

# The 151st Open

Press Conference

Sunday, 23 July 2023

**Brian Harman**



MIKE WOODCOCK: I'm delighted to welcome the Champion Golfer of the Year, Brian Harman to the interview room.

Brian, congratulations on a tremendous performance throughout the week. You've played some fantastic golf. You putted so well. Your short game has been just electric this week.

Sum up what it means to you to win this great championship.

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, I'm over the moon. It was a tough last three days, really was. Being able to get some sleep was big last night. Sleeping on a lead like that is really difficult, so glad of the way I hung in there the last couple days.

Got off to a bad start both days and turned it around, so really happy with that.

**Q. Can you just take us through last night, what time you went to bed, was it difficult to sleep? What did you do this morning? It's a long wait until 2:15 in the afternoon.**

BRIAN HARMAN: So I got done 7:40 or so. Went and hit balls for about 25 minutes, putted for about 10 minutes, and went and had dinner up here.

Then had a session with my physical therapist and then ice bath for five minutes, and then I probably got to sleep at 11:30.

As far as being a bundle of nerves, I did pretty good.

**Q. You said after the Scottish Open that Scotland has the worst weather in the world. Were you tempted at all today to change that opinion?**

BRIAN HARMAN: You know, yesterday was supposed to be terrible, and I got out and the weather turned and it was fantastic weather, all things considered, yesterday.

Then today I'm looking at the forecast, and I'm like, what the hell do they know, and I get out here and it's Armageddon. It was bad. It was really tough.

I haven't historically done very good in the rain. It's just always bugged me. I was really proud of the way that I struck the ball

in the rain today.

**Q. I'm just wondering if as a treat and with your passion for hunting over the past few days, whether there will be a hunting trip to celebrate, whether you'll go out? Or seeing as you've won quite a lot of money today, is there money for a new rifle?**

BRIAN HARMAN: I'm a bow hunter, no new rifles. I had a nice week a couple weeks ago and I bought a new tractor for my hunting place, so I'll get home and I'll be on the tractor mowing grass in the next few weeks, so I'm excited about that.

**Q. So that's going to be the reward, you're going ride your tractor?**

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah. Just put my phone away and go get on the tractor.

**Q. Could you tell us a little bit more about your tractor, please?**

BRIAN HARMAN: I haven't seen it yet. It's on order. It's a 105 horse Kybota tractor and it's going to be a pretty one.

**Q. What colour?**

BRIAN HARMAN: Orange.

**Q. How many acres will you mow?**

BRIAN HARMAN: Let's see, we've got about 25 acres of food plots that need, and, gosh, I don't know how many miles of roads, but I'd call it probably 40 acres total that needs to get mowed.

**Q. I've never known an Open Champion to celebrate by mowing grass on a tractor --**

BRIAN HARMAN: I've got a lot of layers, man. I'm like an onion.

**Q. Will that be the place where you just lose yourself and come back down to earth from this, your ultimate sort of chill-out?**



BRIAN HARMAN: My family is up at a lake house in upstate New York, so I'm going to get there tomorrow evening and I'll spend three days with them, and we'll do some fishing and I'll get to spend some good time family.

So that's where I'll disappear, and take it from there.

**Q. How much was the tractor? How much did cost you?**

BRIAN HARMAN: Oh, gosh. I don't know. Probably -- I haven't told my wife how much I spent on it yet. (Laughter.)

**Q. Brian, did you speak with Kirby Smart last night? And if so, can you tell us how he helped you today?**

BRIAN HARMAN: No, I didn't speak with Kirby. I've been really impressed with the way that he's handled success, and so I've always kind of -- I just always pay attention when really successful people talk. There's always clues there as to how they feel.

I've always admired the fact that even with all the success that he's had, it's all about the next play, the next game, the next week of practice. He knows that the results come because of what you do in the trenches.

**Q. You didn't want to talk last night to one of the reporters about what you figured out with your putting. Can you talk about it now?**

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, I found this -- it's a silly looking mirror where it's got like a little better release pattern. I was just kind of cutting my putts too much. I spent a lot of time just feeling the ball, almost hitting like a baby draw with my putter, and it's been really, really good the last month or so.

**Q. Where did you get that and what made you think of it?**

BRIAN HARMAN: I picked it up on the putting green at some tournament over the years. There's all sorts of trinkets and different things up until Wednesday, so I saw it, liked it.

Hadn't been putting very good this year until last month or so, but I found that in my barn at my house and it made sense, and I started putting well with it.

**Q. Do you have it here this week?**

BRIAN HARMAN: I do, yeah.

