent here, I can't sort of just sit back and not use it. So I guess in a way, I look back and took that as a positive and not really a negative.

Q. Did you change doctors?

**STEPHEN LEANEY:** No, I didn't change doctors. I kind of wanted to prove him wrong. But I still send him a Christmas card.

Q. Is this just a good putting round, what are your expectation the next month or two months?

**STEPHEN LEANEY:** Well, I'm going to try to get some sleep tonight. I got a little girl who is not sleeping that well tonight. Hopefully I'll get some sleep tonight. I'm just going to get up and play the same way tomorrow. It's a golf course that you've just got to stick to your game plan every hole. You can't get aggressive with a driver on a hole where you would be hitting 3-wood. The golf course doesn't lend itself to that. It's such a hard golf course. It really forces you to play one shot at a time. Whereas a lot of weeks you can kind of get ahead of yourself thinking you got an easy par-5 coming up. It really forces you to stick with what you got. I got to keep doing what I'm doing, not thinking about winning the golf tournament. The course is way too hard to get ahead of yourself. You can't put scores in your brain because you know that you can really make a bogey on every single shot if you're not careful. You have to stay with what you're doing and just try to keep your putting game. That's really the reason why I'm leading because I probably holed more putts than any one else.

Q. Only a couple of Top-10's last year, any reason, some technical part of your game not up to it?

**STEPHEN LEANEY:** I think it is a very hard TOUR to play on, if you are not playing well, you don't have the confidence. Kind of this week is really the way that I play sometimes. I play pretty steady most weeks. If you don't make a lot, I'm not going to do a lot. The weeks I tend to do well is when I putt well. I'm not going to (inaudible) and have a lot of easy birdies. I'm not long enough to play power golf courses. But I've been working really hard the last month with my putting. It feels pretty good. I have to try to take that same feel into the weekend.

Q. Where are you living now?

**STEPHEN LEANEY:** Dallas, been there for three years.

Q. And playing where?

**STEPHEN LEANEY:** Timmeron Country Club, in Dallas. It's right on the golf course where I live. I think it was the only golf course that Byron Nelson actually designed.

Q. Timmeron? Where does Pamps play?

**STEPHEN LEANEY:** He lives in Claremont which is a bit further north than me. There is about six or seven Australians that live there.

Q. Why Dallas?

**STEPHEN LEANEY:** More the travel aspect. It's pretty easy for us to travel out of. We've looked in Florida. Florida is the further part of the world to get back to Australia, it's a long way. It's about a 26 hour flight as opposed to 24. Two hours makes a big difference.

Q. You said you were working on your putting, everybody says that, what exactly are you doing? Are you trying different putters? Are you moving the ball different places? Are you trying a different stance?

**STEPHEN LEANEY:** I've been using the putter since June of last year. My alignment -- I was having trouble getting my set up in the right position. My arms weren't lined up on target line. It felt very uncomfortable once I changed it to get it back to where I needed to get it. This is only the fourth week that I've been working on it. It just starts to feel natural now. It's not really a mental issue or anything else. It was more a set up problem, which was causing me to hit a lot of bad putts.

Q. Did you work with someone that spotted that, or did you figure it out yourself?

**STEPHEN LEANEY:** I have a guy in England, named Dennis Pugh, who I worked with, but Steven Bane (phn), who coaches Stuart Appleby, just mentioned to me in Phoenix and said you really need to try and get it here. And it's part of the drill I do before I hit each putt. Just to make sure my forearm is in the right spot.

Q. Is it inspiring at all to see the success of the other Aussies over the last two or three years, or do you look at each as a bunch of Aussies who have different homes in America?

**STEPHEN LEANEY:** I mean for sure, I've been playing against Rob and Stuart since we were 15 or 16-years-old. We grew up playing amateur golf together and to watch the success that those guys have had. And it certainly proves to you that those guys are good enough to do it, especially since Geoff won The Open last year. You don't have to turn into a different player to win out. You just got to do what you do best and stick with that. There were certain things that I do well, and certain things other guys do well. It's

really a matter of playing my game. It certainly helps to watch those guys win.

Q. Did you think that when you first came over here that you had to be a different player?

**STEPHEN LEANEY:** Mostly after The Open I thought I had to be longer be more aggressive. I mean if I look back at the weeks that I play well, I don't play that way. If I look at the way I played at Olympia Fields, I didn't play that way. I just play the way I know how to, which is, get it in play, use my strength, my play and wait for the putts to roll.

But it's hard when you go through a stretch when you don't make a lot of putts you suddenly try to force the issue. Suddenly you miss an extra couple of grains a round, you make it harder on yourself to make birdies. That's kind of what I haven't done here this week. It's that sort of golf course where it forces you to hit a lot of fairways and greens.

**JOE CHEMYCZ:** Take us through your round if you would. Birdie starting at 1. (Scorecard.)

Q. What did you think about 16, did you think it was going to fly a little bit?

**STEPHEN LEANEY:** It just looked soft. It was one of those lies where it was half Bermuda and half ryegrass, it looked like it was going to come out soft and it didn't. It just came out really quickly on me. That was a bad mistake.

Q. They were saying on TV that a lot of guys had trouble getting it into the hole on 18, but you didn't have that problem?

**STEPHEN LEANEY:** Well, I'm thankful it didn't go off the green, it was going pretty quickly. Yes, it was just nice to get a good lie in the rough and be able to make -- 4 was a good score, 3 was a bonus.

Q. 43 feet, 9 inches.

Q. Steven when was the last round (inaudible)

**STEPHEN LEANEY:** I think the last good week was Boston. Most of the Top-10's I had last year were purely again just from making a lot of putts. Putting is a different game. It's almost like a separate game from the rest of it.

If you look at the guys who win regularly, they make a putts. Tiger seems to do it more than most. He makes his share and makes them when he has to. It's just one of those areas where if you looked at everyone that won every week, they are probably up there in the top two or three in putting stats. You have to do it well. I just want to keep that same feeling going over the weekend.

Q. In your own mind, how hard is it to win on this TOUR?

**STEPHEN LEANEY:** I don't know, I haven't won yet. I've won tournaments in Europe and Australia. I know it's difficult to win in America. You still go through the same process in your brain whether you are winning the German Masters, or Moroccan or whatever.

I've won on some very hard golf courses in Australia where par is a very good score. So I like golf courses where you don't have to be overly aggressive. You just play to your strengths. I'm trying not to think about winning a golf tournament. Obviously, if I'm there on Sunday with a chance, I've got the experience to fall back on. I just haven't got that experience over here. As I said, you still go through the same process of winning a golf tournament, whether it's the PODS Championship, or any other tournament. It's a matter of drawing on it. I know I've won before. I can handle the pressure of doing it.

It's a matter of getting in on Sunday with a chance to win.  
JOE CHEMYCZ: Thank you.

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