

The 151st Open

Mixed Zone

Thursday, 20 July 2023

Michael Stewart



Q. Obviously 3-under, terrific.

MICHAEL STEWART: Yeah, good. After the start, yeah, I was so nervous on that first tee, but I hit a hit a great tee shot. Played the hole not too bad after that. I missed a tiddler putt and played pretty scrappy there on the second, made another bogey, but almost like the two bogeys settled me down a little bit. I don't know.

Then once I got through the third hole, I felt absolutely fine. Rode my luck a little bit in the middle, hit some really quite poor tee shots, got really lucky on 7 and 8, and nice to get out of there with two pars.

And then again, I rode my luck a bit later in the back nine. But, yeah, played really good. Holed some good putts. Just delighted. The atmosphere is just incredible.

Q. Even at the end there, after 9:00 still people there cheering, which is fantastic.

MICHAEL STEWART: Yeah, Brandon hit it great, credit with him, as well, and there was quite a few folk there watching me, so was a nice little crowd going, sort of from 1 and they followed us all the way through. Then we got some hangers-on at the end, as well, there finishing their day. It was great. I had such a good day.

I hadn't teed off yet when McIlroy's group came down on the 3rd and it was just like -- it was kind of like being here when Tiger was here. You could see the buzz on the fairway just to see the people and I thought, this is it now.

Q. We've had 10s there, 9s, 8s, whatever.

MICHAEL STEWART: Yeah, I don't take the most strategic approach. I aim down the left and just hammer it as hard as I can basically. Kind of talked about it the last eight hit it left and keep it left the bunkers it's okay in there.

You can almost get it down onto 1 and play at the corner, and if you get a good enough lie you can maybe get something close to the green. But if it moves back on the wind, which means I was in a good position and it leaves you a chance to get it on the green.

Q. You talked about being nervous, but you certainly didn't show it because that was one of the best tee shots I've watched there on that first hole.

MICHAEL STEWART: Yeah, but I think what settled me -- well, I say settled me. I was really, really nervous and then Brandon got a huge ovation, sort of like kind of Ryder Cup style, riled the crowd up a little bit more, and hit a great tee shot. It kind of calmed me down because I was laughing, and then I just zoned in and probably hit the best tee shot I've arguably ever hit because I was -- I know they weren't shaking, but I felt my legs were shaking.

It's one of those ones you just feel like as soon as you put the tee in the ground, everything feels like it's moving. But I know that everyone is going to go through that. Like everyone has had their first Open or whatever their big tournament is, and guys that are experienced are going to maybe not be quite as nervous as I was, but they're going to be nervous.

Q. Three shots off the lead; you would have taken that wouldn't you after the first day?

MICHAEL STEWART: Yeah. I don't know, what's --

Q. 5-under.

MICHAEL STEWART: 5-under, so two back. I thought somebody maybe shot 6.

Yeah, good. Obviously there's so much golf to play. Look at who's at the top of the leaderboard there. Tommy has played some amazing golf the last year, and he's a local boy. He's going to be tough to beat this week.

I'm just going to try and enjoy it as best I can. Today I didn't have a number in mind or nothing. I just tried to just, pure cliché, isn't it, just one shot at a time, go to the next one, all that sorta stuff.

Exactly, so I'm just going to see if I can do the same tomorrow, great. If not, I'm going to have a blast doing what I'm doing tomorrow because that was the most fun I've had on the golf course in a long, long time.