**Q. Can you imagine what it's like to be a fan out there today in this drenching rain all day?**

BRIAN HARMAN: Well, normally they do such a great job of letting you know where your golf ball is because the applause

here is always great. They appreciate really good shots.

But since everyone is holding an umbrella it's hard for everyone to clap. There was a couple times I got up there and I was like, oh, that's better than I thought it was.

But the fans here have been incredible. My hats off to them. They packed the stands today. I damn sure wouldn't have been out watching golf today.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, sounded like from some of the fans that -- I haven't seen any beer carts, but there must be tons of them out there.

**Q. You played an amazing round. My question is at what point in time at your game do you think you can definitely make it to win The Open trophy?**

BRIAN HARMAN: There were fleeting thoughts throughout the day, but I told myself I wasn't going to let any of that come into my brain. So any time it came, I just thought of something else.

I really honestly didn't think about winning until I had the ball on the green on 18.

**Q. One of your best friends is Patton, who's 6'5"; your caddie I believe is 6'3" --**

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, it's unfortunate for me. Low amateur is 6'9". Yeah, fantastic, right?

**Q. Have you ever thought to yourself, why do I hang out with so many tall people?**

BRIAN HARMAN: I think it's just like a natural selection type thing. Like just the law of averages, I suppose.

**Q. Was there a shot that sort of stabilised you? For the second day in a row you had a little bit of wobble in the first three or four holes.**

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, the par-3, 6th, hit a really good 5-iron. I got it up there, made birdie after bogeying a pretty easy hole in 5.

**Q. You talked earlier in the week about wondering why you hadn't crossed the line more often in your career, and then you played one of the truly great performances here on links golf. How did that happen?**

BRIAN HARMAN: You know, I've always had a self-belief that I could do something like this. It's just when it takes so much

time it's hard not to let your mind falter, like maybe I'm not winning again.

I'm 36 years old. Game is getting younger. All these young guys coming out, hit it a mile, and they're all ready to win. Like when is it going to be my turn again.

It's been hard to deal with. I think someone mentioned that I've had more top 10s than anyone since 2017, so that's a lot of times where you get done, you're like, dammit, man, I had that one; it just didn't happen for whatever reason.

Yeah, to come out and put a performance like that together, like start to finish, just had a lot of control. I don't know why this week, but I'm very thankful that it was this week.

**Q. I remember speaking to Stewart Cink when he'd won in 2009, and he said he was going to spend the following week walking around his house trying to see where the Claret Jug looked best where to keep it. Is there any chance you're going to take the Jug out on the tractor?**

BRIAN HARMAN: The tractor might make it down to the farm one time just to show everybody, but I'll let my wife pick it out. She's got a much better eye for how to feature things than I do.

**Q. Could you tell us about that feeling when you actually -- we all know it's the most historic trophy in golf, to actually cradle it for the first time, to have it in your hands.**

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, it's pretty surreal. It really hasn't sunk in yet. Yes, it's really cool.

**Q. I see the way you're looking at it now.**

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, man, I'm not going to let it out of my sight for the time being for sure.

**Q. You had a couple bogeys early on Saturday and then again today. You showed some serious resilience. What was going through your mind particularly today after those two early bogeys because a lot of men in your position might have shown further weakness throughout your round but you held firm.**

BRIAN HARMAN: After I made the second bogey yesterday, a guy, when I was passing him, he said, Harman, you don't have the stones for this. That helped. (Laughter).

**Q. That was the motivation?**

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, that helped a lot. I think he was -- anyway, that helped.

Anyway, it helped snap me back into I'm good enough to do this. I'm going to do this. I'm going to go through my process, and the next shot is going to be good.

**Q. So it was a case of trying to prove any doubters wrong?**

BRIAN HARMAN: You know, I'm not going to give any more -- I shouldn't have given him credit right there.

Yeah, just the resilience, just knowing -- I knew I was going to make -- I figured at some point that I was going to hit bad shots.

Just with the weather and the scenario, you're going to hit bad shots. I knew that the way I responded to that would determine whether I'd be sitting here or not.

**Q. Which would you rather do, hunt for a long time the most rare animal that you could possibly come across and kill it, or win that thing?**

BRIAN HARMAN: No, I'm not hunting any rare animals. I would say I love to hunt. We do it, but I couldn't go hunting every day. I could play golf every day.

To win what I consider is the greatest prize in golf, it's as good as it gets.

**Q. Did you say just now that you didn't use a rifle?**

BRIAN HARMAN: No, I use a bow and arrow.

**Q. All the time?**

BRIAN HARMAN: Yes.

**Q. From what distance are you most deadly?**

BRIAN HARMAN: You wouldn't be want to be standing in front of me. I'm good out to about 80 yards, but I don't take a shot past 40.

**Q. That explains your short game.**

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, good pair of hands. (Laughter.)

**Q. I wondered what your thoughts are on the Ryder Cup and how your game might match up with some of your other compatriots.**

BRIAN HARMAN: I'm going to kick that can down the road a little bit. I'm going to enjoy this. The next thing for me will be our Playoffs, what I'll be looking forward to.

**Q. What do you bring to team golf?**



BRIAN HARMAN: I enjoy match play. I've done well in all the match play tournaments I've played in. Had a really good junior record and amateur record in match play. I enjoy the head-to-head competition.

So, yeah, I really enjoy match play.

**Q. If the golf ball does get rolled back, how do you think that would impact you? I know that the longer hitters think it might benefit them.**

BRIAN HARMAN: It depends on who you talk to. Some people say it'll help. The guys that hit it shorter -- I don't know how it helps a guy that hits it shorter. There hasn't been any -- there really hasn't been any change or golf course design that's helped a shorter hitter over the last 20 years, so I don't know how the next thing would help a shorter hitter.

The game is going longer. That seems to be the way it's going.

**Q. Curious, do you have anything specific in mind that you're going to drink out of that jug?**

BRIAN HARMAN: Guinness.

**Q. Tonight?**

BRIAN HARMAN: Tonight.

**Q. What specifically, how do you think life is going to change for you as The Open champion?**

BRIAN HARMAN: I don't see how it's going to -- I'll be in some better tee times. I'll have to do a couple more interviews at golf tournaments.

But I've got a great family. I've got hobbies that I really like. I have a very comfortable life that I enjoy.

I wouldn't want my life to change any.

**Q. Will you ever have to pay for a beer in the state of Georgia ever again?**

BRIAN HARMAN: I'll be buying beers when I go home.

**Q. You mentioned the good crowd support here at The Open. Obviously at all the venues. Have you given much thought to the idea that you'll be coming back here for a very long time to this tournament? They embrace their champions throughout history.**

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, I look forward to coming back for a really long time. This has always been -- growing up in

Georgia, obviously being a huge fan of golf, I've watched The Open Championship. We would wake up early and watch it.

I never knew how much I'd appreciate it until the first time I came I played in 2014. I just didn't know what to expect. You grow up in Georgia, it's all the Masters. It's all -- it's proximity.

But I came here and I was like, wow, man, this is unbelievable. The fans are incredible. Everyone understands golf over here. It was just a delight to play. Man, I'm stoked. Stoked to come back here.

**Q. This is your eighth Open. Four out of the first five were missed cuts, sixth last year. What has changed that has allowed you to improve your play in links golf?**

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, I missed those four cuts, I think I missed all of them by one. I played some okay golf, so it wasn't like I was over here hacking it to pieces, I just couldn't quite get comfortable, and I felt like maybe I rushed through it too much.

Then last year I finally felt like man, if I would have played a little bit better the first couple days, I could have been right there. I was excited to come back here this year.

I think coming over for the Scottish helped a lot getting ready and putting all my eggs in the basket of playing well here.

**Q. I was talking to Sepp Straka earlier and he said you don't hit it that short, actually --**

BRIAN HARMAN: I will let you all figure -- I don't hit it that short. I don't hit it that short.

**Q. He says that your putting is better than anyone else and you actually hit it medium distance, so what's the problem?**

BRIAN HARMAN: No problem. Right here. Ain't no problem.

**Q. There was a few boos on the first tee today. Why do you think that was?**

BRIAN HARMAN: Don't know. You had Fleetwood and Rory making a run. It's fine. Everybody has got their team they're rooting for.

Yeah, I heard them, and I don't hold any -- if they wanted me to not play well they should have been really nice to me.

**Q. You're The Open champion; you're a major champion; you're No. 10 in the world. Did you always think this could happen? And if you did, why?**

BRIAN HARMAN: I had a lot of success as a junior golfer. I won the U.S. Junior, and then as an amateur I was the No. 1 ranked amateur in the world for a good while, was the youngest American to get picked for the Walker Cup. I had success. Like I had the pedigree.

Then I got to college and it just kind of sputtered a little bit. I just didn't keep up with the -- I didn't keep up with the progression.

My pro career has been really good at times and not good at times.

Last year felt like I kind of found something a little bit, and yeah, man, I'm just -- I don't know. It's been great.

MIKE WOODCOCK: Brian, congratulations, thank you for joining us.

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