

The 150th Open

Mixed Zone

Friday, 15 July 2022

Tiger Woods



Q. You've given everything, as you always do. But it's not to be that you're playing through the weekend. Reflect on your two-day play for us?

TIGER WOODS: My two-day play is I made my share of mistakes. Struggled again today to get the feel of the greens. I left a lot of putts short again. Same as yesterday. And I had hit a couple of poor shots, end up in bad spots. And, again, I just never got anything going.

And I needed to shoot a low one today and I certainly did not do that. And hence I won't be around on the weekend.

Q. You received incredible ovation coming up from the 18. You looked emotional. Describe your emotions for us?

TIGER WOODS: Yes, it's very emotional for me. I've been coming here since 1995, and I don't know when -- I think the next one comes around in what, 2030 -- and I don't know if I will be physically able to play by then.

So to me it felt like this might have been my last British Open here at St Andrews. And the fans, the ovation and the warmth, it was an unbelievable feeling.

I understand what Jack and Arnold had gone through in the past. I was kind of feeling that way there at the end. And just the collective warmth and understanding. They understand what golf's all about and what it takes to be an Open champion.

And I've been lucky enough and fortunate enough to have won this twice here. And it felt very emotional, just because I just don't know what my health is going to be like. And I feel like I will be able to play future British Opens, but I don't know if I'll be able to play that long enough that when it comes back around here, will I still be playing?

Q. That was emotional on 18. Not the two days you wanted here, but did you enjoy playing The Open at The Old Course?

TIGER WOODS: I always enjoy playing The Open at The Old Course. It's special. The R&A set it up with some pretty tricky pins, Some new ones. Made it a little more difficult. Obviously a lot more difficult on me than the others.

But, again, anytime you get the chance to come back and play The Old Course in The Open, it's just special. It really is. As I said to Tim, I've been lucky enough to have been doing this since 1995. And I don't know if I'll be physically able to play another British Open here at St Andrews. I certainly feel that I'll be able to play more British Opens, but I don't know if I'll be around when it comes back around here.

So the warmth and the ovation at 18, it got to me. And I felt the guys stop there off the tee on 18, and it was just incredible. Just the amount of understanding and respect from all the people that are involved in this event, that come out in support of the players, the nods I was getting as the players were going out.

I looked over there, and Rory gave me a tip of the cap. J.T. did the same. It's just there's something to it that's just different.

Q. Sounds like a "who knows then" in terms of the Swilcan Bridge again. As you reflect on this year and everything you've achieved, what's your overriding emotion?

TIGER WOODS: I'm a little ticked that I'm not playing on the weekend. I certainly did not play good enough to be around. I wish I would have played better. I wish I had a little bit better break at the 1st hole yesterday and maybe started off a little better. But that's just kind of how it all went from there. Just never really kind of materialized.

I fought hard. And unfortunately I just could never turn it around. I struggled with the green speeds again today. And I could never hit putts hard enough. I was leaving them short again. So consequently I didn't make enough birdies.

Q. After two days of tough rounds, is St Andrews the favourite course for you still?

TIGER WOODS: It still is. This is my favourite golf course. I fell in love with it back in 1995. And it hasn't changed. I just love how it can be played in so many different ways. And, again, today, we had winter this morning and we had summer this afternoon. So it's just the way it goes around here.

Yesterday I just absolutely pummelled a drive at 14 and hit it over 400 yards. And it was down off the right. The next thing you know, my second shot's in off the left. It did a complete

180.

And we're all looking at each other going, what is going on here? Some of us were talking about that at breakfast this morning. Like, this golf course is something else, how it just changes.

But still, the ovation I got at 18 is something I'll always remember just because I don't know if I'll ever be able to play another one again, here. Future ones, yes, but I don't know if I'll be able to be around for the next one.

Q. Japanese fans are worrying about your retirement. Can you give us a message and say no?

TIGER WOODS: I'm not retiring from the game. But I don't know if I will be physically able to play back here again when it comes back around. I'll be able to play future British Opens, yes, but eight years' time, I doubt if I'll be competitive at this level.

