

RBC Canadian Open

Press Conference

Wednesday, July 26, 2017

Ian Poulter

THE MODERATOR: Welcome Ian Poulter, in some fine form of late coming off a T-14 at The Open Championship last week and also making your first start at the RBC Canadian Open.

If you could start us off with comments about what it's like to be here and to play the RBC this week.

IAN POULTER: Well, it's been a very long time waiting to play this event. It's great to finally get here. I think I played Glen Abbey in the Skins event about 12 years ago and had a great time then. And unfortunately the schedule, every time I've played The Open championship, I've been back in the U.K. and I've had my charity event and I've had a junior day, and I've always spent an extra week in the U.K. because I haven't had many weeks over there.

This year is a difference. Obviously finally getting a decent result at THE PLAYERS Championship, meant I could spend a nice summer back in the U.K. with the family. Meant I could also play in the Canadian Open. I know it's been a long time and I should have been here in the past but I'm really happy to be here.

It's a great event. I've watched many of them through the years. The great players that have won this event through the years; Jack was at an RBC event yesterday, which was a nice surprise to catch up with him and have a little chat with Jack, especially about this event.

It means a lot to a lot of people and I'm proud to be here this week.

THE MODERATOR: The experience last week, being in contention at a major championship, and also the charter flight over here and coming here to RBC, what's that whole experience been like? Has it been kind of a whirlwind last few days for you?

IAN POULTER: The last two months has been a whirlwind. It hasn't been the last two days. I didn't use the charter plane on Sunday night. I chose to drive back home to my house in the U.K. I re-packed three months' worth of clothing and decided to head to Heathrow airport Monday afternoon which was great. So I spent another night in the U.K. Had a great time with the kids on Monday morning, and then I went to the airport, came over, arrived at the hotel Monday



night about 6:30, 7:00, had a nice dinner and played in the RBC golf day yesterday.

It's been a mad few months, not just a mad couple of days, but it's been great. This RBC, it's the 108th of the Canadian Open. It's a big tournament and through the years it's meant a lot to many people, great winners, and hopefully come Sunday, I can hoist the trophy.

Q. I just wanted to get your feelings on The Open and whether you and Matt Kuchar have had a chance to reflect on what happened that weekend, especially when you look at Kuch, pretty impressive, went toe-to-toe with Jordan down the stretch, and Jordan just turned it on. I wonder how -- whether you've had a chance to talk to Kuch about that and then secondly, what's the feeling like to be emotionally into a tournament like that, in contention, and then have to travel and then cross the continent, cross the ocean and start over here?

IAN POULTER: I obviously saw Matt yesterday and I congratulated him on a great finish.

Obviously what Jordan did on the last five holes was pretty incredible. When you think of -- when you're playing, you don't see how the guys perform during the round of golf. Obviously I haven't had enough time to review the coverage. I got off the course -- I teed off at half past one and I think they teed off about an hour later. So I haven't really seen much of the coverage.

But obviously when I finished, I saw how things were unfolding around the last five holes. Remarkable from Jordan. Obviously you feel a bit sorry for Matt, who had a position; I think he was 1-up playing 13, shot 2-under from that moment and lost by three.

You know, when you look at that, Matt would have thought at that time, had he finished 2-under par for the last five, he perhaps could have been holding the Jug, but as it turned out, Jordan did his thing.

So I haven't really spoke to Matt in person. I just said to him, congratulations. Second place is always kind of a bittersweet feeling. I was there in 2008 and finished second, same as Matt did. I holed a putt on the last, which I thought was to win The Open, and then all of the sudden I lose by three. I've been in that position

and it's a hard position to be in. You're so close but so far away from a fantastic week. So yeah, I haven't had time to catch up with him.

But crossing the pond, your second question -- yeah, this is five weeks in a row for me. This is my fifth open in a row: Starting with The French Open, The Irish Open, The Scottish Open, The Open Championship, and now the Canadian Open. So there's been a lot of mileage in between all of those, albeit the first four Opens were quite close together. It's been a great summer for me to spend a lot of time with the family in the U.K. They traveled to a couple of the tournaments.

Yeah, I feel a little bit tired today to be honest with you. But once that gun goes tomorrow afternoon, I'll be ready to go.

Q. You mentioned it's been a crazy couple of months, with the medical exemption and points recalculation, but you've had some good form this summer, too. Was it a technical thing that changed your results or an attitude thing? Have you been able to identify why the form picked up?

