

The 149th Open

Mixed Zone

Thursday, 15 July 2021

Ben An



Q. (In progress.)

BEN AN: And ended up making a birdie. Just the course like this, you need some luck with the bounces here and there. Then when I miss I had some great lies, and then yeah, I was able to take advantage of it and then shoot 3-under par.

It was definitely a decent score today.

Q. How nice is it to be back at the Open after missing it last year and having such a good strong crowd here supporting you?

BEN AN: Yeah, it's great. It's never a good thing to miss a tournament and not having a tournament, and especially this is an event that I will come over like once a year away from U.S., and just I love the links course and I like how tough it plays every year.

Then even with the good weather like today, I mean, still the scores are not as crazy low because that shows how tough the golf course is. I just like playing a links course, and just to see the fans out there, although it's limited fans, still get to see them and I can hear claps here and there, and it's definitely great to see.

Q. In terms of overall round, how important was it to get those birdies on 17 and 18 after picking up two bogeys on the back nine?

BEN AN: Yeah, it was definitely great to see -- great to finish with a birdie-birdie, but I just look at it as a 3-under par. Doesn't matter what happened what hole. If I shot 2-over on the front nine and shot 5-under on the back it's still a 3-under.

It was nice to have that momentum going into tomorrow, and although I made two bogeys on the back nine, it was -- it wasn't great shots and those are -- it happens out there. I try to kind of forget about it and focus my next shot, and hit some great drives on 17 and set me up for kind of an easy-ish birdie 17.

Last one I got lucky with the bounce and came back in the fairway and made a birdie, so it's just -- overall I would say it was a lucky day than unlucky. I hit the flag on No. 2 and missed the green, but it happens. I'm quite happy with how I hung in

there after two bogeys on back nine and finished with the two birdies.

Q. You're putting seems to be the positive stat from today. It's definitely well above the average or well below the average of the field, 1.44 putts per green, whereas the average field at the moment, 1.64. So you must be happy with that, and has that something you been working on?

BEN AN: Yeah, I mean, always if you see a positive number on the putting it's always a good sign, and I had some good numbers this year. I putted good and bad few days. That's what it is, right? I know my strength is more off the tee than tee to green and around the greens, so I been working hard on the range and the short game to try to hit it close and don't have to worry about putting too much.

That's kind of held me back. You can say it held me back for the last couple years. I just need an average putting day and that will do enough for me. So like a day like today I putted great and a lot of putts went in. You never know on these greens and with how strong the winds are. I mean, just got to hit a good putt and pray that it goes in. It could anywhere because of the wind.

Q. The forecast seems to be relatively consistent over the weekend. In terms of winds, would you be happy with that for your own game? How does it suit you?

BEN AN: Yeah, I think so. When the wind picks up I think it gets obviously pretty tough and then it gets very tough to hit it close, near the flags, and even miss.

I have a decent short game so I can go around and make a par around it. I definitely rather see the wind. It's definitely hard for me too, but it's hard for other players. At the end of the day, it tests who grinds the most and stays until the last. It's not about shooting 8-, 9-under par which I kind of not prefer compared to day like today.

It's a little bit breezy and you have to shoot a good score. I don't want to be shooting 4-under par and stay where I am. I want to be able to shoot 2- or 3-under and move up. I like a little breezy, windy conditions, and if I have a good day I know I'll move up.



