

# The 149th Open

Mixed Zone

Tuesday, 13 July 2021

## Ryan Fox



OLIVIA McMILLAN: Ryan, welcome to Royal St. George's for the 149th Open. It's a pleasure to have you here. How are you feeling?

RYAN FOX: Yeah, pretty good. Our six-month-old woke us up at 2:30 in the morning, so I'm a little bit tired but excited to be here and see the golf course for the first time today.

OLIVIA McMILLAN: Have you had a chance to get out and play Royal St. George's yet?

RYAN FOX: No, I haven't. I came to the golf course yesterday afternoon but just to do the testing and stuff like that. Hit a few balls and tried to dodge some of the rain, talked to a couple of guys.

My caddie has walked a few holes; he said it looks fantastic out there, so I'm looking forward to getting out there and seeing it today.

OLIVIA McMILLAN: Heading into the week playing a new course that you haven't been to before, do you do much research?

RYAN FOX: Me personally, no. I just play it how it comes. Obviously we get very, very good yardage books, and I might talk to a couple of people that have played the course and ask what they think of it or what stands out in their mind about the golf course, but in terms of actually doing proper research, I've tried it a couple of times, I've found it never really did anything for me, so I didn't bother.

**Q. I think you're playing with Daniel Hillier; is that right? Have you been able to share your knowledge of playing in the Open Championship with him?**

RYAN FOX: Yeah, I've got a practice round with Dan this morning at 10:00 so I hopefully will be able to share a little bit. From what I've seen of Dan growing up in Wellington I played with him at the Muriwai Open a few weeks ago, and he controls his ball very nicely and shouldn't have any problem with links golf.

If he wants to ask me any questions, I'll definitely try to answer as best I can, but as far as I'm concerned, Dan has got all the

pieces there; it's just trying to figure it out in his head and feel comfortable this week.

But he's had some major experience before, and hopefully that puts him in good stead, as well.

OLIVIA McMILLAN: You mentioned obviously you've got a new baby. I guess has your approach to golf changed now that you are a father?

RYAN FOX: I don't know necessarily about that, but it's nice being able to go home and now that they're up here, be able to go home and regardless of how good or bad a day I've had, it doesn't actually matter to Isabel whatsoever. I'm just Dad. She's probably got no comprehension of playing golf.

It was cool while I hadn't seen them in seven weeks and I saw them in London on Sunday night, and she took a little bit to figure out what was going on, but then to get the smiles and the excitement there and get that -- I woke her up this morning at 6:30, to get the little smiles and excitement and everything like that makes everything pretty cool. So I'm sure I'll be a bit more relaxed in that sense around golf going forward for the rest of the year hopefully.

**Q. Have you played Royal St. George's before?**

RYAN FOX: No, I've never seen Royal St. George's. I've heard lots of great things about it, so I'm looking forward to getting out there in a couple of hours and seeing it myself.

**Q. Is it a links course?**

RYAN FOX: Yeah, definitely.

**Q. Hopefully that will suit you because you've always played well at the Irish and Scottish.**

RYAN FOX: Yeah, I've always enjoyed links golf. You've got to control your ball really well. Obviously you've got to deal with the conditions, as well. Generally a bit of wind. I think our forecast is actually pretty good this week, though, so we might not have too much of that, but I've always enjoyed that style of golf, the creativity involved, so hopefully that puts me in good stead for this week, as well.

**Q. Are you happy with your form at the moment? I see you gained 18 shots at the Scottish Open, which is good.**

RYAN FOX: Yeah, the game is close. I haven't probably quite put it all together yet. I had a bad week in Ireland the week before, but I figured it out a little bit more last week in Scotland.

Golf is kind of a funny game; all you need is something small to click and you can start shooting some really good scores. I'm working hard to make sure that happens for this week and for the rest of the year going forward.

**Q. Your fifth Open then this year, I guess. What have you learned in your previous four Opens? Obviously your best finish last time out was Portrush. How are you feeling going into this one?**

RYAN FOX: I've learned a lot in my previous Opens. Just to get the experience with playing with the best in the world, the first couple I had was awesome, and then to figure out that links golf was something I really enjoyed and felt like I could do really well at was probably the next couple, and Portrush was pretty cool to finish in the top 20 a couple of years ago. It was my best finish in a major, and it feels like if I play well, I can compete with the top players in the world.

Hopefully I can take all of those learnings into this week and put it all together. Royal St. George's has a bit of a history with outsiders winning. I guess that's the best way to put it. So I certainly wouldn't mind that being me up near the top this week.

**Q. Obviously yesterday there was quite a bit of rain, I guess softened the course up a little bit. Do you prefer those conditions or do you prefer when it's really hard and bouncy?**

RYAN FOX: I don't mind either way, to be honest. I think each has their own challenge. I think from what I've heard because there's been quite a bit of rain around here, there's quite a bit of rough, so that makes it more important to keep it in play off the tee.

I think if it's been bone dry and really firm, there's less rough, but obviously you've got a bit more to think about with how you play the golf course off tees and stuff like that. It just provides a different challenge.

Probably personally for me, I prefer it when it's firm and fast. I think you just need to use your imagination so much more, but I certainly don't mind playing links golf no matter what the conditions are.

**Q. Just wondering how you have been coping with bubble**

**life and everything. We've heard from a number of athletes from varying sports give their opinions. How have you found it over the last couple of months?**

RYAN FOX: Yeah, it's pretty tough. It's a little easier now for us than it was at this time last year when I came back to the UK after the pandemic started, but it's also a little more confusing. Obviously countries are opening up more and more and we're still under the same restrictions we were pretty much a year ago.

In some ways the bubble is less restrictive, but it's also a bit more frustrating because you can't quite understand or comprehend some of the rules that you're being made to follow. But for me, my family is up here this week, so the bubble life certainly got a whole lot better for me this week and going forward. It was a pretty lonely existence up until the last week, so yeah, looking forward to actually being able to socialise with people and spend some time with my daughter and everything.

**Q. You touched on something I was going to bring up. Given the frustrations around the protocols and things, how much of a difference to your game does it make to have your family there, I guess making it a bit more relaxed and more comfortable?**

RYAN FOX: I mean, I don't know what -- obviously I've only just got up here, so I don't know if it's going to have any effect on performance, but just mentally, just even know when they were coming up and I'd see them in a week or so, I felt a whole lot better about the tour of golf, everything like that. So having them here this week is -- definitely I'm a bit more relaxed, a bit happier with everything, and it does make the bubble a lot less frustrating. So hopefully that translates into better golf.

I know there's been a few guys play really well after having kids. It kind of puts everything in perspective, and I certainly hope it works like that for me, as well.

**Q. Just touching on your practice round with Dan, was that something that happened by chance or something that one of you requested or were able to put together?**

RYAN FOX: Yeah, I just -- obviously I saw that he qualified a couple of weeks ago and I sent him a message saying congrats and just said, if you want a practice round, just let me know, and he goes, yep, really keen, and then he texted me early last week and said he had booked one for 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday. I was like, yep, that's perfect, I'll see you there.

It's cool to be able to support him and see, I guess, the next generation of Kiwi golfers come out. I played a bit of golf with him when I was back home on the Charles Tour, and he's got a lot of game, so I'm looking forward to seeing how he plays this

week.

OLIVIA McMILLAN: Ryan, thank you for your time, and we wish you the best of luck this week.

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