It's a struggle just playing just the three events I played this year. That in itself was something I'm very proud of. I was able to play these three events, considering what has transpired.

Hopefully we do more hard work and give myself some more chances next year to play a few more events.

Q. Can I ask you about coming off the 17th green, walking to the 18th tee, was it in your mind to possibly stop on the Swilcan Bridge then?

TIGER WOODS: No. I was just thinking about a 5-wood or 3-wood. Hit 5-wood yesterday, got there and rolled back. Today the wind has switched and we got a little moisture on the ground. So now it's possibly 3-wood.

I watched guys yesterday hit iron over the green, into the back edge of the green. And Fitzzy's over there having a conversation -- is it a 7-wood or a 3-wood? I'm over here having a conversation whether it's a 5-wood or a 3-wood. And that's all I was thinking about, which one I was going to commit to. And I committed to just chipping a 3-wood down there.

As I was walking off the tee, I felt the guys stop, and I looked around, where the hell is Joey? He stopped back there, so I gave him the club. That's when I started to realize, hey, that's when I started thinking about, the next time it comes around here I might not be around.

Q. The tears started to show up then?

TIGER WOODS: No, not then. As I walked further along the fairway, I saw Rory right there. He gave me the tip of the cap. It was a pretty cool -- the nods I was getting from guys as they

were going out and I was coming in, just the respect, that was pretty neat. And from a players' fraternity level, it's neat to see that and feel that.

And then as I got into the shot -- or closer to the green, more into the hole, the ovation got louder and got -- you could feel the warmth and you could feel the people from both sides. Felt like the whole tournament was right there.

And they all had appreciated what I've done here for the years I've played -- I've won two championships here -- my British Open success and all my times I've enjoyed here in Scotland and playing, I felt like it just came to a head right there as I was walking to my golf ball.

Q. Different people it gets them different ways. Did you have a gasp in your throat? Was there a tear in your eye?

TIGER WOODS: I had a few tears. I'm not one who gets very teary-eyed very often about anything. But when it comes to the game and the passing on of -- just the transition, I was lucky enough in '95 to watch Arnold hit his 1st tee shot in the second round as I was going to the range.

And I could hear Jack playing his last one -- I was probably about four holes behind him. But just to hear the ovations getting louder and louder and louder.

I felt that as I was coming in. The people knew that I wasn't going to make the cut at the number I was. But the ovations got louder as I was coming home. And that to me was -- it felt, just the respect. I've always respected this event. I've always respected the traditions of the game.

I put my heart and soul into this event over the years. And I think the people have appreciated my play in the event. I've won it three times. And to have Peter Dawson say it all three times was pretty neat.

Life moves on. And I think that's what people understand. And they knew my circumstances this year, of just playing, period. I was very lucky to have had a great team around me to get me to where I was physically able to play three times this year and very thankful to all of them for getting me to this spot.

Q. At the Masters you talked about how much you looked forward to this tournament. Have you given any thought to what you're looking forward to? Are you circling anything in the future? What is next for you?

TIGER WOODS: I have nothing, nothing planned. Zero. Maybe something next year. I don't know. But nothing in the near future. This is it. I was just hoping to play this one event this year.

And I was lucky enough, again, got three events in. And they're all majors. So I feel very fortunate to have had the things happen this way and the struggles I've been through to get to this point.

Q. Could you see yourself trying to play more going into majors next year, just to give yourself...

TIGER WOODS: I understand all that. I understand being more battle hardened, but it's hard just to walk and play 18 holes. People have no idea what I have to go through and the hours of the work on the body, pre and post, each and every single day to do what I just did.

That's what people don't understand. They don't see. And then you think about playing more events on top of that, it's hard enough just to do what I did.

Q. Did you think you'd ever play here recreationally? Do you think you'll ever come back here on a holiday?

TIGER WOODS: I don't know. I'm sure my son will probably want me to come back here and play. I was fortunate enough to have gotten an honorary membership to The R&A. I have my locker here right when you walk into the left here. That's pretty neat.

And because of that I'm able to get a tee time.

(Laughter).

So that could happen.

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