

The 149th Open

Mixed Zone

Thursday, 15 July 2021

Paul Casey



OLIVIA McMILLAN: Paul, thank you very much for joining us today. A lovely start from you today and nice golf played. Talk to us about it, please.

PAUL CASEY: You got a terrible delay on that. I couldn't hear that. I did hear that. Yeah, thank you. It was, I mean, obviously a clean round, which is a very rare for me at an Open Championship. Started off great with a birdie on the 1st and another birdie on the 3rd.

I thought it was perfect golfing conditions. It was the sun was breaking through, a nice pretty -- not a crazy wind, but is stiff-ish breeze. Just a really enjoyable day on the golf course. I made a few errors and didn't drive it my best. That was probably the reason I failed to make more birdies coming in is I didn't drive it brilliantly. Got a little bit of trouble but saved myself. To be honest very, very happy with 2-under.

Q. Obviously a great round today. Just wondering, obviously played loads of majors now. How are the nerves first round compared to kind of other events? Do you feel it more at a major?

PAUL CASEY: My nerves are, they're still there, but not a lot anymore having played as many majors as I have. Now it's more excitement. I mean, there was a time when I was extremely nervous teeing it up, to the point where it affected my performance, and now honestly, I couldn't be more excited to play.

I feel -- the desire is still there. I haven't won one. I desperately want to, but I don't feel like that's adding pressure. I just feel excitement every time. It's like an opportunity.

And I think more so what's been interesting the last couple of years with this whole pandemic and having fans away, the fans being back, I love it. I missed it. So standing on this first tee, even today we had a chuckle. Poulter wanted to tee off. Abe was second but Poulter was on the tee about to put the tee in the ground and we just have a laugh. It's not like it used to be.

The nerves are not a thing. Only time I feel like I get really nervous now is the first tee of the Ryder Cup.

Q. If I could ask one more. Obviously it was a great round

today, bogey-free. Having played the first round, what do you think the keys will be to victory this week?

PAUL CASEY: Probably still predominantly a tee shot golf course. The key is you have to drive it well. The greens are pretty slow, so that takes out the -- I think that mutes any sort of really big advantage on the green if somebody is brilliant putter versus a guy who is maybe average.

The trouble around the greens and on the fairways is just so penal that, again, if you're a magician I'm not sure you can show off your skills and elevate yourself into a much better position than a guy who is average, but you will get found out if you don't drive it well because you just cannot get it round in golf course bogey-free if it you don't.

There is a lot of crosswinds. This is a course which is always sort of turning, so you rarely get the same wind twice. In fact, I think we only played two or three holes today actually downwind. Everything seemed to be sort of a slight angle.

Yeah, tee shots, a guy who has basically the ball on a string, drives it well, that's the horse to back this week.

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