

The 149th Open

Mixed Zone

Thursday, 15 July 2021

Darren Clarke



Q. A good solid start today. You only made eight greens in regulation, but the putter was hot. How do you feel overall the round went?

DARREN CLARKE: I didn't realise I'd only hit eight greens in regulation. Sometimes that's a funny stat whenever you're on links because if you're just off the fringe, which you're going to be an awful lot in links golf, you're going to use the putter, so my stats may have looked a lot better than they actually were. I actually hit the ball pretty nicely but I missed a couple of fairways by two inches and all of a sudden when you're in that you're trying to run the ball up or you're aiming away from flags to not make any stupid mistakes. Consequently my stats may have been somewhat misleading today, which frequently that's what will happen on links golf.

But overall I was quite pleased with the way I actually hit the ball and the way I played.

Q. Enough encouragement for tomorrow to make a good push?

DARREN CLARKE: Yeah, yeah, as I say, I hit the ball -- my ball flighting was the best it's been probably in maybe this past month or so, so still got a little bit of work to do, but I've been fortunate to spend a little bit of time with Pete Cowan on the range, and he put me back on track, so hopefully go out there and do a little bit better tomorrow.

Q. How did it feel to be back at Royal St George's in the Open atmosphere after obviously 10 years ago?

DARREN CLARKE: Yeah, it was wonderful. You know, the reception I got on the first tee and the first fairway all the way around and walking up the last with the people applauding, the Open Championship

is always special to play in. It's even more special to win it and it's even more special to come back to the place where you've won it at before. The crowds were really, really kind and generous with me today, so it was a pleasure to be out there playing today.

Q. There was a lot of crowds out there today following you. How did that feel today, the atmosphere?

DARREN CLARKE: Yeah, it was wonderful. You know, obviously with the limits and what have you this year that we have, it's not possible to get as many spectators in as we want, but it looks to be a great crowd out there. It's an Open Championship. Yes, we were fortunate, we had a quite a few people walking around with us, and there's people all over the golf course, which is great to see.

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