

# The 151st Open

Press Conference

Saturday, 22 July 2023

**Brian Harman**



MIKE WOODCOCK: We'll make a start. We'll welcome our third-round leader, Brian Harman, to the interview room. That's after a 12-under par total of 201 and a 69 today.

Obviously you played really well today again. You got off to I guess a slow ish start but then bounced back really nicely. You must be very pleased with how it's gone.

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, start was tough. Hit a couple loose shots. It was nice to turn around and have a nice back nine.

MIKE WOODCOCK: Looking at tomorrow, you've got yourself in a fantastic position.

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, I'm not focused on it. Just going to try to get a good night's sleep and get out and play a really nice 18 holes.

**Q. Obviously you're playing in front of a very pro-Fleetwood crowd today. Was it hard to block that out knowing they were pulling for the other guy?**

BRIAN HARMAN: Tommy and I have been friends for a long time. I knew he was from around here, so I'm not saying I was totally prepared for it, but I knew that he would have a lot of support. It's nice to see so many ^ fervor-ish fans for Mr. Tommy.

**Q. What's a good night's sleep look like for you when you're leading a golf tournament?**

BRIAN HARMAN: Hopefully about 10 hours' worth.

**Q. Is it hard to fall asleep when you're in this position? Obviously a major is a little different.**

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, I imagine -- the thoughts come and go, so we'll do our best and sleep as much as we can.

**Q. When you started with a couple bogeys and you saw Jon Rahm put up that number, you said yesterday that your mind sometimes gets going. Where was your mind at that point?**

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, I mean, it would have been really

easy to let the wheels start spinning and really kind of let it get out of control, but I just kind of doubled down on my routine and knew I was hitting it well, even though I hadn't hit any good shots yet.

Staying patient out there is paramount. Sometimes it's a lot harder than others. But really proud of the way that I hung in there.

**Q. You said yesterday you didn't think you could pick your nickname. Wondering what you think of the tabloids calling you The Butcher of Hoylake.**

BRIAN HARMAN: I like that one better than the Harmanator. That made me chuckle. Someone texted me that yesterday. That's funny.

**Q. How big was the par save on 18 just to maintain the five-stroke lead?**

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, I wasn't really worried about trying to maintain a lead. I was just trying to make a par. Not fired up, but very pleased to make a par. I got sort of a funky break off the tee. I didn't hit a great shot, but it went into a really bad lie where I couldn't chase it down the fairway. Just kind of made a mess of it.

So to salvage a 5 I was just happy with a 5.

**Q. You mentioned it was nice to see so many feverish fans, but I guess as a competitor, do you relish that kind of environment where you can maybe show them something, too?**

BRIAN HARMAN: You know, I'd be lying if I didn't hear some things that weren't super nice today towards me. I hear them, but at the same time, I don't try to let that influence the decision I'm about to make.

**Q. What did you hear?**

BRIAN HARMAN: It's unrepeatable. (Smiling).

**Q. I wonder if you've been out to eat, and has anybody recognised you at all this week anywhere in town?**



BRIAN HARMAN: I took a selfie with a person at the Silk Road restaurant last night. It's a fantastic restaurant over there.

**Q. It seems to me that every time I looked at you this week when you were on the greens you were holing putts. Would you agree that you have been putting extremely well, and is there any particular reason why you've putted so well?**

BRIAN HARMAN: I think today it would probably be statistically the worst putting I've had this week. I struck it really nice on the back nine. I had a couple looks that I thought I had a really good chance at.

But yeah, I've had a really nice week putting. That's kind of been my MO throughout my career, just kind of a really good short game, good putter.

Yeah, I expect to hole putts. These greens have been fantastic, and I've had a good line for them so far.

**Q. Are you the type of individual who will visualise yourself tonight holding that Claret Jug tomorrow or will you blank all of those things out?**

BRIAN HARMAN: No. Like I said, you'd be foolish not to envision, and I've thought about winning majors for my whole entire life. It's the whole reason I work as hard as I do and why I practise as much as I do and why I sacrifice as much as I do.

Tomorrow if that's going to come to fruition for me, it has to be all about the golf. It has to be execution and just staying in the moment.

**Q. Would you consider yourself underrated?**

BRIAN HARMAN: I don't. I don't care. I enjoy what I do. I like the grind. I've always appreciated the hard work that golf takes, and for me that's satisfying enough. I don't need anyone to think one way or the other about me.

