

AIG Women's Open

Thursday, 20 August, 2020

Amy Olson

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome to our tournament leader, Amy Olson. I just heard you talk about maybe it was the best ball-striking day you've ever had.

AMY OLSON: Yeah, I mean, the conditions out there honestly were so tough. I've said that was the best ball-striking day of my life. I kept the trajectory on every shot what I wanted. My start lines were really good, which was especially important those first nine holes going out into the wind, and my distance control was really good, which can be really tough to judge on a day like this.

THE MODERATOR: You found birdies where nobody else has. It is like you're playing a slightly different course. You had a bogey on the 3rd and then from then on your momentum was just extraordinary. Can you talk about how you mastered the course today whereas everyone else was struggling, your playing partners and everyone?

AMY OLSON: Yeah, it was so tough. I can't even describe how difficult it was out there. The 2nd hole I saved par on hole 2, and I just turned to Tanika, and I'm like, that felt like a birdie. Those holes out there, every par-4 felt like a par-5, and then when you're coming back, like hole 16, the par-5, feels like a par-4. So your mindset kind of changes where you're just hanging on for dear life going out and then coming in you really need to be aggressive and fire at some pins, and I gave myself a ton of opportunities. Honestly it could have been way lower, but I'm obviously very pleased with my round.

THE MODERATOR: Last week and this week I'm really struck by how much you relish the challenge of -- this is even tougher obviously than last week. You're almost excited talking about the challenges that you faced and how excited you were to play Troon.

AMY OLSON: Yeah, I love playing links golf. I feel like over my career I've gotten a lot more comfortable with it, a lot more experience with it. Where I grew up in North Dakota it gets extremely windy, and so I grew up playing the ball very low, and I've adjusted my ball flight to be higher to be able to play a lot of our Tour golf courses, but I still have the ability to bring it down, and I think that served me very well over here.

THE MODERATOR: Did you play any links courses when you were younger?

AMY OLSON: Yeah, I never really played any links courses when I was younger. I played similar conditions but not the style. I love being able to play with feel and not necessarily rely on just pure math because out there you just have to feel your way around the golf course, and I really enjoy that challenge.

THE MODERATOR: You really did feel your way around this golf course.

Q. I see you changed 13 clubs in your bag. Could you just explain the reason for that, please, and when you did it?

AMY OLSON: Yeah, I did it over this kind of quarantine break. I had been trying to change. I've been -- not that I wasn't pleased with my old set, but I just really wanted a company that provided really good service to the women's Tour, and Ping does that, and so I was really wanting to change to Ping, and I love their woods, their drivers. But it just took a little bit to get everything quite right. I am a perfectionist and it's hard for me to change golf clubs. So this really gave me the opportunity, the time that I needed to be really happy with this new set.

Q. Those are Ping I take it?

AMY OLSON: Right, yeah, so it was all -- from my 58-degree all the way up to my driver I changed exclusively to Ping. I still have a Callaway putter, and yeah, but I switched over. My bigger reason honestly was probably the wedges. I was not particularly happy with how my wedges performed out of like bowl shots, and I really like how the Ping glides do.

Q. How does it feel to look at the leaderboard and see yourself three clear? And also the scoring average on the 6th today was a lot closer to 6 than 5, and you made a 4. I'm interested to know what you hit on that hole and how you made that birdie.

AMY OLSON: Oh, my goodness. That feels like so long ago. I can't remember what I did. I know I hit driver, 3-wood, and I believe it was 3-hybrid into the green. I



pulled it a little left, so I was left of the green, and I chipped in. Seriously I hit my landing spot so well so it just rolled in. Obviously a piece of good fortune there.

I can definitely have seen it -- oh, you know what, hang on, that was hole 4 I chipped in on. Hole 6 I stuck it to about a foot with an 8-iron from 91 yards, so you can tell how strong the wind was.

Q. How does it feel to look at the leaderboard now and see a three-shot lead in the AIG Women's Open?

AMY OLSON: Yeah, I mean, I honestly have played so solid today, if I wasn't on top of the leaderboard I wouldn't know what to do, so it feels really good obviously whenever you're playing well, it's just a good position to be in and especially at a major.

Q. You've contended in several majors now; what is it about the grind that suits you, number one; and number two, what have you learned about the marathon of the major and how to prepare for it?

AMY OLSON: Yeah, I seriously love major championship golf. I love the difficult conditions. I just really feel like the cream rises to the top. You have to hit -- you can't get away with anything, honestly, and so it requires every part of your game to be sharp, and I love that challenge. I relish it. It is a marathon. I mean, this is day one, and there's three long days of golf ahead. Tomorrow is going to be similar conditions to today, and it's all about staying present and taking one shot at a time, and I know it's cliché, but there's no other way to do it.

