

Horizon Irish Open

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Thomastown, County Kilkenny, Ireland

Mount Juliet Estate

Shane Lowry

Press Conference

SHANE LOWRY: I say it every year, it's always great to come back to The Irish Open, the tournament. It's kind of close to me, and I owe a lot to it for where I am in the game with the start that I had with The Irish Open in 2009, and, yeah, gave me the kick start to my career that I really needed, definitely gave me one up on the rest of the guys around my level at the time.

It was nice. It's nice to come back here every year. It's nice to come back here. I'm playing some good golf, and I'm just kind of excited for the week ahead, and I'm very hopeful that I put in a good performance.

Q. You've had a lot of good results this year. Do you remember ever coming into this tournament with such a strong six months and consistent six months behind you?

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, well, off the back of a missed cut. But other than that, it's been good. It's been a nice stretch for me, and I feel confident, I feel good about my game.

So it's just about managing expectation in a week like this really. But I feel like I'm doing that every week because I feel like every week I play now is such a big week, and every week I really want to do well.

So it's just managing expectation, managing myself around the course and allowing myself to play good golf, and I'll be fine.

Q. Have you done anything to protect yourself in this environment, which is difficult for guys like you?

SHANE LOWRY: What do you mean?

Q. Protect yourself from hangers-on on, from distractions, which goes with The Irish Open, as you know.

SHANE LOWRY: Oh, like as in coming in this week?

Q. Yeah.



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SHANE LOWRY: No. No, I treat it like any other tournament. I was actually talking about it the other night, you come back to Ireland like once a year to play this tournament. And especially this year, when things have been going well and I've been playing quite good, there's no point shying away, one of the highest ranked players in the field, one of the top Irish players, one of the players that people really want to do well. There's expectation there.

Well, I want to go there, like come off the back of the ninth green, lots of kids there waiting for me, last thing I'm going to do is walk past them just because I want to protect myself or play well. I kind of have to do a bit of both where obviously I want to play well when it comes to tomorrow at 8 o'clock, I'm standing on the 10th tee, I'm going to be in game mode.

All around that, I'm just going to be myself and be as good as I can with everyone and just give people what they want. Because I think that's just nice. When I was a kid coming to The Irish Open, that's what I wanted. So it's nice to be able to do that. And, no, not doing anything different. I'm staying here on site, my family are here. I'm going to up and down and around for dinner and stuff. Nothing really different.

Q. Were you here in the '90s?

SHANE LOWRY: I was here for the World Golf Championship in -- I would say I seen the shot, I stood at the back of the scorer's waiting for golf balls. So, yeah, that's my only memory.

Actually, funny enough, one of the guys that was -- I seen a fellow out there today that I grew up playing golf, and I haven't seen him for a few years. Derek Malloy is his name. We used to play together. I think I was at that tournament with him here. He was there with his family today.

Q. (Off microphone)?

SHANE LOWRY: The second one, the wet one, I think.

Q. Do you put an asterisk over that missed cut in the



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U.S. Open, given what happened after you finished your round --

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, I was -- I have to say that was one of the more disappointing Friday evenings I've had. I'm not out here to just make cuts and finish wherever. I generally thought 4-over, you know, if you're under par for the tournament you're going to have a great week, which that was the case.

So, yeah, I went back to the house Friday afternoon, and two hours into it I was like this is going to be way tighter than I thought it was going to be. And then like an hour later, it was like this is no chance, I can pack my bags.

So, yeah, it was very disappointing. I was very disappointed on Friday evening because I felt like, yes, I didn't that week, but I felt like I played nice golf. And I felt like going down to the last few holes, I thought in my head -- when you're in that position, you think in your head. Like I thought in my head the number is 4.

And I birdied 8, and then I hit a great shot into 9. And I had a 10-footer at 9, it was one of those putts where I had not been putting great, not been holing out great, it was quick, left-to-right, I give it a go, but it was one of those where let's not knock it four feet past type thing.

So, yeah, it was one of those days that you kind of -- that's the way it is. I got a similar draw at the PGA, managed to make the cut, ended up having a half decent week. Yeah, you just move on.

Q. Nothing you can do about the weather, but golf is supposed to be about fairness and equity. How disappointed were you when you saw the greens were being watered --

SHANE LOWRY: That was disappointing. I got an explanation of the USGA that it doesn't do anything to the playability of the greens, but I don't believe that. That's what I've been told. I think -- I don't think the greens were getting any way ridiculous at any stage. I've played in U.S. Opens that were worse than that. So I was disappointed.

