

AIG Women's Open

Thursday, 20 August, 2020

Catriona Matthew

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome to Catriona Matthew, our 2009 champion. What a fantastic round today. Can you talk about that a little bit?

CATRIONA MATTHEW: Yeah, obviously delighted with my round. You know, I played well. I drove the ball well. I don't think I missed a fairway today, which gives you just the opportunity to try and hit the greens. Going out was obviously super long, going back out into the wind, and then coming back downwind sometimes isn't that easy, either, it was such a strong wind.

Drove the ball well and putted well. Putted well from probably 10 feet and in, which I think that's probably the two key things you have to do well on days like this.

THE MODERATOR: In a wind like that, how did you possibly not miss a fairway? Hearing the other players talk about it, it seemed like it was almost impossible with the different club selections.

CATRIONA MATTHEW: I don't know, I just happened to drive it well. You know, I drove it well into the wind, and yeah, just one of these days where things go well.

THE MODERATOR: You had a bit of a run on the back. Were the conditions becoming a bit easier?

CATRIONA MATTHEW: I think obviously just downwind, birdied 15, 16, 17. 15, I hit a good drive and just hit a kind of little wedge into the green, which actually just stopped on me, so I had about a 30-footer, which I holed, so a real bonus there. And then 16, I actually hit a really good drive over the burn, dreadful 6-iron off to the right and a really good chip and holed about a 15-footer for birdie. 16 hit a little 8-iron, just bounced up nicely to probably 12 feet and holed that.

Unfortunate to bogey the last, but standing on that first tee I'd have taken even.

THE MODERATOR: And the bogey on the last, what was that club selection?

CATRIONA MATTHEW: I laid up off the tee. Some

people are just hitting driver. I laid up off the tee to try and miss the bunkers and then just kind of pulled the second and had to just do a chip-and-run -- with the downwind I couldn't hit a flop shot over the bunker, so I had to chip out to the side and then take a two-putt.

THE MODERATOR: Given your experience and obviously living on the coast, do you see a day like this and whilst you're not thinking this is lovely conditions, do you sort of think, oh, I do have a bit of an advantage here because I am so experienced in playing in it?

CATRIONA MATTHEW: I don't know that I'd actually go out and play on a day like this at home. I'd probably sit and look at them and think what idiots they are to go out there and play. But I think perhaps just the experience of having played in this event so often. Throughout the years we have had some pretty horrific days, and it's just to go out there, I think, with the mentality that you just need to hang in. You might get the odd bad break, you might get a few good ones. But I think just hang in and just try and give yourself putts for par.

THE MODERATOR: I heard you mentioning in the TV interview that you thought the weather was kind of comparable to Hoylake. Absolutely pouring down now, so it must make you feel sad you finished --

CATRIONA MATTHEW: Yeah, very upset.

THE MODERATOR: Do you think this was as bad as Hoylake was?

CATRIONA MATTHEW: Yeah, I think that Sunday at Hoylake and then perhaps the year Sherri Steinhauer won at Lytham was pretty horrific, as well. Yeah, we've had days like this before, but it was actually probably slightly better today than the forecast, so at least we managed to play it. Last night I really wondered whether we'd be playing.

THE MODERATOR: And actually the forecast was maybe a little bit worse than it actually turned out to be.

CATRIONA MATTHEW: Yeah, I think the forecast was calling for like 40-mile-an-hour winds, which I don't think you could play in, so we lucked out in the 30.



Q. I'm just curious what the most difficult shot was you had out there today in the wind, if you could describe it?

CATRIONA MATTHEW: I think to be honest they were all difficult, but I don't think one stood out any more difficult than any of the others, to be honest. I think you really just had to concentrate on them all. I think you really had to be committed to your shot. I think that's the worst thing you can do in the wind is if you're indecisive. You've really just got to be committed and hit the shot and hope you pull it off.

You know, I think the Postage Stamp obviously, even though it's such a short shot, that was kind of a cross wind off the left, which was pretty tricky, so I was pleased to see my ball land on the green there.

Q. I probably should know this, but how many times have you played Troon in any events prior to this one as an am or anything?

CATRIONA MATTHEW: The last time I played in it, I think in the Helen Holm, obviously a big amateur event over here. I'm not quite sure how many times I played in that, but it's probably '94 was the last time I played here.

