

Horizon Irish Open

Wednesday, 29 June, 2022

Thomastown, County Kilkenny, Ireland

Mount Juliet Estate

Seamus Power

Press Conference

Q. How excited are you for this week?

SEAMUS POWER: Yeah, really can't wait. It's one I've had circled on the calendar for probably six months now. So it's going to be great. Haven't played since '19. Obviously last couple years with COVID has been tricky. I think it's going to be sold out, and it's going to be a great week. I can't wait.

Q. Playing with Shane Lowry tomorrow. You're going to have some crowds following you. How much do you relish that?

SEAMUS POWER: Yeah, as soon as I saw the draw, I think it's going to be pretty cool. Probably some of the biggest crowds that I've seen, I'd imagine, with Shane. I've known Shane a long time. Haven't played a ton of competitive rounds as professionals together. We played quite a few practise rounds together. So I think it's going to be really, really good out there. Big crowds. Hopefully the weather is good.

Q. You're quite familiar with Mount Juliet. Can you go through a little bit of what the course challenges players.

SEAMUS POWER: Seeing the back this morning, I think it's going to play pretty long and there's going to be a lot of drivers. And the fairways are pretty narrow. The rough has grown in. Some of the holes are no more than I'd say 20, 25 yards wide. And then the rough is pretty thick.

I think that's going to be the biggest challenge. If you get it on the fairway, after the recent rain, you're going to be able to get at some pins with the softer greens. The biggest challenge will be finding some fairways.

Q. You penciled this date in quite a while ago. Your trajectory and your form is really good. So playing in the marquee as one of the favorites, is there any extra weight this week? How do you handle all that?

SEAMUS POWER: I don't know. To be honest, most



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guy here, your inner expectations would be higher than anything that comes from the outside. You're going to have more people watching, but for the most part you're still going to prep, prepare like you're trying to win the tournament. You're still going to do all those things, mentally get yourself in the right state of mind.

That's all you can do. The bigger crowds is fantastic, but at the end of the day, you're still playing your own game, and hopefully it's going to add up to the right score on Sunday.

Q. Are there many from Waterford?

SEAMUS POWER: I'd say there be quite a few, yeah. Should be a busy couple days.

Q. Seamus, we spoke to Shane Lowry earlier. He was saying when he first played in majors, he found it a little bit daunting, a little bit difficult, and talking about why sort of didn't feel comfortable there. At least that's what the gist of what I thought he said. I think he did. But he said he's watched you, and we have, and it all looks like you've taken it in stride, making cuts at Augusta and then strong finishes in the PGA and the U.S. Open. Have you surprised yourself how you've taken to it at that level?

SEAMUS POWER: I wouldn't say surprised. You obviously dream of playing in the majors, and when you get there, you're obviously hoping your game fits pretty well and matches up.

So it's more on that side of it. Obviously, I've played well and I've played against a lot of the guys that compete in majors, played against a lot of them in a lot of tournaments, so I knew that kind of deep down.

But it's still nice to see different setups. Augusta is obviously one setup, and see your game hold up pretty well. And then PGA and U.S. Open were tougher tests and set up very difficult, and still seeing the game hold up under pressure was very exciting more than anything.

I wouldn't it came as a surprise. Like I said before, I think just being 35, starting in the majors I think makes a difference because I've already seen a lot and I've been around a lot of players. I've seen guys that I've played with



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It gives you a little bit of inner belief that the gap isn't that big. But still to put it on paper and put up some good results is very encouraging. Gives me a lot of confidence deep down if I can get back in those moments, I'll be able to react a little bit better. Left a couple out there in the last round of the U.S. Open, PGA. So you want to get back in those positions. But it's very exciting and hopefully continue.

Q. Given the location of where this is, does it feel like a real homecoming? And how do you stop that becoming a distraction in some ways with so many people around that you might know?

SEAMUS POWER: Yeah, I suppose I'll have to be careful. I don't quite know as of yet. Last couple of days have been busy, but my manager over this week has been great. He takes some of the buffering out of it.

But it's tough. It's a completely different experience for me. I've played in the States for a long time. Haven't played that many Irish Opens, and obviously none really as someone near a featured group.

So it's going to be a different experience. I feel like I have a good plan set up for it. At the end of the day, I'm going to start a golf tournament tomorrow morning. No matter where it is, I still have to be prepared, do proper warmups, having everything taken care of preparation-wise and see where my game stands.