Q. What have you been doing on the putting?

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, to be honest, I've had -- like I got home, I haven't got to do as much practise as I would have liked over the last week. But, yeah, I've been -- couple of phone calls with Steve and doing a bit of work with Neil, but there's maybe not as much as I would have liked.

But I'll go and do a half an hour, an hour here when I finish here, and hopefully, you know, I feel like I'm figuring it out.

But, yeah, I've worked hard on my putting over the last year, and one week isn't going to stop me from anything. So yeah.

Q. Did you get to watch Pádraig down the stretch there on Sunday night?

SHANE LOWRY: I didn't. I fell asleep. I fell asleep, yeah. When I woke up, Wendy said he won. I was like, oh, great, and I thought he won easy. Then I checked his scorecard the following day, and I realised it wasn't as easy as I thought it was going to be.

But, yeah, it was great. I was like you're hardly coming out as No. 4 now, are you, what's the story? No, it's great for him and it's great for him to come back here the week after with us. And, yeah, I told him it was about time he did that out there.

Q. What will do that do for him now? Six years since he had a win.

SHANE LOWRY: Well, look, does he think he can compete this week and does he think he can compete at St Andrews? Absolutely. I think that will just give him confidence. And maybe that's what -- if he goes and plays in the seniors and starts winning a few tournaments, he will come back to the majors that he's in with confidence.

And, yeah, we'll see how that goes. But winning tournaments, I don't care at what level, it will give you confidence going forward.

Q. Does it add to the competitive juices this week for you guys? Obviously you're going to be going up against him.

SHANE LOWRY: Look, obviously I'd love myself to do well this week. I'd love myself to be the Irishman to do well. I think obviously Seamus or Pádraig, or even anybody, we were all up there on Sunday afternoon, and one of us won it. So it would be great for the torment and it'd be great for golf if that was the case.

Q. What would it mean for you to win this week? Do you feel like you need a win before The Open, or does it matter?

SHANE LOWRY: No, I don't think I need anything, to be honest. Obviously, I'd love to win here, absolutely, like why not. If you ever -- yeah. I mean, if you've ever been picky, you'd love to play four really good rounds, give yourself a chance. If you win, you win. If you don't, you have confidence going into St Andrews.

For me, it's obviously about doing really well in this tournament and trying to keep my confidence levels high and keep my good golf going and keep hitting the ball solid. We're probably going to get some tricky conditions at some stage this week.

So, yeah, I don't need anything. Look, obviously, I've been knocking on the door this year, and I feel like it's not far away. If it's not this week, I do hope it's at St Andrews.

Q. What did Keith say to you guys last night about player entry, player meeting, and what do you make of the new agreement with the PGA?

SHANE LOWRY: I think everything Keith said last night was pretty much in the release as well, it's pretty much about the two tours coming together, how good this is for golf, for world golf in general. And he was just explaining the situation to all the players that, going forward, what way it's going to work with, you know, being able to get your card in America through Europe with the guaranteed prize funds over the next five years. Which people don't realise that that's not normally the case on any Tour in golf at all, what the European Tour have guaranteed or the DP World Tour have guaranteed, rising prize funds over the next five years. They've got that deal with PGA TOUR now for the next 13 years.

So I think it strengthens world golf and the fact that the two main tours in the world have come together. I think that's only good for golf.

Q. What do you see is the future of The Irish Open? It's not going to be co-sanctioned. What would you like to see happen with this event?

SHANE LOWRY: Look, I think obviously like co-sanctioned next week in Scotland is great, is great for both tours, because it's great for the players that are coming over from the PGA TOUR to play there because they can make FedExCup points, it's great for the DP World Tour players because they're playing in a really big tournament.

I think this tournament itself, you look at this week, we've got a great new sponsor, 6 million Euro prize fund. This is one of the biggest tournaments on the European Tour all year.

So I've heard the talk like it's not about it being a co-sanctioned event. I think we always talk about the date, don't we. We always talk about this date. Look, there's no doubt about it, we don't have the best field here this week. We have a few of the top players in the world, myself and Seamus, and we have Paddy coming back from winning

the U.S. Open, which is great, but we would like to have a stronger field here, there's no doubt about that.

Personally, I do feel like the date could be looked at. We talk about this every year, and I've talked about it with the Tour every year, and we'd love to have the date where we can guarantee Rory coming back and playing here every year, what works for his schedule. Because at the end of the day, we do need to acknowledge what he's done for the tournament and what he needs to do to get ready to play his majors because that's what it's all about for him at the moment.

