

# The 150th Open

Press Conference

Wednesday, 13 July 2022

**Robert MacIntyre**



STUART MOFFATT: It's my pleasure to welcome Robert MacIntyre to the interview room.

Robert, first Open in front of a home crowd. How special is that going to be?

ROBERT MACINTYRE: It's going to be brilliant. I've always dreamed of playing an Open Championship. Thankfully I've played two already, but to finally get one at the home of golf, St Andrews, is something I'll never forget.

**Q. You've played in two and done well in two, but so far this week, can you just sort of sum up how different this has been, just the huge occasion this week?**

ROBERT MACINTYRE: Yeah, it's been brilliant. I think everything is just taking a bigger step forward. From even in the players' lounge and stuff, it just keeps getting better and better.

I've played The Old Course so many times now, and I've never seen it the way it is now, firm and fast. It's only going to get firmer, which is a good thing. And it's its defence.

We've played it in Dunhill and stuff, and I thought The Old Course was relatively flat. This week I'm seeing slopes and the ball moving that I never thought was possible. But it's the way The Old Course was designed to be played.

**Q. You're obviously going to have a lot of home support. I'm guessing you're probably feeling it already. Some people may be a bit crushed by that, but are you the type that will get a spark off that, and it will really drive you on?**

ROBERT MACINTYRE: Last week I was disappointed in what happened. But this week it's no different than any other Open I've played. Obviously it's on home soil, but it's still the same test. You're playing against the same players.

Of course I'm probably going to be a wee bit more anxious, a wee bit more nervous at the start. Once I get into it and after I play the first couple of holes, I'm playing golf. I'm competing for the biggest tournament in the world. That's why everyone's here. And it's on a special golf course.

I've just got to put everything to the side, and hopefully it's going to be a memorable one.

**Q. When you say it's a special golf course, and I take it as a kid when you pictured yourself holding the Claret Jug, is it St Andrews that you think of, just because of what it means?**

ROBERT MACINTYRE: Yes, I mean, St Andrews is, for me, I've always said, if there was only one Open Championship that I played in my life, I would hope it's The Open at St Andrews. I think it's everyone, from watching Jack Nicklaus, Tiger Woods, guys like that, this is the ultimate Open Championship this week.

It's a dream come true for me, but it's something I've got to try to compete and win a golf tournament. It's not going to change whether it was here or Portrush my first year, it's still the same golf tournament. I'm still here to compete. But, no, obviously, this is a special, special place.

**Q. Hi, Bob. You had a very rapid rise. You've probably taken a bit of a step back this year a little bit. What do you need to do to get your mojo back again? Is it technical? Mental? What is it?**

ROBERT MACINTYRE: I don't really think -- obviously I'm not -- I've been on a pretty steep rise since I turned pro. I think, if this is my slump in my career, then I've done all right.

And there's not much. I'm striking it really well. Last week I would have said the draw kind of killed us. I mean, Xander, fair play to him winning because the way the starts were, he was up against it.

For me, it's just, I got the buzz back in Ireland. And I've been practicing hard the last kind of six, seven, eight weeks. I don't really know what -- obviously my personal side, my head hasn't been right with -- I mean, I'm getting down on myself pretty easily. Other than that, when it all clicks in and I start getting momentum going, I'll be back to myself.

I mean, the game, if anything, I've got more shots in the bag this year than I did last year. There's still a lot of the season to go. Yeah, you can just spark a run of six weeks, and then you're jumping back in the top ten in the Race to Dubai.

Golf's a funny game, and it's not been kind to me just now, but it will be.

**Q. Bob, you said earlier the course played firm and fast. Can you tell us, how many holes have you been driving that are helped by that? And is there an example that you've been taken by surprise with a ball running further than you imagined?**

ROBERT MACINTYRE: When we turned up here on Sunday, we played five out, five in. The first was slightly down wind. I was like what would you hit here, Mike? He was, like, 3-iron. Hit 3-iron, pulled it slightly. I hit another one straight down the middle. I get down there, the first one was down at the bottom. Second was over 300 yards with a 3-iron. I'm, like, this isn't the way we know it.

I've played here so many times now, and I remember we used to throw balls at the pins and it would stop, when I played amateur stuff, played the Dunhill. Now this week it's -- you're just hitting shots, like if you're in the rough, you can't throw onto the green. I actually said to Mike, when I'm in the rough, you have to tell me where the bunkers are. Because sometimes I've only got 170 yards, and I'm going to try to only hit it 100, pitch it 100 and it will take off.

It's going to be a lot more feel, a lot more imagination going into this week. Especially if you start talking pins, then you've got to really create angles to get near them. As fair play, someone is going to get hot at some point and run up a good score.

But for the majority of time, I'm getting messages this morning saying it's firming up again. And if you start talking pins away, then, okay, you're going to drive it next to the green, but you've got no chance of getting your pins.

**Q. Because of how different it is to how you've played here before, have you been able to turn what happened last week into a positive because you came here on Sunday and played some extra rounds?**

ROBERT MACINTYRE: Again, last week's last week. As much as I was disappointed after the round on Friday, once I got here on Sunday, you completely forget about what's happened.

It's the same with most golf tournaments. After a couple of days, you forget who finished second, who finished third. It's all about the next week. That's just the world we live in. It's all about moving forward and trying to get better.

