

Dubai Duty Free Irish Open

Saturday, 3 July, 2021

Thomastown, County Kilkenny, Ireland

Mount Juliet Estate

Graeme McDowell

Quick Quotes

Q. Not the start you wanted to your round but you certainly battled back well?

GRAEME McDOWELL: Yeah, it was tough to acclimatize to the sort of colder weather conditions. I came up short on 1 and hit a beautiful 7-iron to 2 which kind of also came up short. And then I three-putted the third, and like you say, not really the stuff I was looking for but nice to steady the ship and play some good golf after that and post a couple under, which you know, keeps me alive for a decent finish tomorrow.

Obviously it's a lot colder and we have some misty rain coming in. It's a bit more like the Irish Open I suppose. No, listen, golf course remains in great shape. The rain just makes the rough play a little more penal and makes the golf course play so much longer.

Some of the clubs I was hitting into some of those heels after fiery fast conditions the first couple days was a little bit of a shock to the system. Obviously you've got to adjust and continue; it was also pretty gettable in places.

Q. Great bounceback after a disappointing start.

GRAEME McDOWELL: Yeah, I got off to a very slow start. Conditions took me by surprise. The ball was travel nothing where and after some fast and fiery conditions Thursday and Friday, the ball was travelling long distances, came up short on 1, missed a short putt for par and actually made I great swing to 2 with 7-iron which came up short again and I couldn't believe how far the ball is flying. Three-whacked three just to finish my start off.

But it was nice to steady the ship, make some birdies, make some putts and keep myself in touch to have a good day tomorrow and hopefully try and post a decent finish.

Q. Still seeing progress and hoping for a low one tomorrow?

GRAEME McDOWELL: Progress is playing the weekend right now. I talked about it early in the week, high



expectations, low confidence. Got to switch that around to low expectations and build the confidence up. Playing the weekend is step one. Got to simplify the process and take it one step at a time.

Today if it got away from me it would have been disappointing but I can go into a Sunday and try to post a low round and get myself ready for The Scottish Open.

Q. The kind of round which when you back up a 67 with the champagne stuff almost of yesterday and then get down and dirty, must be satisfying?

GRAEME McDOWELL: Yeah, listen you have to do it every which way. We all know that there's a lot of different ways you've got to score in this sport, bogey-free on Friday and then I open up with three in a row this morning, three bogeys in a row, different conditions this morning, colder and ball was travelling nowhere. I hit a 7-iron from 160 flag on 2. My 7-iron is a 175 club and only pitched about 155. So it was a 15- to 20-yard kind of difference in ball flight early on which took me by surprise early on. Short-sided myself and didn't get it up-and-down I was reeling through three holes.

And then you have to stand on probably the toughest tee shot on the course, No. 4, and it was driver today because it was playing so much longer. That was kind of a key shot. Hit it in the middle of the fairway and managed to make a 4 there and birdie the next and away we went.

It's satisfying to be able to turn that around today because I talked about how important it is for me to make weeks and to be shooting 75 on Saturday is not going to get the job done. It's not going to do anything for the building of momentum that I need. So shooting a couple under today after that start is very pleasing. It gives me something to go fire at tomorrow.

Q. You pressed the reset button at the beginning of this week in a manner of speaking. You've had the sort of career the last six, seven years where there has been dry patches of form and a win, dry patches of form and then a win; how close are you to switching that back on?

GRAEME McDOWELL: We all know how thin the lines are



out here. Your confidence can also get very thin, as well. It is a game of confidence. Bob Rotella called one of his books that. It's a truth. You see guys going on runs where they just are confident and they play free and they can get it going; and then the flipside of that coin is a guy who is tight and needs it and puts so much pressure on himself and has high expectations kind of the way I've been playing the last couple years.

I think talking to you guys this week was the result of kind of some thoughts I've been having for the last three for our weeks which were a reset of three or four weeks where I was trying to soul search and understand where I'm at mentally and I just kind of spewed it all out to you guys early in the week.

Like I said, I wasn't trying to sound negative. I was literally trying to get some stuff off my chest, the way I feel, the way I'm thinking, so I can take the expectations off my own shoulders by just verbalising it. Really important just to be here this weekend for me. Really important to turn that round around today and important to get back out there tomorrow and hopefully continue to hit some good shots and go to the Scottish Open next week feeling like a guy who can compete.

Q. There's probably a time not that long ago where you turned your nose up at a Top-10 tournament like this because obviously you want to win the Irish Open, but a Top-10 is what you want, if that's to be the case?

GRAEME McDOWELL: For sure, Top-10s at the Irish Open, never turn my nose up at those because those are few and far between. Top-10s anywhere right now for me are absolutely fine. Beggars can't be choosers, and I've done a good job at going down, like Punta Cana earlier in the year where I would have screwed my nose up at that event five or six years ago. But you have to change your attitude around. You have to be seeing every week as an opportunity.

I'm seeing every round as an opportunity right now to start building my confidence back a little bit again. Like I said to you guys yesterday, missing cuts, if I had missed that cut yesterday one o'clock Friday afternoon and I have to wait till Thursday to tee it back up again, those are the five or six days that kill you a little bit because you can't build any confidence, you can't build any momentum and you can't find it on the range. I'm at that point where I need to be on the course competing.

Q. If you do feel the confidence that you spoke about, how many years do you think you have?

GRAEME McDOWELL: I think I have until I'm at least 45.

I'm reasonably injury-free. I'm wearing a little bit of a brace on my arm this week because of a couple small tears in my right forearm which I'm going to go sort out after I'm done with this little trip here really just from overuse, too much work on in the gym and too much work on the range.

But I'm reasonably injury-free which is hugely important. I think it's really -- to me it's 50 percent physical and 50 percent mental when I look at the Phil Mickelsons and Richard Blands, and even like a Pádraig Harrington who is playing well this year. I don't look at that as purely physicality. I look at that as a huge amount of mental belief and also the desire, and I think you need both of those things.

So I believe I still have those things and when the confidence starts to come back, which I hope it will, I think I can compete for another three or four years.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports