

The 149th Open

Press Conference

Tuesday, 13 July 2021

Bryson DeChambeau



STUART MOFFATT: You've just come off your first practice round. I wonder how things are looking out there and what your first impressions are of Royal St. George's.

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Royal St. George's is an amazing golf course. The weather is beautiful today. Yesterday I played a little bit with Phil and a couple others. We had a great time out there.

It's pretty interesting. There's a certain amount of holes that you can kind of go after it on, and there's a couple that you can't. If you hit it in the rough, in the hay.

Yesterday I played a little bit with Phil and a couple others. We had a great time out there. It's pretty interesting, there was a certain amount of holes that you can kind of go after it on, and there's a couple that you can't. If you hit it in the rough, in the hay, it's not easy to get out of.

I hope I can hit it far enough to where I can wedge it out still onto the green if I get good enough lies, but there's certain lies out there it's going to be a pitch back to the fairway, and that's including for everybody.

If you're hitting it 300 off the tee and it goes into the hay, it's not easy to get to the green from there, either.

I hope that the length will be a little bit of an advantage. I just have to drive it well. That's what I have to do this week, and the speed controlling the greens is going to be huge. If I don't three-putt this week, I'll have a pretty good chance going into Sunday.

Q. I don't mean to start on a negative, but your Open record on its own suggests that figuring out links golf or an Open Championship has been tricky for you.

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: For sure.

Q. Is there any reason why that seems to be the case?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Yeah, I mean, I don't know why. I played well in the Walker Cup when it was here. I had the best -- I played really great golf. Maybe the conditions have been favourable when I played over in the Walker Cup, where I do

pretty well with not as windy conditions and firmer ground environments.

The times I've played in the British Opens in the past, I think they've been a little wet and windy. I usually struggle on that in general.

I think that hopefully if we get a little bit of a dry week, I can get the wind under control in my brain, hopefully I can have a good week. I love links golf. I've shot low numbers over here before, but it's about putting it together for four rounds and making sure my game is pretty repeatable.

The thing is you can't miss it out here very often. If you do you're in the hay and it's not easy to get out of. This is the first time I've taken my length to links golf. We'll see how that plays. Maybe it plays out week; maybe it doesn't. I'll keep trying to figure it out.

I look at Tiger and what he did back in the early 2000s, hitting 7- and 8-irons off every tee, that's an interesting thought process that may come into play here soon, but there's too many places out here where covering some of those bunkers is a huge advantage no matter what, so that's kind of the game plan I'm going to take as of right now.

Q. I'm kind of curious, other the last few months we've watched you launch a few drives into a few crowds and you don't seem so shout fore. Just wondering why you don't?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: I do shout fore. I don't know what you're talking about. There are plenty of people on the tee box that do shout fore. You're bringing up a very controversial thing, which is unfortunate, but 99 per cent of the time I do, and unfortunately people think I don't. But that's okay, they can say whatever they want.

Q. Obviously it's the first time you've been out of the country for a while. Brooks was in here earlier saying that he continued to feel you were fair game and that he was going to take his shots. I just wonder how you feel about this row now because it seems to become a pit of a pantomime.

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: He can say whatever he wants. I think he said something back at Liberty National not upholding something. I don't know what he's talking about in that regard.



Maybe that's on me. Maybe I didn't. I really don't remember anything about that. We just had a conversation that I really don't know what happened, because we haven't really bantered back and forth until now, so it's like why is that happening now.

Besides that, I'm just here to play golf and focus on that. If we want to keep bantering back and forth, obviously being respectful and keeping lines where they aren't getting crossed, yeah, I think it's fun and a good environment for people in golf.

Q. Is there a sort of more contrived element to this, the fact he's offering his fans free beer if they taunt you on the course?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: I don't know. That's, again, probably more of a PGA TOUR or I would say R&A/USGA issue than even me. I mean, I can't do anything about that. He can do whatever he wants.

Q. Could you just give us any examples from today of sort of hitting it out of the hay, as you called it, anything in particular --

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Yeah, 15 you hit it left -- I hit it left and it was in some pretty thick stuff, and I tried to get a 7-iron out of it and just didn't -- I could barely get it out. It's pretty diabolical.

I think you've just got to weigh the risk-reward in those situations. If you get a good lie, I'll be able to get it out of there up next to the green and hopefully save par. But the key is driving it in the fairway this week. No matter what, you've got to be in the fairway.

If I get in there more times than not into the hay, probably not going to have a good chance this week. So you've got to make sure the driver is well.

15 was brutal. I mean, even on 14, I just tried to chip it out of the left over in the water. It was in the thick stuff, the hay, and just chipped it out with a 58-degree back into the fairway because there's nothing more you can do, it was such a bad lie. Good test.

Q. Apart from being the only venue in the south of England, is there anything else that makes this one apart from the other venues that you've played in in the Open?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Anything that is distinctly different is what you're trying to -- well, it's a lot softer in the fairways this year I feel like than in other British Opens that I've played in. Even in Portrush when it was still raining it was still running out quite a bit from what I can remember. Maybe I'm wrong in that.

But it seems like the fairways are holding golf balls a lot better. Maybe because it's early in the week. But that's what I can recognise right now that's a little bit different.

Q. It's not really been your nature of late, but is there anyplace out there where you feel like you need to lay up or you might lay up off the tee, not hit driver?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Yeah, 14; if the wind is into me I'll definitely be laying up there.

5, the dogleg left, hitting a 4-iron off the tee. I can't cover the 338 number I think it is, then I'll be laying up there, as well.

8, good example, too. I'll try and lay up short of those right bunkers, give myself a wedge into the green.

So yeah, there's definitely still a lot of places.

No. 3, it's kind of over the big Himalayan -- I think they call it the Himalayan bunker or something like that. I'm not sure. But hitting it over that part, I'm not going to be hitting drivers too tight up in that little corridor.

Q. I just had a question for you, some players thrive on controversy and conflict and distractions and stuff like that and can perform on from that. How would you describe yourself as handling those kind of things? Obviously Detroit, I don't know how much that affected that week for you, but how do you describe yourself as a guy that handles those kind of outside things?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Yeah, I mean, everybody is human. I'm definitely human. We all make mistakes and things happen. We have emotion. And I think that sometimes people objectify us big players at the top of the game too much and they don't realise that we are human and we make mistakes and things happen.

Somebody that thrives in controversy, I don't even think it's about that. Look, I never grew up to become famous. I grew up to play golf, and that's something that people I don't think realise. It's difficult to truly understand unless you're in this environment, and sometimes you just try and make the best of situations, and they don't necessarily look good or come out the right way.

That's life, unfortunately. Us as professionals, we have to be on top of it all the time. Unfortunately it just doesn't come out the right way sometimes or happen the way you want it to, and we make mistakes.

At the end of the day we have to move on and do the best we possibly can. For me, I'm somebody that doesn't necessarily

like controversy. I just like doing my own thing. Do I like showcasing something unique and different? Yeah, but I guess what comes with that is controversy, and I guess that's something that I don't necessarily deal the best with sometimes.

At the end of the day I try to do the best. I'm trying to become better at it.

Q. Going back to the comments about Koepka being sure that you won't be paired together in the Ryder Cup, would you have any problem being paired with him in the Ryder Cup?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Oh, no, not at all. I think would be kind of funny actually. I think we'd do well, to be honest. It would create a little interesting vibe for the team or for the guys we're playing against.

Q. Last week you played the match in Big Sky, Montana. That was a bit of an idiosyncratic course. Did you feel that maybe on top of the fact that it was obviously charity and a bit of fun that there was a little bit of preparation for links-type course with the hills and the hilly greens and the slopy greens?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Yeah, I wouldn't say it was great preparation for links golf, but we raised a lot of money for charity. I think we delivered 6½ million meals, which was amazing. So we did a lot for charity, and I think that was more of the reason why I did it and wanted to showcase myself in a unique light that people don't usually get to see me in.

Because again, people think I'm this really hard-pressed person that demands everything out of everybody, and that's not true. People think that's the case, but for me I wanted to show a different side of me. I wanted people to see that there's more to Bryson than just what meets the eye or what they think meets the eye.

Also, I would say from a slope perspective it was nice getting to see the greens and how slopy they were. That was kind of fun. I would say that the green speeds were 11 so it didn't really relate to here, and the super huge slopes and the altitude adjustments didn't help very much, so not much I can relate to that.

But it was certainly fun to give a lot back to charity and also just play a fun round of golf with some amazing athletes.

Q. How is it going with your caddie? And what are the unique challenges being teamed up with him for the first time at a major championship on a links course?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Yeah, it's certainly throwing him

into the deep end, like I showed on my Instagram post. He's okay with it. He loves it. We've been doing really good together. It's provided me an opportunity to be in a different state of mind with Brian. He's a different individual and a very hard worker, somebody that I have high regard for and respect for as well as Tim.

I would say that he's still learning the ropes a little bit, which is expected on any end when you have somebody new that's really never caddied before, but I wanted somebody on the bag that I could trust as much as I did with Tim, and I think that's why he fit the place so well.

It's going to take probably a few weeks, but so far he's done super well and I'm super proud of him for taking this role.

Q. There's obviously a lot of talk about the funkiness of the fairways and the rough this week. You did mention the avoidance of three-putts. Is that a reference to the fact that these are quite severe greens on The Open rota?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Yeah, they're definitely severe and you have to make sure you're in the right areas relative to the pins. There's a couple low areas that you can get yourself into that you're hitting up 15 to 20 per cent slopes, and that can be quite treacherous and difficult trying to control speed.

And then having 60-, 70-, 80-footers on certain holes, for us guys over in America, we play on speeds that are around 11s and these are a little bit under that, and it makes for a little bit of a challenge that we all have to adjust to.

If I can adjust well and do the right things and control speed this week, not three-putting is going to be a huge key to winning this week.

Q. You referenced Tiger going to the irons off the tee, and you also said that the fairways are currently quite soft. If they get fiery at the weekend, is Tiger Woods' approach something that's in the back of your mind?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: A thousand per cent, no doubt. I think what he showcased is an awesome ability to play it on the ground, play links on the ground, which is the way it should be played I personally think, as well, albeit I do something completely different.

I have the utmost respect for that style of play. I think there's certain advantages to hitting it long in certain places, but not everywhere. There will be certain holes where there is a lot of wind and you can't really control the golf ball with that type of wind, where it bounces, how it bounces. So keeping it low and on the ground if it gets firm is definitely something I would utilise, yeah.

Q. You always come across as being a super confident person, but some of the criticism you get for being different, especially from Brooks, does it hurt?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Does it hurt what?

Q. Does it hurt you personally?

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU: Well, I think it makes it emotionally a little more difficult to, I would say, resolve that because in my heart of hearts, I really think I'm a great person and a really good person to be around, a kind person to be around.

It's sometimes difficult, but at the end of the day you can just keep doing what you're doing, and I think that's why for me I've done a lot on social media, done a lot of YouTube series to showcase myself in a different light because I want people to see that side.

I think there's a lot of greatness to that and also humbleness to that, as well. Showcasing that I am human and I did start pretty much from nothing. My parents were nice enough to give their whole lives to help me play golf. Played at a public golf course and country club every once in a while when I got the chance, but it was humble beginnings.

I hope people can realise if you work hard enough, you can be successful in life. That's really my goal. And yes, at times it can be difficult, but at the same point in time, I've just got to keep pressing forward.

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