I think this week's a new opportunity for me. Again, it's the biggest golf tournament in the world. Who can't be excited about this?

**Q. What's the support been like, friends and family wanting tickets? Is there anyone left at Open?**

ROBERT MACINTYRE: I've left that to Stoddie over there. He's been -- the thing, with it being at home, there's a lot of people wanting tickets here, there and everywhere. I pass it to Stoddie, and I take a backseat and try to not be on my phone because social media is a dangerous place at times.

I put my post out, and then it's shut down. I just spend time with my pals, maybe playing a game of Playstation or what not, but I try to not be on that too much.

**Q. Just about your experience of the course and the way that it's playing this year, does that mean that experience almost doesn't count for as much as it would have done in previous times that you've come here?**

ROBERT MACINTYRE: To be honest, I've never -- if I'm being perfectly honest, I've never played this golf course that well because I never knew how to play it. I've never seen the way the golf course was meant to be played. And this week I've seen how it's meant to be played. You start seeing different ways of getting balls to different pins.

So there's a big positive on that that I'm learning the golf course better this week, especially with it being firm. It's more so, if you start bailing out, if you start playing safe away from the bunkers, which the majority of people are going to do, then it leaves a horrible angle. That's the way it's been designed. The tighter line you take, the more risk, but the better reward.

So, yes, there's just different ways of playing it now. When it's so firm, you can attack it with driver. You can lay it back to create an angle or whatever you want.

**Q. Kind of a similar theme there. Can you actually remember your first round around here? Was it an unmitigated disaster or no?**

ROBERT MACINTYRE: You've probably got the numbers up. I'm sure it was. It wouldn't have been a good one. It would have been St Andrews Links, I would say.

Again, it's just playing so different. It's not the same golf course that we played as amateurs, as even the Dunhills, as I've played now. It's a completely different test of golf. And it's just going to play firmer. Well, I hope it will just keep baking out because, really, if it's not blowing 20, 25 mile an hour, the modern games, it's its only defence.

**Q. Have you allowed yourself to dream? And do you realise then five days from now you might have achieved the ultimate?**

ROBERT MACINTYRE: Yeah, I have. I've had that dream since I was a wee boy. When I was driving in on Sunday, that's the first time I've ever had goose bumps coming to St Andrews. I always drove into town, and it's like, oh, we're in St Andrews.

But when I came in from above the town and I had the music on, and I actually had goose bumps. I was like, wow, this is just -- this is different. This is what, as I said at the start, if I was ever to play just one Open Championship, it would have been here.

I've not had the best of times here, but it's just different. The Open Championship in here, again, it's the biggest golf tournament that you can play in.

**Q. After the Scottish Open, you said you were going to go away and talk to some people about a few things. Was that just with your team? And what exactly was it you discussed?**

ROBERT MACINTYRE: Yeah, that's the people I speak to about my golf, the team and family. Again, you get so many outsiders trying to give you advice. I had a message last week that I laughed at when I got it.

Everyone's got their opinions, but the reason I've got the people in my team to help me is because I think they're the best for me. It's as simple as that.

I won't go into what's been discussed because it's just the things that we discuss is what we discuss. It's how we get better. There's a couple of things that we're going to try to do, more mentally than anything. The game's here. I can hit it the same way the majority of guys out here can do it.

Again, it's just another golf course. You've just got to figure out -- I'm not going to -- it's just a message that I just laughed at. The people on my team know what's going on.

**Q. You were mentioning goosebumps. I just want to encourage you because when John Daly won The Open, when he turned round just at the A-92 and saw the SPAR and everything, he said he had goosebumps and he knew then he was going to do well. I hope you have the same good fortune.**

ROBERT MACINTYRE: I hope so myself. It's just because of the -- I mean, I've watched The Open on the BBC since I was a wee boy. It was just so different. And it was on from early and I watched till the last thing at night.

It was just something that you dream of playing a golf tournament like this here. Do you expect to do it? No, not a chance. It only comes around every now and again. To get the chance is when you realise the opportunity you've gotten.

Again, if I play well, I don't see why I can't do something in this

golf tournament again that I have done the last couple of years. I know how to play links golf. It's just if my game turns up at the right times, I don't see why we can't have a good week.

**Q. Bob, you can be quite tough on yourself at times, and you admit that. How important is it to get back to playing golf with a smile on your face?**

ROBERT MACINTYRE: That's the goal this week. That's the main mental goal this week is to try -- there's going to be a few triggers we're going to do out on the golf course to try and -- just it's more acceptance of I'm going to get it wrong. Mike's going to get it wrong at some point. But it's about moving on.

As much as I got annoyed, it's just, oh, well, we'll just deal with what's next. It's something that, since I've come back from COVID, it's just been something that I lose my head too quickly. I think that's been part of the problem, the main problem with why I've not been performing the way I've wanted to this year.

There's ways around it. There's ways to fix it. Good golf normally takes care of that.

**Q. You are Scottish and you are playing in Scotland, home of golf. What makes you believe that Scotland is the home of golf?**

ROBERT MACINTYRE: It just is. It's where the game started. It's where it was created. It's something that -- I don't know how to answer that. It's just we've been brought up playing the game. It's a game that I've loved. It's a game that I've played since I was small.

But, yeah, Scotland is the home of golf. It's as simple as that.

STUART MOFFATT: On that note, we can bring things to an end. Robert, thanks for your time this morning and very best of luck this week.

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