Q. And this is the first time the women are playing this major championship at Royal Troon and then yesterday's news of Muirfield and St. Andrews and this fabulous roll-out. What did that mean to you personally? I know you're excited to come play Troon, but from a historical significance, what does it mean that the women are here?

AMY OLSON: It is so fantastic to be here. This course has so much history, and for the longest time women couldn't play here, and it just shows how far we've come as a society, as women, and I'm really proud to be -- I mean, honestly a lot of us are riding kind of the coattails of what a lot of women did before us, and I know one of my goals is to leave it better for the little girls who are sitting home watching right now and hope that they continue to have more opportunities.

Having those golf courses announced, that's the first step in that or one of many steps, and so it was really exciting to see.

Q. They don't have hurricanes in Scotland. Of course they don't have them in North Dakota, either, but it kind of looked like you were playing in one today. You unlike most of the field were able to hit it the right distance. You were flag high today more than anyone when people couldn't actually hit it on the green. Yeah, you're striking it well, but how did you judge the roll-outs and the fly distances and the things that got you flag high when nobody else seemed to be able to do it?

AMY OLSON: Well, my caddie is from the Bahamas so she knows what it's like to play in a hurricane. A lot of it is trajectory. The golf course does require you to really think your way around it and plan on different bounces.

I think -- I love coming over here a week early just because you get in that mindset, and I feel like last week was very beneficial for me.

Q. Just on that 8-iron you mentioned from 91 yards, do you think that was -- that was on the 6th hole was it?

AMY OLSON: It was on the 6th hole, yep.

Q. Is that sort of a perfect example of how you like to play, having to take something off such a long shot or such a short shot in that example?

AMY OLSON: Yeah, I mean, for me that was the club that I could hit that I could keep low and really have no spin on? I felt if I was going to try to hit a 9-iron it would have gotten up in the air too high and then it gets a little unpredictable, so I just hit a little chip 8-iron. Obviously it worked out great. But it is, it's totally feel, picturing your trajectory and committing to it. That's probably the toughest thing in the wind is just committing to whatever you decide, and I did that really well today, too.

Q. In North Dakota playing in the wind, who gave you the best advice for how to tackle the wind growing up?

AMY OLSON: I don't know who gave me the best advice. I mean, my coach growing up was really -- I mean, he was a drill sergeant about learning how to hit your low shots, your high shots, your medium shots with draws, fades, all of it, so I think I just developed that feel pretty young, and then I've made a lot of swing changes in the last four years, but I think all of that practice when I was younger did serve me really well. I still know how to create all those shots.

Q. Remind me who that was again, the drill sergeant?

AMY OLSON: Dale Helm. He was my coach from '12 to probably my third year on Tour.

THE MODERATOR: I was wondering when you went out to the 1st this morning and there's obviously no fans and you've played three events now with no fans but this is a major, the setup is a major, when I was out there this morning, the atmosphere even without fans felt -- how did it feel to you? Did you feel the usual nerves of a major? What was the difference?

AMY OLSON: You know, the setup here honestly is still super like grand. They did such a great job making it still feel like a major championship, even though there aren't fans, so there was definitely -- I mean, even like our practice round, we had more cameras following us in the practice rounds than in a typical tournament that we've been playing, so it felt like a major from the day we set foot on property. But it is, it's eerily quiet and the Scottish fans are so educated so it's really fun to play in front of them. I think we all miss that. But we're kind of learning to just take whatever comes as it comes this year.

THE MODERATOR: So you've got an early start tomorrow. What are you going to do for the rest of the day ahead of tomorrow?

AMY OLSON: Sleep and eat, I guess. And just hopefully get a little bit of rest. Talk to my husband. He's on a fishing trip right now so hopefully he has service when I get back. But yeah, just relax and honestly there's just not a whole lot of time until we turn around and play again.

THE MODERATOR: Does he typically follow you around when he's on fishing trips?

AMY OLSON: Yeah, he'd be in trouble if he didn't. No, he'll definitely know. And he follows -- if not on TV, I don't think he has the ability to watch on TV right now, but he's definitely following on his phone I'm sure.

THE MODERATOR: Will you have to show an interest in how many fish he's caught?

AMY OLSON: Yes, I'll keep you updated.

THE MODERATOR: We'll see you tomorrow. Thanks very much. Thanks, everyone.

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