

The Memorial Tournament Presented By Nationwide

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Muirfield Village

Shane Lowry

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for joining us. We'd like to introduce Shane Lowry to the interview room at the Memorial Tournament presented by Nationwide. You're the current Open Champion, of course, and you played last week at the Workday Charity Open with a top-40 finish. This will be your fourth start here at the Memorial. Just give us an assessment of where you feel your game is right now coming into this week.

SHANE LOWRY: I mean, I was pretty happy with how it went last week. Obviously not that I was using last week as a warmup, but when you see two -- well, I personally thought that it was a great opportunity to play two events on the same course. You stay nice and fresh coming into this week. This is obviously a bigger week. This is a big week, one of the most prestigious events on TOUR, and I made 20 birdies and an eagle last week, so I was pretty happy with that. Obviously I made a few too many mistakes, but 20 birdies -- when I see myself making enough birdies, I'm pretty happy where my game is at, I just need to clean up the mistakes this week.

THE MODERATOR: This was originally scheduled to be Open Championship week, and you're the defending champion. What's the feeling for you this week. Is it kind of bittersweet? Just express what you're feeling.

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, it's strange. I wouldn't say it's bittersweet, but it is strange, like I should be going, should be in St. George's day probably sitting in the pressroom there as defending champion and wondering how I'm going to go out and tackle that golf course as opposed to being here in Ohio. It's just very strange times for us at the minute, isn't it.

The one thing I'm just happy that we're playing golf. I think the PGA TOUR, Jay and everyone involved have done a great job, and we're very lucky to be back at work and back playing golf, and I'm kind of grateful for that more than anything else.

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what it is right now, and we kind of have to deal with the cards we're given.

Q. Mark mentioned that this would have been the Open Championship week. I'm wondering how would you assess your last year of play since that life-changing victory?

SHANE LOWRY: I would say like sort of the back end of last year, I certainly wasn't lighting it up, but I wasn't too disappointed in how I was playing. Then obviously I committed to starting this year, and a bit of an iffy start but then had a couple of top-15s. I was pretty happy. I went to the Honda Classic then and I was in contention there for a little bit of time on Saturday. I felt like I was getting in the mix. I went to THE PLAYERS feeling good about my game. I shot 1-over in the first round, then obviously all this kicked off.

I sort of felt at the time that I was starting to play well. I felt good about the way things were, and then obviously this happened and we were in lockdown for a number of weeks, and we came back out and I worked very hard in my time off, probably as hard as I've ever worked in my life on the range and in the gym and just kind of doing stuff. Came back out kind of hoping to get off to a great start, and I didn't really do what I would have liked. I missed a couple of cuts and had a couple of average weeks the last two weeks, but I'm still fairly optimistic where my game is at. Like I said, I made 20 birdies and an eagle last week, and I'm pretty happy with that, and I kind of just need to cut out the mistakes this week, and you never know what could happen.

Q. I want to go back to the Open for a minute. I'm sure there's been lots of little landmarks along the year of being reminded of what you've done, notwithstanding having that little silver jug at home. How many have you had this year, moments or duties or what have you, related to the Open, and is it still hard to get your head around the fact that we're not playing this year, that you're not at St. George's today, as you mentioned?

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, I wouldn't say it's hard to get my head around the fact that we're not playing this week because, like I said, I don't kind of dwell on things. Things happen. We're certainly not in control of what's happening

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

in the world at the minute. We just kind of -- we have to deal with the card we're given. Obviously I'd love to be in St. George's this week defending. I'd love if we were playing in front of 40,000 or 50,000 people this week in St. George's. I'd love, like everybody in the world, if things were back to normal, but they're not, and we kind of have to get on with that. So I certainly don't dwell on that.

As regards the whole year with the Claret Jug and stuff like that, it's not -- not that it's surreal because I don't want to sound like I never thought I'd be able to do something like that. I just find -- I just always feel very grateful that I got to do something like that and I got to hold the Claret Jug and I have it at home in my house. That's just kind of the way I feel about the thing in general.

Q. How much do you know about Richard Burton?

SHANE LOWRY: Richard Burton?

Q. That's it? That's all you've got? He won the Open in '39 and then World War II and he basically I think held the jug for six years. You only get it for two.

SHANE LOWRY: Sorry, honestly I have never heard the name Richard Burton. I'm going to have to go home and look at that one.

Q. Real quick, Shane, what's going on with Bo? I heard his father died. Is he coming back out?

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, so Bo has had a bit of a strange few months. He's just had his second kid two weeks ago and his dad died a couple of weeks before that after a long illness, and he'll be back out for Memphis. I've got my -- I had an Irish guy, an Irish caddie Darren Reynolds for the last four tournaments, and I have my brother-in-law caddying for me this week, Wendy's sister's husband.

Q. I just wonder if you could actually sum up what the Open Championship means to you overall as an entity?

SHANE LOWRY: Well, I think when you grow up where I grew up -- you know, I wasn't from a golfing family, so sort of probably would have taken a lot longer for me to realize what it actually is, but when you see -- I suppose when I seen the magnitude of when Harrington won back in 2007 and 2008 and when it meant to the Irish people and how big it actually was, but even before that, when you start playing government and you realize how much you love golf and you start looking at golf on TV and you watch the Open every year, for us where I grew up, it's the biggest tournament in the world.

Like I've said all along the past year, I'm just very grateful that I got to achieve something like that, that I actually have one of those on my mantelpiece and my name will be on that trophy forever.