So I think the date could probably be looked at. But I'm not working for the Tour or behind the scenes. I don't really know what goes on into having tournaments at certain dates. There's nothing much else I can say about that.

But I think we're here this week. We've got a great new sponsor guaranteed for the next six years. I've played with the CEO, a lovely man. Seems very involved and wants to grow the tournament and make it like a festival for Irish golf. So I think we're in good hands going forward.

Q. After this week, you're heading down with an extraordinary field for the JP Pro-Am, 11 of the top 12 we're looking at. How would you be around all those guys?

SHANE LOWRY: Look, you know, there's guys over there playing this week that have been friends of mine for years, and not only friends of mine but guys that I've looked up to and guys that I've learned off and get on really well with, and I still get on really well with. I'm sure we'll have a great time next Monday and Tuesday.

So I have nothing against anyone that's over there. Like absolutely nothing against them. It's a decision that they have made, and they have their -- they have their reasons for doing that. That's all I can really say. It's nothing that -- it didn't never appeal to me, so it's something that -- yeah, it's what they decided to do. It's up to them.

Q. (Off microphone)?

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, yeah, numerous times I've said. Yeah, yeah.

Q. Just asked Pdraig this yesterday. JP McManus, how does he get a major championship field every, whatever, five, ten years? What is it about that man? Can you talk about JP and why Tiger will drop everything and turn up?

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, it is amazing when Tiger made his

announcement after the U.S. Open, he said I hope to be back for the JP McManus Pro-Am. He's obviously very good friends with JP and just spent a lot of time together over the years.

I've got to know JP fairly well. Not as well as Pdraig. Pdraig is obviously very good friends with him. But I know his brother Jerry very well and the McManus family. And just what they do for -- you know, they've always kind of -- not looked after me, but any time I could ever -- anything I ever need, you make a phone call, you know that they're for a phone call, you know that they're looking out for you.

They've been great for Irish golf. All this next Monday and Tuesday I think that a lot of people miss is that the amount of money is going to be raised for a charity in the local area. And I think that's what's great about it.

The fact I don't know how he gets the field that he does, he just has that pull, and it's great. It's great for Ireland. And I'm looking for to it.

But, yeah, JP is just -- when you look at what he does for horse racing in Ireland and what he does for golf in Ireland and what he does for Limerick GAA, it's incredible.

Q. (Off-mic).

SHANE LOWRY: Oh, yeah, like, you know, if I was doing a charity day or if anybody's doing a charity day, he'd be one of the first people you'd ring, and he'd have no problem donating whatever, yeah. We're not quite rivals because we're not at that level. But hopefully at some stage.

Q. A question about Seamus Power. He's obviously -- over the last year, it's been extraordinary, the development, the overnight success that took 20-something years. From your own point of view, how do you see it?

SHANE LOWRY: I've known Seamus a long time, and I've played amateur golf with him, boys golf for Ireland with him, and I've seen him around the PGA TOUR a little bit a few years ago, and then all of a sudden he's figured out a way to get to that next level that it takes to get into the top 50 in the world.

It's great for him and great for Irish golf, a place like Waterford, to have someone like that. And the two of us have started together and we went different ways and we ended up in the same place. That's pretty cool. The fact that we're going out and playing the first round of The Irish Open tomorrow as two of the marquee players is actually is

pretty cool for us.

And, yeah, I've got to know him very well, and he's a great lad. Just a normal country Irish lad that happens to be good at golf, a bit like myself.

Yeah, it's great, great for Ireland, great for the game of golf. Nothing has come I'm sure, like myself, without the hard work and everything that him and all his team and everyone has put in behind the scenes. So it's a credit to him and everyone involved.

Q. (Off-mic.)

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, yeah, he is. You know, you get to -- because I know -- maybe because a bit older, but when I got to my first majors and first Masters and all that, I was little bit uncomfortable, but he seems to be in his comfort zone out there and he's playing pretty good.

And when you get out there and you're doing that in the big tournaments, that's great to see. Hopefully the next step is to get over the line in one of those. I'll let him take those questions. I've had those questions for years.

Q. Have you looked cloning yourself after your final on Sunday afternoon?

SHANE LOWRY: I hope I'm not in -- so, yeah, we're only 20 minutes away. So I doubt I'll be able to make it. But hopefully they can do the business. I will. Depending on how I'm going. We'll see. Hopefully I'll have other things on my mind than hopefully I'll be going back on Sunday to celebrate.

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