

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW: TOM LEHMAN (-8)
May 5, 2017



DAVE SENKO: Tom, good start, 8-under 64. I know when we were coming in you told me you got off to a little bit of, I think, a slow start and you made some long putts to kind of get things going.

TOM LEHMAN: Well, I got off to a slow start in terms of the way I was swinging, but a fast start in terms of scoring. I hit a decent drive on the 10th hole. I hit a terrible sort of semi-fat push 7-iron 70 feet to the right of the hole if it was an inch and I made it.

Then I hit a really good 5-iron the next hole to about three feet and missed it, which was strange. But then a couple holes later, on 13 hit a terrible wedge that spun back probably 40 to 45 feet short and then I made that.

And then kind of did a couple of good things, knocked it on the par 5 in two and two-putted. Then 18, hit a pretty good 3-wood but ended up in the right rough. Thought I had a flyer and it didn't fly and ended up just about two yards short of the green, and then I had 23 steps to the pin there and then I made that. What's that, 72 feet, or 69 feet or whatever it was. All I know is I made three putts over 40 feet in the first nine holes and I haven't made three putts like that in three years.

DAVE SENKO: Which holes were they again?

TOM LEHMAN: 10, 13 and then 18. So I made three that I wasn't expecting, and then I started to play pretty well. Really somewhere along the line there I started hitting it pretty well and gave myself some good looks and made a few more and had a really good day.

DAVE SENKO: You mentioned you just had the one blemish at 7?

TOM LEHMAN: Yeah, we talked about the wind. The wind, you kind of get an idea what the wind is doing. It was supposed to be a northwest wind most of the day and you kind of plan for that unless there's a reason not to. I got to the seventh hole and it was supposed to be hurting, and it just felt like it was more across and just didn't really trust that it was more across, and hit a 3-wood that went left and went in the bunker and it was up against the lip and had to chip it out sideways and made a bogey.

But the wind swirling through the trees is what really makes the course so difficult on a breezy day. It's so hard to really be certain of what direction it's going and it therefore makes it very easy to be way off with your distance if you don't kind of guess right.

Q. Have you led this tournament before?

TOM LEHMAN: I've had a lot of good tournaments.

Q. I was going there with that because you've been second twice and you've been fourth twice.

TOM LEHMAN: Yeah, I've had a lot of good weeks. I'm not sure if I've ever been leading or not, I really don't know, I couldn't tell you that.

Q. The two second places, were either of those tournaments that you thought might have gotten away from you?

TOM LEHMAN: No, definitely not.

Q. You just ended up in second place?

TOM LEHMAN: Played really well. I remember Fred Funk one year, he hit it to about a foot on the last hole and made a birdie. I hit a beautiful putt that hit two spike marks along the way and ended up lipping out on the right side. Yeah, so the weeks that I played here, I played well. I played well start to finish and just somebody else has always played a bit better.

Q. At your worst showing up with that (inaudible) marks was last year with a 12th-place tie. In six trips, I think that's pretty good.

TOM LEHMAN: Yeah. Last year I was having a really good week, too, and hit a tee shot down the left side of the fairway, which I thought was going to be either left edge of the fairway or barely in the right rough, and we never found the ball. On the last hole of the tournament, made triple. So I would think I was in like fourth place last year going into 18 and it either stayed in the tree or somebody picked it up. But I hit a tee shot that I thought it was going to be very, very playable and never found the ball and made triple.

Q. I guess a year later you've gotten that out of your mind, right?

TOM LEHMAN: No.

Q. Did you take a look when you were out there today?

TOM LEHMAN: I said, There's that tree right there that swallowed the golf ball. Well, it could have been that little kid. No, I've had good weeks here. I really enjoy it. It's really interesting because I played here in the Tour School way, way back a long, long time ago in 1989, I think it was, and it was in December. Terrible weather, cold, wet, and I played awful. I got like the last conditional Hogan Tour card I played that badly. I nearly missed everything. I vowed to myself then I'm never going to go back there and play, I hate it there. So all those years between the Champions Tour and then, I skipped coming here.

Q. So you didn't play the Shell?

TOM LEHMAN: Didn't play the Shell. Just had these really bad vibes and memories about the course, I didn't like it. And when I came back here on the Champions Tour and played it, I said to myself, Well, what the heck were you thinking? This course is so perfectly suited to your game, and it's a great course anyway. You really kind of missed out all these years by skipping this weekend.

Q. That was my next question, obviously the course suits you. Can you elaborate on that a little?

TOM LEHMAN: Yeah, sometimes you have a bad experience, it sways your thinking. It wasn't the golf course that I played so poorly so I didn't like anything about that week. So yeah, I obviously just think this golf course is fantastic, and for whatever the reason, I feel very comfortable on it.