Q. Do you have to trust your game in some way, given it's a different environment than you play in a lot of time, weather different, all that kind of thing?

SEAMUS POWER: Obviously the weather is going to play a factor, but besides that, not that different. I've played so much golf in Ireland growing up, I'm used to it, and you have less elements, you're going at the green and stuff like that, which takes away a certain element. For the most part, it's very similar, and especially you don't have the same kind of learning time as you need for a links course.

I think I'm settled on the golf course and looking forward to getting started.

Q. On the links element, how much are you looking for St Andrews?

SEAMUS POWER: Honestly, that's a dream come true. It's going to be my first Open, and for it to be at St Andrews, I don't think you can ask for anything better than that.

I haven't played St Andrews since 2010, I believe, was the last St Andrews links. It's a special place. It's a tough course to describe. You stand on the 1st and the 18th hole, and it doesn't feel like anything else in golf.

I'm really looking forward to seeing it with, I don't know, 40,000 people, whatever they have in a day, it's going to be obviously different, but it's going to be so unique with the center of the course being basically out of bounds for spectators. It's going to be different. All the top players have always spoken how special it feels playing an Open there. I'm really looking forward to being a part of it.

Q. Seamus, we were talking to Keith earlier, and he said there's no plans for The Irish Open to become a co-sanctioned event with the PGA TOUR. Troy Merritt has decided to come over this week. Did anyone else talk to you about what it would be like to come to an Irish Open?

SEAMUS POWER: I don't know, everyone's got different schedules. It's difficult, because I've run across this the last couple years, where you'd love to come play here and there in Europe, but if you're not in a position where you have your card locked up in either side, it just becomes so difficult.

Obviously some of the top guys are playing next week, and they obviously have all very set schedules, what they like to do before majors.

Every situation is so different. But it's great having Troy here, but it's going to be difficult because guys like to do different things. Especially coming up to a major. Especially in the States, there's only, I don't know -- is there six weeks left in the regular season?

So if you're anywhere between 90 and 1, whatever, like it's very different to risk because at the end of the day, it is your job and it is your career, so you're going to have to take care of that first. That's part of it's going to be different. Obviously, in the schedule over here, a little bit more in the middle, but the end is coming quick over there which changes a lot of guys' minds and opinions of where they play.

But going forward, it's difficult. I don't know. And there's some guys that will play. I know Jon Rahm has won it twice and done stuff like that. So you have guys coming here and there. But it's just -- I think the top name guys will figure out what works best for them in majors and plan their year around that.

If the tournament doesn't fit in, it's difficult. It's going tough



to sway them because obviously so many of those guys are judged on how they play in the top tournaments, the majors, and then guys maybe, you know -- you get a lot of them -- sometimes you get guys out of their home country, they don't like it for extended period. If they're playing the Scottish and the Open already for a week, maybe they might not want to do.

I think there's varying factors. It's great having whoever is going to be here is going to be here. It's a big tournament, it's a big purse, it's going to be an exciting week.

Q. Just on your trajectory the last year as well. What do you need to do to go on the next few feet?

SEAMUS POWER: This is always a tricky thing with golf. Sometimes that search for constant improvement can really lead you down a bad path. That's where it's difficult.

I think we have enough stats to know where your little tweaks can come, but it's only going to be little tweaks.

For me, in the last couple, like the majors and stuff, it's been little mental things, just a little thing like just trying to hole a putt a little bit too much can just lead to a couple of missed putts here and there, or trying to do something a little bit too hard instead of letting things come to you.

And that's going to be the biggest thing for me mentally. Physically, I'm very happy where my game is. Some weeks are going to be better than others. But I know what I'm doing with the golf ball. I know what I want to do, I know what I'm doing with my swing. So I'm pretty comfortable. Obviously from 120 yards and in, you'll never be as good as you want to be. You can always get close. You can always make some better chipping and putting and wedges. That's always going to be the spot for me where I'm going to put the most work in.

But besides that, it's just little mental things here and there, where so much is getting used to being in situations which are obviously newer to me, and some of it is going to be handling those situations better.

