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## Leishman Stands as Australia's Last Hope at Royal Portrush, Eyes More Major Appearances

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Marc Leishman, the sole Australian remaining at The 153rd Open Championship (commonly known as The Open), delivered a strong third-round performance on the challenging Royal Portrush links in Northern Ireland. The Victorian golfer shot a 3-under-par 68 on Saturday, moving to 4-under overall and tying for 22nd place, 10 strokes behind leader Scottie Scheffler. While a major victory remains a steep climb, Leishman's consistent play positions him well for future appearances in golf's biggest tournaments.

Leishman began his round with confidence, striking two precise iron shots before a costly three-putt on the first hole. The crowd roared as England's John Parry aced the same hole, and Leishman nearly matched the feat with a close birdie putt at the third hole. After finishing the front nine at 1-under, he reflected positively on his game. "Felt good today. Played good, hit good shots into the first and then three-putted, but hit two shots exactly where I wanted to hit them," Leishman said. His goal for the final round is to break into the top 5 or 10, though he acknowledges the tough leaderboard.

A setback on the 12th hole, a fairway bunker trap, led to a double bogey, but Leishman accepted responsibility. "I deserved to make 6 on 12. Hit three bad shots, so you don't mind making sixes if you deserve to make them," he admitted. A strong finish, including birdies on the tough par-3 13th and the infamous "Calamity Corner" at 16, helped maintain momentum. Leishman called the 16th "very difficult for everyone," noting that a par there feels almost like a victory.

A top-four finish this week would secure Leishman a spot in the upcoming Masters Tournament at Augusta National, while a top-10 finish guarantees his entry to the next Open at Royal Birkdale in 2026. "There's the carrot dangling to try to get into the top 4 but also to try to get in The Open next year," Leishman explained. Despite trailing leader Scheffler by a significant margin, Leishman remains motivated to "do something silly" on Sunday and make a strong push.

Leishman's post-round routine includes sharing golf insights with his son Harvey, who is showing a keen interest in the game. "He loves it. Inquisitive, I guess I would say, and he wants to learn," Leishman said with a smile, revealing that Harvey questions him about his shot choices.

Rory McIlroy, the 2025 Masters champion, also thrilled local fans with a 5-under 66 to reach 8-under overall, keeping his hopes alive for a second major title this year. After watching the British and Irish Lions defeat the Wallabies in rugby earlier that day, McIlroy got off to a strong start, birdieing three of the first four holes. "I played well. I rode my luck at times, but yeah, it was an incredible atmosphere out there," McIlroy remarked.

All four rounds of The Open Championship are being broadcast live on Fox Sports and Kayo, giving golf fans full coverage of one of the sport's most historic and challenging events.