

# BMW PGA Championship

Thursday, 8 October, 2020

Virginia Water, Surrey, England

Wentworth Golf Club

## Aaron Rai

### Press Conference

**Q. 68 this morning, no bogeys, just tell me how pleased you are with that round?**

AARON RAI: Really pleased. It's been a different build up over the last few days to this event after last week, so it was nice to get started on the course and get off to a good start.

**Q. Seemed like it's really tough out there. How do you take a win from last week and take that form into a week like this, such a different sort of performance needed out there? How do you take that forward?**

AARON RAI: I think from success on any style of golf course, there are a lot of things you're going right in your game, and that can be taken forward to any week, such as the short game, good putting. I think strategy on the Monday and Tuesday, learning the course, is imperative to play well this week and prepare for these kind of conditions. It was nice just to be able to put it all together today.

**Q. How are conditions?**

AARON RAI: It's playing very soft tee-to-green. The greens are really receptive. It's almost lower flight into the green which is so different so how it's normally setup. That was probably the biggest thing.

**Q. How is the confidence level?**

AARON RAI: It's the right amount. Not so confident to where I'm complacent and for me it was important to get here on Monday and Tuesday to practise exactly how I normally would. I think it was more to show myself, really, that I'm here to try and perform as well as possible on this given week, regardless of what had happened on Sunday at the Scottish. But obviously to answer your original question, to be in contention, to have a good result and to win an event is an incredible thing to take forward to this week and for the rest of the year.

**Q. Was there a catalyst?**



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AARON RAI: It's really hard to pinpoint one thing in particular. As you know, golf has so many different aspects and facets. It's a number of different things combined. First and foremost it was really beneficial having such a long break during the lockdown, but it also gave an opportunity to work on a few different things, and then going into the U.K. swing, we had a good set of results, really. Nothing really high up, just very consistent. So going into these last couple of weeks, certainly gave me a little more confidence and assurance that I was on the right path.

**Q. Did you manage to celebrate much?**

AARON RAI: There wasn't much of a celebration. We drove back straightaway after The Scottish Open. It was quite a long drive back home. I did spend Sunday night at home with my family, so I did get to see them. It was just nice to share a few moments without really having to celebrate, but maybe in a couple weeks' time.

**Q. Are you on social media at all yet?**

AARON RAI: No.

**Q. Is that going to change with all the success you've had?**

AARON RAI: No, it's very much a conscious choice. I have a private Facebook account but that's about it. I know there are so many benefits so social media, and it's the way the world has gone now, and it can be used in a very positive way, but I just feel it's simpler to be without.

**Q. All the message of support, do you get that the old-fashioned way?**

AARON RAI: Through texts and WhatsApp, and I've had a few messages on that Facebook account. That's about it.

**Q. Has your manager or anybody said to you that it's a good idea commercially? Any pressure on that side?**

AARON RAI: It's been mentioned a couple of times in the past. But it is something I feel quite strong about, and I feel that I just want to try to focus on the game as much as

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possible, and just try to improve as much as possible. I know as a golfer, everyone out here is trying to be a brand to some extent, but I just want to putt the golf first.

**Q. How were the energy levels, or today after the last few weeks? Is this a benefit of the work you mentioned during lockdown?**

AARON RAI: Yeah, it's definitely a byproduct. It's definitely a byproduct. I think having a few weeks off before The Irish Open as useful to work on things and also to rest up a bit after playing all six events in the U.K. swing. But I certainly didn't expect to have the results I've had the last two weeks. It has been a little bit of a surprise, but maybe it's a byproduct of a lot of things coming together.

**Q. You didn't have a manager, did you, when you won in Hong Kong?**

AARON RAI: No. I had a couple of people who help me out, but not management.

**Q. Is that another conscious choice, don't want to be chasing the dollar, or why is that? Can you expand on that?**

AARON RAI: I think the way I see sport, or my viewpoint, is when we -- when everyone starts at sport, we start out of passion and we start out of enjoyment of it being a hobby. Along the line, it's very easy to lose that through competing at a high level in competing at a high level in junior golf and amateur golf, and turning professional, your spending money, your earning money, and the original meaning of the game that was once a passion and love begins to get diluted over a long period of time.

I feel that it's important to try to keep that alive as much as possible and I just think trying to keep things simple for me, anyway, it's not necessarily the right way to do things for everyone, but for me it's the right way to go.

**Q. Do you have an office manager?**

AARON RAI: A few.

**Q. You don't want to become a brand?**

AARON RAI: I think a brand is quite an open-ended term I think. It depends how you want to define it. I think -- I'm not sure. I would like to certainly create positive around me, whether that's through being a brand or whether that's not through being a brand. I'm not sure whether it's through interviews or whether it's through helping out or whether it's through trying to do the right thing as much as possible. Then hopefully I can have a positive effect, even

on a small scale, and that's something I would be happy with.

But I don't think it's right for me to try and chase anything outside of that.

**Q. Do you think the more successful you get, the harder it will be to keep that passion you talked about?**

AARON RAI: I think it becomes harder. It becomes harder at every point. The first thing came to my mind when you said that is an interview Rory did with David Feherty, and I think he mentioned that that he doesn't play golf for fun that often. I think that probably sums it up for quite a few people; it becomes a job and it becomes our a profession. That's a natural thing and that's part of what we do, and of course it's part of what I do and I'm not lost on that. But I think if you can keep a little of that spark alive, that's vital.

**Q. Do you still enjoy playing golf?**

AARON RAI: Yeah, for sure, and I think for me, that's why that period during lockdown was so important because it helped to give me a slightly different perspective on things. I guess I've mentioned a lot of what that perspective is, and it's great that it's changed in a positive way.

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