

U.S. Senior Open Championship

Friday, June 28, 2024
Newport, Rhode Island, USA
Newport Country Club

Richard Bland

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Please welcome Richard Bland to the interview room at the 44th U.S. Senior Open at the Newport Country Club.

You shot a 6-under bogey free 64, and you're currently tied for third place. How would you describe your round today?

RICHARD BLAND: Pretty good. It wasn't easy. The wind kind of switched on us literally when we were just hitting the final putts on the putting green there.

So I'm thinking we might to hit the 10th tee shot downwind but it played into.

Yeah, obviously it makes the into the holes a lot tougher. That's kind of the way the course plays. It's either you come downwind or kind of into it. There's not too many crosswinds, so that does make it a little easier. You haven't got to worry about too much curvature on the ball that way.

No, I kept the ball in play, which you need to do around here. Yeah, I didn't really hole too much. As you know, kind of USGA, they always kind of find little slopes and places to put the flags.

So, yeah, every putt I had today kind of felt like I had a minimum foot or 18 inches of break on it.

It's quite hard -- you've got to then match the speed and the line perfect.

Hopefully I can get a couple of better looks at it over the weekend. Yeah, happy to be in this position. I'm where I need to be. Looking forward to the weekend.

Q. It seems like you drove the ball remarkably well today. Did you do anything different than yesterday?

RICHARD BLAND: No, no, no. I didn't drive the ball particularly badly yesterday. If I'm missing a fairway by a



little bit, which is usually me, I'm usually a pretty straight driver of the ball.

But, yeah, if you can, play from fairways, then the kind of tight pins that you have here, you can be that little bit more aggressive.

It looks like kind of like the greens are -- I don't know. They seem to be a little different in softness. I had -- like on 18 today from the fairway, I had a wedge that released about eight or nine yards on me, and then I'm hitting 5-iron into the 1st, and it comes back 18 inches from the pitch mark straight downwind.

Yeah, I think the greens -- I don't know whether the sort of back nine is maybe a little bit more overexposed, getting dried out a bit.

Yeah, if I keep doing what I'm doing, hopefully I'm going to be in the lead on Sunday.

Q. Can you describe the eagle 2 on the second hole for us?

RICHARD BLAND: Yeah. To be fair, I probably hit the wrong club off the tee. I probably should have been a little bit more aggressive and hit driver. Where that flag was, you're probably better off getting past the flag.

I hit 3-wood and came up short. Left myself in a horrible spot really, short right. I kind of looked past the hole to see if I could use the slope, but it kind of looked like it could stick.

But it was the only option that I had, so I kind of played it. Landed it probably, I don't know, 50-yard shot. I was probably trying to land it about 30.

I landed it exactly where I needed to. I just came and went up the slope, and it looked like it stayed. The ball must have stopped for two to three seconds. I'm there going like it can't stay there, but I didn't think it would have enough on it then to get all the way back down to the hole.

Then it started just trundling down, and the next thing you know, it disappears. I could stand there all day and not hole that shot. It's kind of one of those.



So it was a nice bonus. I was just starting to get a little bit of momentum, and that was huge for me because I'm kind of standing on the 16th tee, and I think I'm nine behind or ten behind. I was certainly nine. I've got to get the foot down. Not an awful lot was happening for me.

Then, yeah, it kind of kick started, which was nice. It's good to be back in the thick of it.

Q. At certain points on this course, do you feel like you're home at any point? Is there any place that you played, not only in England, but around the world, that this reminds you of?

RICHARD BLAND: Yeah, I played Shinnecock a couple weeks ago. It's kind of got that kind of feel to it, that sort of long fescue, that kind of thing. Thankfully, it's probably a little more forgiving than Shinnecock, especially when the USGA gets hold of it.

But, yeah, it's a beautiful course to play. It's one of those old fashioned places. Yeah, you wouldn't get bored if you had to play around here three or four times a week.

Obviously the scenery is really nice when you get out there close to the ocean. But, yeah, it's just a really nice golf course to play.

Q. Where's your confidence level right now, having won a Senior PGA? Then you know how to play a USGA course. You just played one at a U.S. Open recently.

RICHARD BLAND: Yeah, the confidence is pretty good. I came off of a good week last week in Nashville. So I've been probably pretty consistent all year. I don't see why that should change.

If I can just kind of give myself some better looks at some putts, you know, a little bit straighter ones, then like I said, I think there's still a couple of good scores for me this weekend. Still probably going to need it.

There's a lot of good players out there. I see Stricks is there. Greeny as well. Greeny is obviously playing very well.

No illusions this weekend. I've got to go out and play my best. Hopefully, if I do that, that will be good enough.

Q. What does the next 24 hours look like for you as you prepare for the weekend?

RICHARD BLAND: Just going to just head back, get some food, maybe have a stretch, just chill. Speak to the wife in

the morning. She's probably already in bed.

Obviously depending on what time I was hearing, they might go a little bit earlier tomorrow. I don't know if there's maybe some fog coming in in the afternoon. Then tomorrow we'll be determined on tee time, whether I get to chill out a little in the morning, like I did this morning and watch a little of the DP World Golf, or I've got to be here and have breakfast here.

Whatever it is, that's fine. Yeah, whenever the start time is, I'll be ready to go.

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