IAN POULTER: January, February, I cleared a lot of clutter in the background, shall we say. I just tidied the room; cleaned things up from a perspective to you hit the refresh button. Get things in my head, you know, worked out.

You guys know how mad the last four months has been. Being in a position to try and maintain a card status, having the disappointment level, re-working your entire year's schedule around what possibly could be going on, looking into the whole situation of writing for invitations; and then getting a phone call the following week to say, sorry, miscalculation, you have a card.

The whole stress level of those first few months of the year took their toll. I think mentally, getting the phone call, understanding what that meant from a perspective of a playing schedule for the rest of the season, playing well at THE PLAYERS Championship, allowing me to spend more time with the family over the summer period. You know, my mental state is a lot freer than what it was the back end of last year, coming off an injury, the uncertainty of where I was playing, what I with as doing, not being able to plan a schedule.

Once you understand what you're doing and you have a schedule in place, it's easy to be able to work on things. When you don't know where you're going to be any given week, to be able to plan schedules and stuff, it's hard to see through all of that mess.

So I think from that perspective, things got cleared up

quite nicely; that led to some great performance at THE PLAYERS Championship; that led to obviously a boost in the confidence levels, and because of that, I've been playing golf, that I'd like to play.

Q. The European Tour has tried a few different things recently, most notably the GolfSixes. I'm just curious your thoughts about that and if you think it has a place maybe in North America?

IAN POULTER: I definitely think it's got a place. Any event that we can showcase to broaden the interest in golf is a good thing. So if it's GolfSixes or another form of that, I think it's great. It's good for TV coverage. If it boosts the ratings; if it attracts families, and in families -- from the adults down to the kids. If it interacts with those people gets them, a, watching TV, watching golf, the interest levels for those kids to get to their local club trying to play golf, that's a good thing.

When you look at all of the tours all around the world, how many events we normally play, you can predict how the TV and how golf pans out during those weeks. But when you add a new form of that, it creates a bit of interest. So I think it's great, and you know, I encourage more of those events to help boost the game of golf.

Q. You touched about the tournaments that you've played in Europe recently, and the question is, coming from The Open to this tournament, how do you prepare yourself mentally, physically? How do you prepare your body for that transition to come across the pond to play here?

IAN POULTER: Sleep. Sleep, sleep, sleep. I went to bed last night at 11:00, and my alarm went off at 9:00 this morning, so I had ten hours' sleep. I was still tired when I woke up. I could have had an extra hour's sleep.

It's difficult for your body to go through. It's only a five-hour time change, which is relatively small from a European perspective, what we're used to when we go and play in Asia; you're moving 12 different time zones.

I feel adjusted pretty much. A nine o'clock morning wakeup is 2:00 in the afternoon in the U.K. I've been able to adjust very quickly into that. I'm a family of Poulter's of good sleepers, shall we say. Hopefully that -- my late tee off time I think is a big plus for me again. I can get another really good night's sleep in to feel fresh.

My game's in shape. That's what I do know. So I don't need to work on my game. I need to refresh myself today with Glen Abbey. It's been a long time since playing here. And a, I need to work out the green speed, need to work out the firmness of those greens.

I need to re-familiarize myself with the lines off the tees, and once I do that today in the Pro-Am, I'll be ready to rock tomorrow.

Q. In reverence to how exhausted you are, the schedule, were you aware of your PGA TOUR status when you committed to this tournament?

IAN POULTER: Was I aware of my PGA?

Q. You weren't worried about money or anything like that when you committed here? Just wondering what the motivation was to play, knowing that you're playing five straight weeks and then to come over.

IAN POULTER: I could be playing seven in a row. I'm staring seven in a row right now. Obviously I'm not in the WGC next week. When we worked out a schedule to come and play, I was always looking to break into the Top-50 by the end of this week. Obviously a good performance last week and a good performance the week before would have had me inside the Top-50 already.

I knew I was already looking at -- well, prior to qualifying for The Open Championship several weeks ago in a 36-hole qualifier in the mix, in the middle of those five weeks that I'm playing, which got me into The Open, which then obviously brought me here. I've played a lot of golf in a short window, and I was always prepared to play seven weeks in a row.

I'm in a World Ranking situation where I don't like my World Ranking. I'm trying to boost my World Ranking right now. And by doing that, a, I need to play good golf; b, I need to play a number of events in a row; I need to accumulate as many points as I possibly can in a short period of time.

