

The 150th Open

Mixed Zone

Thursday, 14 July 2022

Ian Poulter



Q. (Indiscernible) was a pretty eventful round. How would you describe it?

IAN POULTER: From the first tee shot?

Q. (Indiscernible) a bit of everything.

IAN POULTER: Had a decent mix. Trying to hit it down that left half of the 1st and hit a tall pole is not really what you want. When I walked off that 1st tee, is it Ian James Finch or what could this be? It was 5 feet from out of bounds.

The barrier was in the way, took a drop, and got off to a decent start after that really. Played nice, plenty of chances. And a Brucie bonus on 9 from about 150 feet I'd estimate. You don't ever hole those putts. Two-putt from there is a pretty good feat, but obviously rolling one in is a nice bonus.

Gave a couple back with a couple of silly three-putts, but it's not easy. It's not easy putting into the wind from 70, 60, 50 feet over little ridges. And it's hard to get it close to some of those pins if you haven't got the perfect yardage.

Q. Of course there are a few boos when you're on the 1st tee.

IAN POULTER: Didn't hear one.

Q. So it didn't affect you? People putting two and two together (indiscernible) --

IAN POULTER: I actually thought I had a great reception on the 1st tee, to be honest. All I heard was clapping.

Q. A little bit of heckling as you went around. Did you hear that?

IAN POULTER: Oh, my gosh, I have heard not one heckle. In three weeks, I've heard nothing. What have you heard?

Q. Absolutely none.

IAN POULTER: You walked 18 holes. Not one noise. You lot can write whatever you like about being heckled and booing. You've walked 18 holes. Did you hear one comment? You can write whatever you like but --

Q. (Indiscernible) the purse?

IAN POULTER: I thought there was a couple of thousand on the tee. So they obviously drowned out the one.

Q. Has your reception been the same from your fellow players?

IAN POULTER: I've heard great comments, great talks with everyone. We might have a difference of opinion, but they're my friends. You play golf with these guys for 20-plus years or 10, 15 years, you've been part of many teams with them.

Even if they have a difference of opinion, that's that. We all have opinions, right? We're still friends, whatever the landscape is and wherever you're playing golf.

Q. Is there a universal talk amongst yourselves (indiscernible) that isn't there some way to figure this out?

IAN POULTER: I would hope so. I would hope so, but cleverer people are obviously at the top of the tree than I am. I left school at 15. I would have thought clever people could figure this out, clearly not.

Q. Your reaction to what the R&A said yesterday?

IAN POULTER: Purposely haven't looked at all. So I don't want to know. You can tell me, I'm not going to listen. I'm here to play golf. This could probably be my last Open Championship at St Andrews. So I'm trying to enjoy it despite the questioning.

I'm staying out of the way. I'm not reading social media. I just want to play golf, right? I can only do my job. If I listen to a lot of nonsense, then I'm going to get distracted. That's never going to be good for me.

I'll leave it to the clever people to figure stuff out, and I'll just play golf.

Q. Has the difference of opinion with your fellow golfers, has that affected your preparations going into this or going around the course at all?

IAN POULTER: Not at all. I shot 3-under. I was quite happy. I was nice and relaxed.

Q. Ian, notwithstanding what may or may not have been heckling on the 1st tee, have you noticed any change in public opinion towards you? Social media, on the course?

IAN POULTER: Social media, you will always get interesting comments from those brave people behind the screens, right? Because they do. Whatever you do, if you do something nice, there will always be a poor comment from somebody that didn't like what you did, even if it was a charity something, right?

It's just inevitable. It's just the nature of the beast with social media. That's why the level of bullying that happens on social media is right there in front of everyone.

Were you on the 1st tee? I didn't hear anyone boo.

Q. There's video of it. You can't hear them.

IAN POULTER: Was the microphone 150 yards down the hole? I didn't hear anything. You was on the 1st tee. Did you hear it?

Q. I wasn't on the 1st tee. (Indiscernible).

IAN POULTER: OK, OK. We always have one out of several thousand people that say something silly most days.

Q. Have you expected any kind of antipathy from the public as a tradeoff?

IAN POULTER: Long word. You're going to have to explain that. What does antipathy mean?