Q. Shane, what are you going to miss the most this week, if anything, that you would have done at St. George's?

SHANE LOWRY: I suppose just -- like every year you get to play in the Open, it's special. Like I've never played in the Open at St. George's, so that would have been different. But just going back and giving back the Claret Jug and just doing the little things like that. I think just competing in one of the biggest tournaments in the world. Look, we're here, this is the biggest tournament in the world this week, the Memorial here, and this is a huge tournament in its own right, so I'm very happy to be competing here. But obviously I'd love to be in St. George's.

Look, I miss the crowds, you miss the kind of buzz, the adrenaline you get from that, and I miss all that. I miss being announced on the first tee as defending champion, but I'm sure I'll get that next year. So everything that I miss or that I won't get to do this week, I'm sure I'll get to do next year.

Q. You've focused entirely on the PGA TOUR obviously the last few weeks. Do you have any plans at all as the year goes on to go back to Europe or you haven't looked that far ahead?

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, I'll be on the first flight out of New York after the U.S. Open. I'm missing home. It's been a long stint over here. Like I said, it's strange times. My wife and daughter are actually going to go home next week because it's just kind of -- I'm going to be playing a run of events. I'm going to be playing Memphis, PGA and possibly Wyndham, and I just won't be able to get back to Florida to them at all, and it's just not great for them to be sitting there on their own in the house in Florida.

Yeah, I'll be going back then, and I'll more than likely be playing in Wentworth in September. But other than that, I'm not sure what my schedule is going to be like at all.

Q. Just curious how often you've found yourself maybe looking at the Claret Jug itself or thinking back to that week, and in strange way has it sometimes maybe been hard to focus on the current moment?

SHANE LOWRY: I certainly don't find it hard to focus on the current -- on what I'm doing now and to get up for tournaments and to try and play as best I can or go out and

perform as best I can. But I certainly do find myself looking at the trophy and looking back on clips and videos and stuff like that. But for me, that's only normal. I'm not sure if other guys do that or if it's the right thing to do or the wrong thing to do; who knows. But it's a moment in my life that, like I keep saying, I'm very grateful for, and it's a moment that I'll always look back on with very fond memories.

I even -- I was sitting in the house yesterday evening, just finished dinner, and I was flicking through the channels, and next thing The Golf Channel popped up and they were showing the final round. So I watched a little bit of it. I didn't stay up late enough to watch it all, but I did watch a little bit of it, and yeah, it's just cool looking back on it.

Q. How many times have you maybe sat down to watch it start to finish? I think somewhere along the line you said you sat down and watched it and curious what came to mind when you have.

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, I've never really watched it without like fast forwarding bits and skipping the bad shots, skipping the missed putts. But yeah, I've watched it a few times. I definitely have. There's no doubt. I think my dad probably watches it every day. He probably sits at home most nights and watches it.

But look, like I said, it's just -- like for me, it's incredible that I just feel it's great that I got to achieve something like that. I might say I'm happy with what I have. I'm still very driven and very focused on achieving more things in my career, but no matter what happens, I'll always have that, and I'm pretty happy with that.

Q. There's been so much chat obviously about Bryson and what he's done over the last few months. As a guy who's a natural artist of the game, maybe dare I say kind of an old-fashioned golfer, do you have any fears of what physicality maybe combined with equipment can do to golf now, or is it something we just have to get used to or maybe should embrace?

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, so I think obviously Bryson has had a great run since he started back and he started doing all this, and he's won once. But I think if you look back on it, and I think a lot of people missed out on this when he won that tournament, he won putting stats, and won putting stats convincingly. And I think most weeks you go out to play a tournament, you know that you need to probably finish in the top 5 in putting stats to win the tournament no matter how well you hit it. You can hit it as well as you like. Look, it'll be interesting to see how he plays this course this week because there's certain bunkers at 320 yards that are just not in play for him and they're probably in play for even the longer hitters; the Rorys and the Brookses and

those guys can't carry them, but he can.

I'm not really worried for the game because I think you still need to be very skillful, and I think Bryson DeChambeau for the last few years has been a top-5 player in the world anyway, so there's no -- it's just he's finding a different way to get the ball from A to B and get the ball in the hole.

Look, it'll be interesting to see if anybody else tries to do it. There's no doubt that over the last 10 years -- has equipment got much longer? It's probably not got a whole lot. I've got a little bit longer over the last 10 years, but I wouldn't put that down to equipment. So I'm not really sure on the whole thing.

I just think it would be very interesting to see how it plays out. But I think the worst thing people can do is try and make golf courses longer. I just think they need to make them harder, because to make them longer, it just plays into the long hitters' hands, like the likes of -- there's a new tee on 15 year this week, and we played it last week, and if I hit a good drive I'm off of the upslope with a blind second shot from 260 yards, whereas Bryson and Rory and these guys are hitting to the top of the hill and hitting an iron on to the green. That's the type of -- the way I would like to see it curtailed would be to make golf courses harder, and when we do get to the majors and when we do get to like the U.S. Open, it'll be interesting to see how he does do then.

But as regards now, I don't think it's a huge issue, but obviously some people do. But like I say, I think no matter what, you need to putt well to win any week.

Q. It sounds like you don't think we're yet at the point where skill level is going to be eliminated by how much people can --

SHANE LOWRY: No, no. Like I know -- look, I know if I play as well as I can, or the shorter hitters, even your G-Macs or Jim Furyk or these guys, they know if they go out and play well and putt well this week and play the game to the best of their ability this week, they can beat Bryson DeChambeau. Just because he's hitting it 60, 70, 80 yards past them doesn't mean he's going to beat them, so I don't think it's at that point yet.

THE MODERATOR: Shane, we really appreciate you making the time to come in, and we wish you a great week at the Memorial Tournament.

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