Q. Just on Mount Juliet here, what's your history on the course here? Have you played any big events down here?

SEAMUS POWER: No, I wouldn't have played -- so we would have played like Southeastern Alliance back in the day in the winters and different stuff like that, I would have come and played here several times just with friends. For us it was always a treat to play here. In the Southeast, this is the pinnacle of the golf courses around here. It's always fun. I don't know how many times I've played it. But

wouldn't have played any big events, just kind of general regular stuff as an amateur.

Q. What's it going to take to get to the next level? Overall you've come up 400 places a little over a year. Have you revised your goals as to how far you can go? Do you think you can get top 20, top 25, become a regular PGA TOUR winner and a major contender in majors?

SEAMUS POWER: Yeah, that is the goal. You want to play in the big tournaments, you want to compete in the big tournaments, and you want to get in contention more, you want to win more.

And the goals have definitely changed, yeah. I do believe I think I can continue to climb, and I still feel like this is my first season getting into the big events, there's like bigger points available in some of these events. But it still comes back to your own game. And that's all well and that. It's setting like the goals in between are the most important ones to me, how am I going to get there rather than where you want to get to. I know where I want to get. I believe I can be one of the top players in the world.

But you still have to go through all the levels, you've got to tighten up wedges and improve, for me, putts in the 10 and 15 foot range and that sort of stuff.

As I said, it's always going to come back to a lot of -- a lot of it is going to be mental stuff. U.S. Open in the last round, I played very nicely, and I just -- it becomes one of those funny things where you know you're playing nicely, so all of a sudden your mind thinks it's got an opportunity, and then you're trying just a little bit too hard on the greens, you miss a couple.

So it's going to be learning from those, getting a little bit better in those situations. And as you see, I mean, two or three shots there, and all of a sudden you jump way up the leaderboard, and then you jump up in rankings. And that's how it happens.

For me, it's going to be about doing all those little things just a bit better and then see how close to those goals I can get.

Q. I don't know what you think the fifth major is, no idea, but maybe you could answer that. And also would winning The Irish Open be the biggest achievement?

SEAMUS POWER: Yeah, at this point, yeah, for me, this is -- yeah, I mean, I know where you're getting the fifth all that stuff, but it's like for an Irish person growing up in

Ireland, The Irish Open is so special.

I have great memories. We used to do -- I don't know if they still do, but when The Irish Open was at Fota Island, local golf clubs would get a hole, and you would steward and stuff. So we did the 13th hole in Fota Island, and that's probably 20 years ago or even more, and it's -- some of my earliest memories in golf, and it was so special watching the guys play.

And I've seen the scenes of Shane winning, Rory win. Playing in front of your home fans and home country, it adds something to it. No matter what the size of any purse or anything like, it's never about that. For me, it's definitely one I've dreamed of winning for a long time. So hopefully I can get myself in a good spot for Sunday and see what happens.

Q. I don't think Padraig has ever missed it when he's been eligible. I don't think Shane has ever missed it. Can you say that you'll never miss The Irish Open?

SEAMUS POWER: For me, I would love to say it, but obviously, for me, they have like long, extended, like, you know, exemptions and stuff like that. But if I continue to play well, I'm in this sort of spot, there's no way I'd miss it. If I'm 124th in the Monday list going into a couple of seasons time, it becomes difficult. But even for just the first couple days, it's so special being able to share, seeing my family out watching, all coming up.

Like any chance I get, I'll be here, a hundred percent. It's different, it's special, and it's -- again, it's everyone's -- it's obviously unique lead to them, and this is something that's it's been special for a long time, and it will be forever, for the rest of my career.

Q. Playing in 2019 maybe cost you a little bit on the PGA TOUR?

SEAMUS POWER: It might have. That's always a risk. But I haven't played in so long and to have that opportunity, and especially being in something so special like that, I didn't think I could turn it down. I'm glad I didn't. That was an incredible week. Everyone was there, enjoyed it, like the weather, everything with the town. That was an incredible week, and I have great memories of.

And I think that's what makes The Irish Open so special. I don't know how many events we would have played that year, but I hardly would remember a lot of them, but I remember almost everything about that week. I feel like this week is going to be is same.

Q. You may have dealt with this, 2002, when your dad

brought you here to see Tiger, could you remind us of that?

SEAMUS POWER: That was pretty special, obviously, to have World Golf Championship here. Was it '02 or '01?