Q. Hostility, unease.

IAN POULTER: Sorry. Have I -- no, not really, to be honest.

Q. But have you expected it?

IAN POULTER: No, I shouldn't.

Q. Ian, it's interesting what you say about friendships and things because I think there's a perception that maybe some friendships have been ruined by this. Some of the other players, and again, you may not listen to this stuff, and I appreciate that, have been quite forthright in their opinions about LIV. That's not been your experience? You haven't noticed any opposite attitudes amongst your peers?

IAN POULTER: Not one. Again, as I say, you can have a difference of opinion on how the landscape lies with it all, but

that should never get in the way of a friendship that you have.

I don't really know -- I know a couple of people have, but never directed in my direction. I've always had respect for all my peers that I play golf with all the time, and I don't think that's going to change one bit.

So even the people that have been vocal have been pretty decent to me. So whether they accept that I'm an old fart or not and let him go about his merry business the way he does, I don't know. I've only had good comments.

Even Thomas Bjorn, of all people. Thomas is Thomas. He's extremely vocal. We disagree, but we're friends, right? It's nice that we have that level of respect between golfers and as friends.

Q. Ian, going back a few years before social media, do you think Old Tom Morris might be turning in his grave a little bit at what's happened here in professional golf over the past couple of months.

IAN POULTER: I can barely remember before social media let alone going back 120 years.

Q. Do you think he's turning in his grave, though?

IAN POULTER: I have no idea.

Q. What do you make of Tiger's comments that you turned your back on the game?

IAN POULTER: Whose comments?

Q. Tiger's comments during the week.

IAN POULTER: I haven't read. I'm not here to comment on other people's comments. I haven't looked at comments this week. I haven't read any articles this week. It's for everyone else to comment on.

Q. After last week, Ian, were you -- you didn't actually do your best.

IAN POULTER: No, I didn't. That was not very good, was it?

Q. Were you surprised that you did so well? You left some out on the golf course as well.

IAN POULTER: I wasn't surprised. I was deeply disappointed with how I handled everything myself last week from a perspective of losing focus out on the golf course more than anything else.

I don't play golf very well distracted, so having levels of

distraction there is never easy. So separating myself away from that this week has obviously been a good thing and not let in certain comments or just general noise affect you.

Q. Is that the reason why you're not reading transcripts and listening to what other people are saying?

IAN POULTER: Again, we have a difference of opinion, and I have read some comments from a lot of you guys, and I disagree. So we can agree to disagree and there's a lot of negative comments. It's not nice reading negative comments. So until we have a fair level of media, then don't read it.

Q. Can I just ask about the 9th? Did you actually take a (indiscernible)?

IAN POULTER: I did bizarrely. As flat as that green is and from 150 feet, I kind of hit it two cups out to the right. If you can ever figure a line of two cups to the right, I knew it might wander a hair right to left through the middle of the putt.

Look, anything inside 6 feet from 150 feet is a helluva putt. So for it to drop is beyond lucky.

Q. (Indiscernible).

IAN POULTER: Oh really? No, I don't.

Q. Did you actually see it drop?

IAN POULTER: I did. I was joking. I was trying to have a bit of a sense of humour. I still have got a level of sense of humour in there somewhere.

Q. The longest putt you've ever made?

IAN POULTER: I mean, that by a mile, but I don't know -- I actually holed one at Woburn jokingly. I was doing a video shoot for OKX, and I holed it from about 100 feet. That was a couple of weeks ago. So 150 feet is a bit longer.

Q. 150 in an Open. Does that mean the stars are aligning, things aligning for you this week, 150 feet?

IAN POULTER: Hopefully I'm not turning in my grave on Sunday.

Q. Off to a great start. Has (indiscernible) changed for this week?

IAN POULTER: Not at all. I come in as focused as possible. I would love to be able to do something special on Sunday as we all, everybody competing in this 150th Open dream of holding that Claret Jug. Goes without saying that I'd love to be able to do that. Getting off to a nice start is good, but it's links golf.

There's a lot of golf to play.

Q. What did you say after the (indiscernible) person shouted on 17? You got a bit --

IAN POULTER: Can't remember.

Q. Was it criminally?

IAN POULTER: No, I said there's always one American in the crowd.

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