

# The 151st Open

Mixed Zone

Saturday, 22 July 2023

**Michael Stewart**



**Q. You must have been delighted with that, were you not?**

MICHAEL STEWART: Yeah, no. I had an average day to be honest. I scrapped like a madman. The wind seemed to be kind of the story of the day.

Didn't quite strike my drive, put it in the trap, holed a great putt for par, and then kind of seemed anytime I mis-struck something, it found trouble, which is going to happen when the weather is -- I'm not going to say -- the weather is nowhere near as bad as I thought it was going to be; put it that way.

The golf course today was probably the most scorable of the three days, and fairways are a bit softer, greens are a bit softer, pins felt like they were gettable for the most part. But I just didn't quite have it in terms of my long game.

But yeah, delighted to scrap, what, level par? I don't know, still 1-under par or something for the tournament, so I feel good, but I'm just knackered because when you don't quite have it you feel like it's more of a grind and you're mentally more tired and stuff, and then obviously I just really wanted to hole that putt on 18, but it didn't happen.

**Q. Is that something you've always been good at, scrapping like a madman?**

MICHAEL STEWART: Yeah, very much so, yeah, on the golf course that is.

Yeah, my long game has not been notoriously the strength of my game until the last couple years with my long game, especially off the tee. I've been great off the tee for such a long time, but this week I feel like for the first time in quite a while I haven't quite had it off the tee.

I think it's the way the golf course is. You're asked to hit a lot of dogleg left holes with wind off the left and a lot of sort of holes where it leaks to the right and the wind is off the right.

It's just a demanding golf course. You've just got to avoid the bunkers, and every time had I hit it in the rough today I just seemed to get a heavy, heavy lie.

I suppose just don't hit it in the rough then, isn't it.

**Q. It seemed like it could have easily got away from you.**

MICHAEL STEWART: Yeah, it's funny because I got on the fifth tee and it looked -- I mean, it looked -- I did hit it very wayward and got lucky, but when I got on that tee I set of flags like afar, the wind was meant to be sort of kind of off the left into on that tee and the flags afar were blowing like right to left.

I looked at the flags on the grandstands here and they looked like they were blowing the normal way and I was like, I don't really know what I'm doing here. I tried to hit hard draw thinking I would just trust the wind's in out of the left, which is where it's been, but when it got up and I seen the flight, the wind couldn't have been in off the left. It must have been hard off the right. So that made me look -- I mean, I got so, so lucky there.

Look, I though I hit a really terrible shot, but in actual fact I don't feel like I hit that bad a shot. It's just playing golf. On links courses when you have grandstands that have tees it's so new for me, but you're just used to like everything is exposed, you know exactly where the wind is coming from.

Whereas on quite a few of these tees they're sheltered and you don't quite feel it, and then you kind of second-guess yourself a little bit.

Yeah, it's just a different test.

**Q. How much is next year on your mind?**

MICHAEL STEWART: I honestly don't even know how many -- if you could tell me, how many spots --

**Q. 10 and ties is it? Top 10 next year get in.**

MICHAEL STEWART: Yeah, obviously I would love to play again. The experience has been better than I could ever have imagined. I mean, I was saying to my caddie, you're used to the challenge. You have like four or five guys and a dog that come out and watch. You don't have to wait for Rory McIlroy behind you to hit a shot for the crowd to applaud or whatever.

It was a cool experience today playing in front of him. I know -- obviously I wasn't playing with him, but the crowds are wild.



On the par-3s that you're close to you need to -- a couple shots where he's lined up next to you when you're teeing off, you need to make sure that you're not hitting when his ball is landing on the green.

**Q. When you were going up the second I saw you look across just to see what was going down...**

MICHAEL STEWART: Just to soak it in, yeah. It's just cool. I mean, he obviously wouldn't remember who I am, but he was a year older than me in the European under-16 stuff and he obviously played men's golf at such a young age.

Yeah, I mean, he just came out of the gym and I was going in the gym, and I thought, that's Rory McIlroy. Jon Rahm was walking out as well. It's cool you're playing the same event as these guys, but overall I kind of looked over and took in just how far he hit his drive there on 1, and I thought, I'd better get back in the gym.

**Q. It sounds like you've had a good week.**

MICHAEL STEWART: Yes, but in all honesty I am disappointed the last two days with the way that I've struck the ball. I'm not disappointed at all with the where I am on the leaderboard. But I feel like there's a lot more of my game that I can -- the course is gettable if you've got your long game. Unfortunately I just haven't quite had it the last couple days. The first day I got away with a couple of breaks obviously, but I felt like for the most part I was in control. Yesterday again felt pretty good.

But obviously got a bad break on 15, and 15 again today got me. It's that kind of golf course.

**Q. I've seen a few people on social media draw the Michael Block comparison in terms of the backing if you like. Do you feel that you're playing for the rest of the guys, the likes of like Ryan Campbell and so on when you're out there, or is it just...**

MICHAEL STEWART: Yeah and no. Yes because -- like obviously you reflect and go, this may have not been your career at one stage, but I also now think there's nothing else that I can do. So it's one of those really strange ones.

Yeah, just honestly, just trying to soak it all in, but I'm so tired. Once you come off of that -- these late tee times get me.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports.