

The Senior Open

Presented by Rolex

Saturday, July 29, 2023

Porthcawl, Wales, United Kingdom

Royal Porthcawl Golf Club

Jerry Kelly

Quick Quotes

Q. Conditions were tough, walk us through the round.

JERRY KELLY: I knew I just wanted to get pars on the first four holes. That's just a stuff tough start in this wind. Dead in the next three, just solid crossing in. Getting those pars, and then got on the par 5 in two and 2-putted. Got the next hole with a good wedge in there. And I had a look on 8. I made a good save on 9. Made a good save on 15. 14 I got gusted. That putt I got gusted.

You can't -- it's really hard to play right-to-left putts. It's a right-edge putt and I was playing it right-center. I would have had to play that outside the left on a right-to-left, and that's just no way to do that.

It was slower than I thought coming up that slope on 18. They are slow. You get uphill into the wind, I've never come up so short on putts as I have this week. It's pretty incredible what you have to do.

But I did it most of the time today. Just a few, and I'll take just a few in this stuff.

Q. You're in this tournament now, you could be tied for the lead, you could be in the lead. Hard to say at this point. But everybody is falling back as we're talking.

JERRY KELLY: Vijay just made 2 on No. 7, 3-under for the day through seven, that's awesome.

Q. How do you approach that knowing what you've seen today and what you'll get tomorrow?

JERRY KELLY: Yeah, it will only help me for tomorrow, no question. With rain, you know, there's going to be issues of the ball squirting on the driver, not being able to control it in the wind as much as we could today. That's going to be extremely difficult. I think the tee shots are going to be paramount.



But then, I think they are going to slow down that much more with the developments of the greens, and you just have to be committed. Even from six feet, I mean, I thought I hit one really hard on 16, going straight up into the wind uphill -- from six feet, I thought I hit it hard, I was hammering that one. You have to do that on some short putts. That's not my style of putting. My style of putting is a die. It's against my nature to hammer it past the hole but going to have to do that a little bit tomorrow.

Q. Is there anything out here that's in your nature this week?

JERRY KELLY: Keep the ball tight to the grass from 60, 80 yards and in. That's my game that I love to play. So I love coming over here. 5-iron was always my club of choice back in the day in The Open Championships. I putt from off the green everywhere in the States, so it's really natural out here.

So, no, this is kind of my nature. I just did a mail-in test on my heritage, and I am 98 percent from here, so that's pretty pureblood compared to what I've seen in those tests.

Q. And with the conditions being as hard as they are, how much more mentally taxing is it to stay engaged as the ball is moving all over the place and making it hard on you?

JERRY KELLY: I think I can be easier on myself in these conditions. Easier on myself. I've been kicking myself for not getting the ball in the hole on 18. I wanted to be, if not the only under-par round, there's a bunch of guys who shot even par, so I really wanted to get that one in big time.

Q. When you say 99 percent, are you talking Welsh? Irish? Scottish?

JERRY KELLY: They don't go that deep, but I'm full Irish on both sides. So I mean, I'm about as pure as you can get for anybody who has left the island two generations ago.

Q. This course never hosted an Open Championship and everyone is talking about how good it is. You've



played enough Opens to know. Where would you rank this course?

JERRY KELLY: I mean, I think it can play longer than Hoylake. So I think in the right weather, I think it's a test. But for us, those first four holes, you know, it's just not as much of a test for length. Bernhard hit it pretty far down there on 2, 3 and 4, and going to the green on 7, and there's just -- you have wedge into 6. If they roll back the ball, bring an Open here right away. But they are hitting it so far. You know, I've played with them enough, twice this year, PLAYERS and Sony, bunkers are further past where we hit it.

But as for the technical aspects of an Open Championship, this course has got everything it needs, no question. I know we don't play it all the way back, so maybe -- (wind muffling).

Q. Since you brought it up, what's your thoughts on that?

JERRY KELLY: USGA, both of them dropped the ball in 2001 when they first realized that those higher swing speeds, it became exponential rather than linear. I don't mind -- swing speed, but it is not. It is not. The harder you hit it, I mean, it's not purely exponential but it surely isn't linear. I'm never going to get the effects that these guys get.

Do we limit them for what they have done to -- (wind muffling) -- the speed? I don't know. But we can't keep building courses that are just long and straight and bunkers out there that you have to avoid. I mean, we want to play technical courses that the guys can absolutely smash it -- (wind muffling). I'm kind of in favour because I was in favour for 2000 when the professional first came out. I'm still in favour. Bifurcationally, we have enough rules that are separate. Guys are hitting longer and longer. I used to be a little square, now you have to open it up. It's nightly reading. I don't think it's bad for the game. I think it will be tough for college golf to adopt it. It's going to be a lot harder for those guys at 19, 21 years old to come right out and play, especially if they make it spinier. Because now we are talking back in the day of true experience and how to shape the ball. At those speeds, it spins. Oh, man, we're in for some rides. Balata, the old liquid center, rubber band wrap, balata cover, yeah. Learned a lot about how to play golf.

Q. Rory hit a 7-wood and it was 50 to 60 yards shorter. We keep going, is it the ball, or is it --

JERRY KELLY: Well, we have limited them a lot, so you can't go any further on that. Limited length. So yeah, they

have done the right things with the equipment now. Now it's the ball. There should be a finite point. I'm fine with stopping right now because these guys are all used to it. I'm done. All the old guys with the slow swing speeds, there's not many slow swing speeds on tour anymore. It's weeding them out. But we don't want to weed out golf courses.

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