

RBC Heritage

Thursday, June 18, 2020

Ian Poulter

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Ian, thanks for the time today, a great round, 7 under at Harbour Town. Talk to us about how it went out there.

IAN POULTER: Yeah, any time you shoot 7 under par around this golf course, it's obviously a pretty solid day. When I teed off, knowing there was a little bit of rain in the forecast, but the opportunity with no wind, soft conditions, off to a perfect start. Made three birdies on the front nine, four on the back.

I feel that I didn't hit it that well off the tee today. So I need to go straight to the range and address a few leaky right tee shots.

My iron play was pretty solid. I holed out really well from kind of inside seven feet, and good to obviously finish with two birdies on the last two holes.

THE MODERATOR: Talk about being bogey free today. How important is that on this course?

IAN POULTER: It's very important being bogey free. Any time that happens on this golf course, you've obviously played pretty well. I think it's a great course. I love coming here. It's a fiddly, testy, tricky golf course. You have to kind of sometimes maneuver the ball around trees that are on the right or left edge of the fairway. So I like it. I like the small greens. I've always loved coming here to play golf.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up to questions.

Q. Ian, as we talk about this getting back into golf, do you think it helps you, as someone who doesn't play much golf anyway, to get back into the competition? If you know what I mean, which I think you do.

IAN POULTER: I feel that I played three or four rounds of golf in that spell of three months off, and it was apparent that, as soon as I come back to hitting balls, I felt like I was swinging pretty good. I felt good about my game. And every time I went onto the range, I felt like my game was good.

So I got off to a decent start at the THE PLAYERS, and obviously we had that big pause. So I think for me it was good to have the kids at home for that period of time. To be honest, I was super active. I was, as you guys probably saw, I was busy on social media. I was

doing lots of different things around the house. The time actually went -- 12 weeks went very, very quickly.

As soon as I felt I was playing well, it was all a case of getting back to playing golf. As you said, I'm not one that plays round after round after round after round to feel that I need to be ready to play golf. I've enjoyed it today.

Q. Quickly, what was the club on 18?

IAN POULTER: It was a 5 iron from 213.

Q. We saw the video of you taking the COVID test that you put out yesterday. Just curious, is it as bad as it looked? If you took one last week, was it a different test? Was it more invasive this time?

IAN POULTER: So I went to booth three this time, and the guy that was in booth one was the gentleman that did the test last week for me. This time round, it seemed like it was up there for a lot longer than it was last week. I mean, I have to be honest, it's not really the actual test itself. It's the thought of what -- the brush that seems to disappear so far in the middle of your head. It just feels very comfortable. It's just a bizarre sensation. It's not painful. It's just -- you just don't want that brush going as far back as it goes.

So it's over within ten seconds, and then obviously your fingers are crossed for obviously a negative test.

Q. Are you surprised no positive tests with all these people coming from all over.

IAN POULTER: It's a great start. I don't think the PGA TOUR would have expected that. They definitely would have expected a few people, certainly from as far and wide as people are traveling to come in and play golf. The potential for being compromised somewhere along the line, whether it's in a restaurant, whether it's filling your car up full of gas, whether -- there's so many different permutations to be able to be compromised.

I think it's been a great two weeks so far. Hopefully, tap wood, that continues going forward.

Q. This may be one of the dumber questions, Ian, since I haven't seen you in a while, but the DP World on your visor looks new to me. Is it?

IAN POULTER: It's been there since the start of the year.



Q. I know you're playing here and you live here with your family and all, but do you have any concerns about the European Tour going forward? Not so much the end of '20, but as we progress into '21.

IAN POULTER: Obviously, playing in so many countries like Europe do and with what's happened across all of the territories that we play on the European Tour, it's definitely going to affect them more than the PGA TOUR, and I think it's -- all of the protocols that go into making us play here on the PGA TOUR, it's going to differ in whatever country the Europeans will go to.

So I really hope that the European Tour can come out of this COVID time not too bad. It's obviously going to impact them a lot more than it does over here. I hope we can support as many events as we possibly can, and obviously, all of the players that do come over here to play, it's our obligation to obviously maintain and make sure we play enough events over there to keep those sponsors coming.

Q. What do you think about a number of players, whether it's Lucas Herbert, Shaun Norris, Tom Lewis, who can't get over here to play? Some have chosen to stay.

IAN POULTER: Tom's here playing, right?

Q. I'm talking about the TOUR, though, in terms of getting ranking points.

IAN POULTER: Again, that's -- it's difficult. I feel that what's the right and what's the wrong thing to do in this scenario when you've got 16 of the top 20 players playing here this week. We had -- was it 6 of the top 10 last week playing? It feels a little unjust to the guys in Europe that aren't playing, but how can you not have World Ranking points in a tournament like this when you've got this level of a field?

Yeah, there's definitely going to be some guys that have missed opportunities, and it's going to be tough. I sympathize. I don't know what the right answer would have been, but, again, if you don't play for any points and somebody wins the first two events -- with this many points on the table, I potentially could move from, say, 60 in the world to top 20 with two wins. So it wouldn't be fair if I was in that position either.