There are events coming up later on in the calendar year which I'd like to be playing in. I'm in the US PGA. Obviously I'd like to play next week in the WGC. I'd like to play HSBC Champions event in China later on in the year which is another Top-50 qualification event.

So I understand, and we worked out, that I could be playing a big block in the summer. But as long as you plan for that, then you know, you can mentally get over the fatigue factor of playing so many events in a row. It's when you get the surprise of playing so many events in a row, or you don't plan to play too many, and then you start adding events that you didn't think you was going to add, and then you start to put more pressure on yourself and you get more fatigued because you didn't think you was playing that many events.

Q. Football is massive in your country. I wanted to

ask you about Arsenal but we'll get to that in a second. Has your curiosity been piqued; across from the clubhouse, have you seen the hockey rink they have erected on the par 3?

IAN POULTER: I drove in the clubhouse half an hour ago and I saw nothing. Terry, my caddie, my former caddie, was driving, and I was on a phone call. I've seen nothing. It took me awhile to find my locker. So no, I haven't seen anything around the course.

Q. So where do you stand on the whole Arsène Wenger situation? I know you're a fan. Fifth was disappointing for your side this year.

IAN POULTER: Well, no kidding.

Q. Where do you stand on where he should be?

IAN POULTER: Where do I stand? From a football perspective as an Arsenal fan, last year was a massive disappointment. I would love for Arsenal to be back where they belong and that's at the top of the Premiership. I think they should be contending in the Champions League and with that they need to continue to strengthen the side.

Obviously Lacazette was a good signing this summer. Other teams in the Premiership have strengthened even stronger from their positions of players from last year, so I would be -- I would be a happier fan if they make an extra few signings. So we shall see.

Q. Just wanted to ask, you put yourself out on social media a fair bit. If a young player was coming up now, would you say to them, it's worth doing?

IAN POULTER: I would advise that person to -- well, it depends on who the youngster is and their financial situation. Probably the smartest way of doing it, is give it to someone who is employed to do it for them. Not let them get interactive with it and completely isolate them from that. Showcase whatever it is the two of them want to showcase, for them as a brand, whatever they want to do.

But I would definitely -- if I was advising them, I would unfortunately tell them to not read all the comments, because unfortunately there's always -- you don't look at the 99 percent of comments that are fantastic. You gravitate to the ones that seem to want to pull you down, and unfortunately those people weren't worth reading about, anyway, to be honest. They are just sad people that don't have much of a life, so shouldn't really be looking at their comments anyway. Should you gravitate more to the 99 percent, which are the good people, the fans and the people that actually want to help you along your journey.

Q. You and Kuch are among the most popular

players on TOUR. You have a real good demeanor?

IAN POULTER: Don't think I'm quite as popular as Kuch, but anyway. Kuch is loved by everybody. I'm like marmite; you either love me or hate me, and I don't care which one it is. I wish you all loved me, but you all don't, but that's fine. I sleep at night pretty well.

Q. How do you balance between being relaxed, enjoying out yourself, and the intensity that a Jordan Spieth will show at times? And he shows all kinds of a range of emotions, and curious to know whether you guys talk about that, the range of emotions he showed on the weekend?

IAN POULTER: No, we're competitors. So why would I talk to Kuch or Jordan about his mental state and why he's got an edge on anyone else --

Q. But do you have an opinion --

IAN POULTER: I wear my heart on my sleeve. You know, I haven't enjoyed my golf in the last 18 months because it's been indifferent for so many different reasons. I've been injured; I've had highs; I've had lows; I've had difficult times. I've had uncertainty. I've had all those things. I felt I haven't been enjoying my golf on the golf course.

If you want to go to the other end of the perspective and want to talk about Jordan, and he's now a three-time major winner and he's won three of the four, you're talking about someone who is at the top of the World Rankings, all it be apart from Dustin who is No. 1.

But you're talking about someone who has taken his game to another level at 23 years of age, multiple wins, three majors, three of the four, he's going for a Grand Slam next week. You're talking about someone that wears their heart on the sleeve because of the golf that they are playing. I can't wear my heart on my sleeve like he has with the uncertainty and all the nonsense that I've been having to deal with.

So you know, different people show emotions for different reasons. Jordan is showing his emotion because he's been able to play great golf, winning great tournaments, winning -- in the last three years, it's been remarkable what he's done.

If I was in that position, you perhaps would see a bit more coming from me than what you've seen; the same with any other player. If you're at the top of the game winning week-in, week-out, you are showing some great emotion on the golf course.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks very much.