Q. Two of them, '02 and '04. Tiger won in '04.

SEAMUS POWER: Yeah, he did. It was incredible. And I remember it still, like there's certain things you remember, you're young, and little things. I don't know what year Todd Hamilton was playing, but I remember Todd Hamilton, I was watching him on the putting green, I always remember this, he was hitting a 10-footer, and I swear he must have missed it 20 times in a row. He went out the next day and was 8-under and was first round leader. I remember I scratched my head, going it just shows you what golf is. It's just such a fun game, enjoyable game, you just never know -- that was one of the things I remember.

Yeah, that was -- I do remember it still. One year was beautiful weather, and one year was not very nice at all.

It was amazing golf. I mean, having Tiger here was -- the crowds were special. I remember watching Freddie Couples and Davis Love playing. It was just -- it was great to watch and having such an event like that so close to home, it was great.

Q. Was it inspirational in any sense?

SEAMUS POWER: Yeah, I mean, to a certain extent. But when I was at that age, those guys were -- they were a different side of the world and playing different tours and stuff.

Like to me, Padraig has always been the guy that was my inspiration. Just so like I remember it was early Irish training and you saw videos when he was 17, 18, and like his swing didn't look the greatest and all this stuff, but the way he talked about the game, you could see he loved it. And he still loves it to this day.

And following his career as an Irish person has been the biggest inspiration to me. And it was great seeing those guys. But I wouldn't have known enough about golf to know exactly like who they were at the time. Except Tiger. Everyone knew who Tiger was. It would have been more on the Padraig side. But to still have that level of event only an hour from home, it was special, very fun to be at.

Q. The JP McManus phenomenon, can you explain that to people who don't know about it and how it comes about and your dealings with the family?

SEAMUS POWER: Yeah, I can't wait to get up there. I've met JP a couple times, only on short occasions, but he's been -- just all the things I've heard about this event and the money raised for charity is incredible.

And it's the reaction I get from players which makes me so excited because for it because guys have been talking about this event for literally two years. And guys have -- I remember Hunter told me -- this is in a Web.Com/Korn Ferry final event, three four years ago, he said it's the most fun and best event he's ever played. And I was like -- I was standing there looking at like this guy's been one of the top players in the world, Ryder Cups, and he's played everything. Just stuff like that is remarkable.

So I'm looking forward to it. I haven't played since they've redone it either. I have seen it since all the redo. So I think that part of it is very exciting.

I can't wait get up here and play the course. I didn't even realise there was like crowds or prize funds until like last week to be honest. I thought it was a smaller event. I didn't realise it was 40,000 people a day. It's going to be a great event. And hopefully -- the goal is to raise a lot of money for charity, so hopefully they succeed with that. I'm excited to be a part of it.

Q. Was it an easy decision to play JP's tournament?

SEAMUS POWER: JP have great relationships with guys the likes of Tiger and guys like that, but it's amazing to see some of the younger -- I mean, obviously, I don't know what goes behind the scenes and stuff like this. But I played with Rickie last week, and Rickie is looking forward to it. You're listening to him talk about his excitement with it, and, yeah, it's amazing. It's tough to understand, but it's such a unique event.

I think it's -- obviously it's been longer this time, but it was only every five years guys are -- it's easier to sign up for. And then with The Open coming soon after, that's part of it. But it's still great to see so many top players kind of joining, going to be playing in Ireland, and I think it's going to be exciting.

Q. Another nostalgia trip, you mentioned about the club having the hole in Fota. Was there any particular moment that stands out?

SEAMUS POWER: I was young, so I was always amazed at guys were using just like -- again, this is such a young person thing to say, but we were at the par-3, and they would all use the long timber tee, brand-new one, they'd hit the shot, and they'd leave the tee in the ground. We were just gathering hundreds and hundreds of tees.

But, no, I remember Colin Montgomerie was very impressive. I think every time I watched him, he had such a good shot in there. And it was -- obviously at the time he was one of the best players in the world. It was amazing.

And just like seeing all the top guys and guys you just would have heard of, and seeing them from three yards away was incredible. We thought it was the coolest thing in the world.

It really was. I was getting into golf, and it was a huge thing that made me want to get back there, and other guys, young guys, to play with the club, we can't wait to be playing there in the future. Yeah, I remember little things like that. Long time ago.

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