**Q. What's your favourite part of the hard work?**

BRIAN HARMAN: Someone once told me one time you should do the things that make you lose track of time, and for me, a lot of times when I'm practising hitting balls or putting when I'm at home, I lose track of time. That's how I know that I really enjoy it.

For me, it's just an enjoyable profession that I have.

**Q. Does the experience at the Scottish Open help you with your game at Hoylake?**

BRIAN HARMAN: Certainly helps with the adjustment, getting sleep and getting kind of in a rhythm of how it feels

over here. Damn sun stays up for 18 hours a day over here it seems like. So getting used to that and just getting a feel for kind of everything.

I enjoyed the Scottish Open a lot this year.

**Q. A bit of a stretch, because it involves cricket, but has anyone heard you say you look very much like Ricky Ponting?**

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, I hear a lot of Ricky, Ricky's out there. I yeah, I look like him. Handsome fella.

**Q. He's your size; very gritty. Do you like cricket?**

BRIAN HARMAN: Okay, so when we first started coming over here, my first trip here it was always on TV, Sky Sports cricket. I think I would be the typical American cricket fan in that -- what's the one where they just try to knock the hell out of the thing all the time? Over 20? I enjoy that where the guy was just knocking it over the fence.

**Q. You have a rough idea of what's going on when they're playing or do you just like the bashing?**

BRIAN HARMAN: Well, they're running back and forth. Is that a run every time? I'm getting there. I've got an open mind. I like it.

**Q. What do you consider your biggest achievement in golf to this point?**

BRIAN HARMAN: That's a good question. This year will be the 12th straight year that I've made the FedExCup Playoffs. I'm not sure how many guys have done that. I'm proud of that.

**Q. Can you just give a quick rundown of your high school golf career and how good you were at that point?**

BRIAN HARMAN: I don't think I was a better golfer. My mental approach to it, I was much more confident and much more willing to take on shots. I've spent the majority of my professional career trying to rekindle some of that.

**Q. Trying to rekindle some of the freedom?**

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, just the -- when you get to harder golf courses everything constricts -- the greens are more firm, the fairways are more narrow, so it kind of lends itself to more anxiety.

Whereas back then it was just wide-open freedom. It's awe fun way to play, with no inhibitions.

**Q. And you were very confident because you had so much**



**success?**

BRIAN HARMAN: Well, there just wasn't anybody that could beat me back then, and now there's thousands of really, really good golfers.

Inevitably as you progress through the game you have periods where you don't play well. That's just part of the deal. I like my ability to -- I've been able to get off the mat a lot. I've played a lot of really good golf, and I've played a lot of bad golf, and I've been able to come back from some bad stretches, which I'm really proud of, too.

**Q. Your performances on the greens, your putting this week, the stats are astonishing. Can you talk about what you've done on the greens this week?**

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, I've always been a pretty good putter. Just been trying lately to get a little bit more consistent. My ball-striking has gotten a lot better over the last couple years and my putter took a little bit of a dip, which is probably some correlation there.

I've spent more time practising my irons and less time practising putting, so, yeah, good day of putting tomorrow would be really nice.

**Q. What was the most important shot you hit today and why?**

BRIAN HARMAN: Either the 3-wood into the green on 5 to make birdie; the putt to save par on 7 I would think.

I had sort of righted the ship, and then I hit a loose one off 7 tee box and was able to make par keep me from going backwards again.

**Q. Do you think the patience that hunting requires has helped anything about your golf?**

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, the patience and the strategy for sure. When I go out turkey hunting I can spend all day out there, and like I said, hunting is something else that I do that makes me lose track of time.

**Q. Is there any game that you were proud of that you stalked all day?**

BRIAN HARMAN: We've been on some really cool elk hunts out in Colorado, really tough hunting, tons of elevation, and then after we harvest the animal, having to pack it out. You talk about six to eight hours packing this thing up and down these mountains.

Yeah, it's just something I really enjoy doing. I enjoy putting

meat in the freezer. Like I said, we eat wild meat a lot at home.

It's cool to know where my meat comes from. We do it a lot and I love it.

**Q. Is that something you did really young as a kid or did you come to it later in life?**

BRIAN HARMAN: My dad used to take me hunting, but we would always -- we always made it a point that I knew how to skin a deer when I was eight years old. It was all part of it, start to finish. I enjoy it start to finish.

Back home at the hunting place that I own, we plant food for the animals. We have prescribed fire for the animals. Everything we do is for the wildlife, and then when we harvest it, we respect it and take care of it and feed our families with it.

MIKE WOODCOCK: Brian, best of luck tomorrow. Thank you.

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