

# The 149th Open

Mixed Zone

Friday, 16 July 2021

## Joe Long



**Q. Hi, Joe. Thanks for joining us. Can I just start by getting you to reflect on today's events?**

JOE LONG: Yeah, obviously great honor to share the course with Darren Clarke and play a round with him again. Played some great golf again. Made a few little silly mistakes on the par-5 coming in. Knew I needed to few birdies to pick yeah, but, yeah, just made a few sloppy mistakes and that was that really.

All in all, played some solid golf again.

**Q. You mentioned playing with a former Open champion. What sort of chat was going on as you were walking round today?**

JOE LONG: We spoke a little bit early on and then we kind of had a chat coming in when there were all the grandstands walking down, kind of 16, 17, 18. Obviously it was quite a special moment for Darren because he last won here in 2011. To get to share that experience, and I just kind of wanted to soak it all up really and think, I am at The Open and just have a smile on my face really.

**Q. Is it about feeling comfortable playing at one of these big events? Obviously playing at an Open golf championship for the first time is a big deal, but is it about feeling comfortable and having that belief that you should be there?**

JOE LONG: Yeah, you know, you got to learn to be comfortable, and you're uncomfortable a lot in golf. I think obviously as you get more experience you get better at that, but ultimately got to get used to that feeling and sensation.

I felt like I held my own out there and played some really solid golf. I just didn't play as well as I scored basically, so score doesn't reflect how you felt I played.

It's going to give me some confidence next week and get the pro journey started.

**Q. Did you think going out today you a good chance of making the cut?**

JOE LONG: Yeah, for sure. Obviously I knew I was quite close

but didn't want to be too caught up in that. Just wanted to try and give each and every golf shot the best I could, try and stay in that moment and not think about the cut. It's hard to do.

I tried my best and got a little bit frustrated coming in, but that happens. That's how you got to learn and reflect and get better from that really.

**Q. What sort of experience has it been like for your friends and family that have been able to cheer you on?**

JOE LONG: Yeah it's been awesome. They didn't manage to get out the Masters or the U.S. Open really, so to have a lot of kind of guys from back home at my home club and my family just felt really special.

So, yeah, it was just absolutely awesome and the support has been amazing.

**Q. Let's just look to the future. You mentioned about turning professional. What's the plan with that? How is that going to work? Are you hoping to get some invites then?**

JOE LONG: Yeah, hopefully. Yeah, I got a start next week at Celtic Manor on the European Tour, which is nice. And then kind of try and put a schedule together there and look at the winter months. I'll be going back to South Africa and see my girlfriend and get some sunshine and get some good prep for next year.

Not too sure what the options are out there yet, but I just got to think about the bigger picture and keep getting better at golf basically.

**Q. Given the world we're living in, it's no surprise the European Tour Q-School was cancelled this year, but I guess that would've been a target for you.**

JOE LONG: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, it's a little bit of a controversial topic. It's the way it is. Same for everyone at the minute.

Yeah, got to be flexible and adapt and, like I say, not get stuck in this moment. Just take care of myself and just keep getting better, and hopefully that will take care of the other things.



**Q. I remember many years ago following the career, the early career I should say, of Chris Wood. What sort of advice has he been giving you about not just playing The Open, but more importantly going forward with your career after it?**

JOE LONG: Yeah, I haven't spoken to Woody for a while, but he gave me some kind of good advice. You just got it not get caught up in what everyone else is doing and keep getting better at what you do, I guess, because you can come out to these events and feel like you have to change your game. I think I kind of stuck to my own thing.

I got a little bit caught up at the Masters, but played my own game and tried to get better at what I do. I been playing some like great golf in these events, but the scores haven't been where I wanted them. That's what golf is like sometimes. I think you really got to stay patient and keep working hard at the end of the day.

**Q. Presumably you know what you need to do to improve your game and also yourself and your body as an athlete as well.**

JOE LONG: Yeah, absolutely. I think if you keep on getting your technical stuff better, your mental stuff better, and physically stringer and better in the gym, that's all you can keep doing day by day, and just striving to improve.

And just most of all enjoy it. Keep enjoying the ride. If you're not enjoying it there is no point in doing it for sure.

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