Q. What is your level of confidence that you can win, especially on this kind of golf course in this event? Is that still high, or if not, why not, and if so, why would you have confidence that you can still win an event like this? I don't mean to age you, but please take the question in the spirit it's intended.

CATRIONA MATTHEW: I mean, I think obviously coming in here with how I've been playing lately, probably making the cut would be good. But obviously a day like today, the conditions probably helped me that it's not going to be super low. I think I changed my putting grip, went to -- I don't know what you call it, the saw, which seems to have worked. Last week I actually felt like I played decent but just didn't putt well. In these kind of conditions you've got to putt well from 10 feet and in, and that change in the grip seems to have helped. No reason why I can't go on from here. Obviously there's still a huge way to go, but just need to keep plugging away.

Q. Would you kind of -- maybe relish is the wrong word, but would three more days like this not particularly bother you but it might do other players?

CATRIONA MATTHEW: It would be -- you'd be exhausted by Sunday night, but yeah. Hopefully it might improve a little bit.

Q. Sort of a follow-up, you last played Troon in '94. Following on missing last week's cut, did you do anything particular in your preparation for Troon, and how often -- how many practice rounds did you play? How familiar would you say you are with the course?

CATRIONA MATTHEW: I wouldn't say I'm really that familiar with the course. I'd actually played a practice round -- I played 18 on Monday and Tuesday and then just a few holes on Wednesday. It's amazing even though it's however many, 25 years ago, how you do remember a golf course.

I think I'd forgotten actually how good a course this was. Obviously you remember it from watching some of the previous men's Opens. I remember watching Henrik and Phil. So you remember the holes from that.

Yeah, I mean, I think the only thing I changed this week really as I said earlier was my putting stroke. I changed my grip a little bit.

THE MODERATOR: During the break you've become slightly addicted to Peloton, and you were saying that Monday was the first day you haven't done it in the whole time. Could that be the difference?

CATRIONA MATTHEW: Maybe I'm not exhausted.

THE MODERATOR: Maybe your Whoop band is letting you recover now.

CATRIONA MATTHEW: Yeah, I've recovered now, yeah. Yeah, I obviously did that, just something to keep you sane during the lockdown, but I must say we've been enjoying it.

THE MODERATOR: This obviously is tiring enough --

CATRIONA MATTHEW: I don't think you'd be rushing to wear yourself out on that this week, no.

Q. This change in putting grip, is this a common thing you do? I don't remember you changing your putting grip so often. Has this been a common thing or is this really a radical change for you?

CATRIONA MATTHEW: It's quite a radical change. The grip I'm using now, kind of the saw grip I think is what it is, to be fair over the years I've tried various different grips, left-hand low, just changing how I hold it generally, but this is quite a radical one. I've obviously fiddled about with it perhaps in practice and things and never taken it to a tournament, but I thought there was nothing to lose this week.

Q. That's what I mean, bringing it into a major championship, especially one at home, especially at a place like Royal Troon, that's quite a departure, is it not?

CATRIONA MATTHEW: Well, I had three days' practice. I missed so many last year I had to try something different.

Q. Regarding the announcement yesterday about future venues, obviously Muirfield leapt out to a lot of us. What do you think is the significance of Muirfield hosting this event?

CATRIONA MATTHEW: Yeah, I mean, I think it's great that they're taking this event to Open rota golf courses, obviously Troon and Muirfield coming on now that they've got lady members. I think the players are just going to love going and playing at Muirfield, Carnoustie coming up, St. Andrews, Walton Heath, a great selection of golf courses. Muirfield is a great one, I think. The men all kind of rave about it. I've been lucky enough to play it a few times and really enjoy it. So I think that will be one that we're looking forward to.

Q. If someone said to you even 10 years ago that Muirfield would host a Women's Open, what do you think your reaction would have been?

CATRIONA MATTHEW: I probably wouldn't have believed it then.

Q. I was curious if over the years very many American players have tried to pick your brain about playing links golf or what your best bit of advice for folks who are struggling with it?

CATRIONA MATTHEW: No, no one has really picked my brain. I think links golf, a lot of it's patience and it's just accepting perhaps bad bounces and different things, and I think it's using your imagination, perhaps, around the greens and even for your second shots. I think probably the biggest thing is not fighting the wind. Sometimes when it's as strong as this, you just have to play with the wind.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Catriona. Good luck tomorrow. Thanks, everyone.

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