

Shriners Children's Open

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Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

TPC Summerlin

Ian Gilligan

Press Conference



Shriners
Children's Open™ 

THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome Ian Gilligan to the interview room here at the 2024 Shriners Children's Open.

Ian, this is your second PGA TOUR start. You earned a spot in the field. You're a sponsor exemption, but you earned a spot in the field by winning the 2024 Southern Highlands Championship.

Talk about getting into the tournament that way and how meaningful that is to you. I know you played in the Barracuda Championship as a sponsor invite.

IAN GILLIGAN: Yeah, for sure. I think obviously very grateful to have the opportunity that the Southern Highlands event provides. So very grateful for that. Obviously to earn it is definitely a little different; feels really good.

You know, when I won the tournament obviously it was huge for my confidence at the time. But, yeah, obviously a little different when you earn it, and feels really good.

Q. You're a University of Florida senior in college. What has your season been like and what do you anticipate going forward?

IAN GILLIGAN: Yeah, we played three events so far and felt like the team's been in a pretty good spot. I think we have a lot of talent. Just trying to get better as a team constantly. For me individually, felt like I've had some really good rounds of golf; just haven't like had it all come together.

But definitely looking forward to the future. I think everyone on our team at Florida is really excited for getting a chance at a national championship. I know that's what everyone's goal is; it's definitely mine.

Really, really excited for the future. I think there is a lot of good golf ahead.

Q. How many times have you played TPC Summerlin?

What sort of the experience do you have around the golf course? And does it fit your eye?

IAN GILLIGAN: I only played it really yesterday. That was the first time I played it. I played in Vegas quite a bit for junior and amateur events.

Yeah, it seem fairly straightforward. I know the scores in the past have been fairly low. You know, probably going to have to have some low rounds.

But I feel like if I'm able to drive it well, then I'll be in a really good spot. Usually that's probably my weaker part of my game because I know I can rely on my short game and iron play.

I just think it's going to come down to driving and course management decisions.

Q. Just wondering, on the subject the PGA TOUR University, what role that has played in sort of your thought process and your goal setting for this week and overall?

IAN GILLIGAN: Yeah, PGA TOUR U is obviously huge for college players. Definitely like changed a bunch of things. Obviously I think everyone who's a college player and they're either a junior or senior, it's definitely on their mind, they're thinking about it.

It's definitely hard to block it out, especially whether it's teammates, coaches or maybe family or whatever is -- it's obviously very important because it kind of determines your job when you graduate.

So I think it definitely changes goals of just you want to finish as high as you can on the PGA TOUR U. But I think also just trying not to think too much about it because it's easy to get distracted with it, especially if you're like oh, man, I'm dropping spots in PGA TOUR U and you get nervous and frantic.

But especially for this class, I know how like tight it is, the race, so one good event can just put you right where you need to be.

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So just trying to focus on keep getting better at golf every day. I think in the long run, that will be the most important thing, whether I finish No. 1 or 20th in the PGA TOUR U.

That's just kind of my goal.

Q. With what you went through with the cancer and being an ambassador for Live Strong, how often are you called on to speak to somebody who is going through maybe something similar to what you went through?

IAN GILLIGAN: Yeah, I think I would say it's been a lot on Instagram. I've had a lot of people reach out about like they're going through something similar to what I had, maybe a family member.

So obviously it's not something you want to hear about, someone else that has to go through that. Obviously I know what they're going through. It's always nice to help other people and give them some reassurance or tell them what to expect. So I feel like that has been one way that I've kind of talked to people.

Obviously I think being partnered with Live Strong has also been a great way to connect with people just with all the great work they do. Being an ambassador of their company is amazing. Everything Live Strong does for families and supporting them.

Obviously when my family had to go through it it's really hard on the parents, not only the person going through it. Live Strong does a great job helping support families in need, whether it's financially or mentally, having someone to talk to. It's huge.

Q. And then finally from me, your dad spoke to the importance of really getting up and walking around and getting your circulation going in order to flush everything through your system when you're on the chemo. What role did golf play in your recovery?

IAN GILLIGAN: Yeah, I think it had a huge part in my recovery. Mainly just being with friends as well on the golf course just to get your mind off things. I think it was very important. It's easy to just kind of be inside all day and be mopey, which is kind of what I wanted to do.

Then I got out on the course with my buddies and it was really nice to kind of feel like I was back before I had treatment going on. Just kind of reminded me of before and felt like I was just a normal kid again and having fun.

So that was definitely huge.

And also obviously I just love golf, so it's nice to be able to do something that I love.

Q. So this will be your second start out here on TOUR. What can you take away from this and bring back to the rest of the college season?

IAN GILLIGAN: Yeah, I think definitely just learning about stuff of what other TOUR players do and caddies, especially practice rounds. Like I mean, yesterday I felt like I learned so much. I played with Tyson Alexander and Sam Ryder for nine holes. Sam Ryder had a statistician guy out there and he just knew so much stuff. He's like telling him, okay, hit a chip here. Last year this was 50% chance up and down rate.

I was like, wow, college we're just like -- coaches are, all right, probably the pin will be back left. Hit some putts there. And then you're hearing that and it's like, man, just makes it a lot simpler and easier, and also you hit shots that theoretically you could have and you know areas that are good places to miss.

So that was cool to see that and how prepared they are for practice rounds.

And then I think just learning stuff like that and then obviously I've got kind of a TOUR caddie, Curtis on the bag who has been with Danny Lee before and a couple other guys.

So I think learning about his process of going through the week, and also how he makes sure that I'm prepared, whether it's food or knowing wind directions, everything that goes into playing good golf is I think something that I'll take away and definitely try and help my teammates when I get back and tell them about what I learned.

Q. So with what you went through on your personal journey and overcoming that, do you come out here and still have the intimidation factor or do you feel like with what you went through, that's nothing compared to playing TOUR golf?

IAN GILLIGAN: I mean, it's definitely still like a little -- it's a little bit of like intimidation for me. Just a little bit, because I've always grown up watching PGA TOUR golf, so it's obviously been a dream of mine.

But I think just trying to stay focused on what I need to do to play good golf is important. Yeah, like you said, obviously things I've been through, it's definitely helpful in times of when I'm playing some bad golf and not getting too down on myself. Obviously that's not going to help me

play better.

Just think about it's just golf at the end of the day. It's not like I'm trying to fight like a life or death battle. So that's definitely a helpful reminder out on the course.

Q. Would you class the victory at Southern Highlands your No. 1 achievement in college to this point, or is there another significant moment that might stand out?

IAN GILLIGAN: I think in terms of a college event probably, but I think winning the Western Am over the summer was probably my biggest win in amateur golf.

I think that was because of how long and grueling that tournament was. In terms of a college event, that was the biggest achievement I've had for sure.

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