

The 152nd Open

Press Conference

Wednesday, 17 July 2024

Robert MacIntyre



ED HODGE: Delighted to be joined by the new Scottish Open champion, Robert MacIntyre. A special week at the Renaissance. Hoping to keep the positive vibes going into this week here at Royal Troon, Bob?

ROBERT MACINTYRE: Last week was obviously very, very special for a lot of people and my family and friends and staff, support staff of mine.

Yeah, a new week this week. Hopefully I can perform well and give it my best and have a chance coming in Sunday.

Q. One, what was the highlight of the celebration? Anybody reach out to you that you didn't expect? Kind of how were the last few days?

ROBERT MACINTYRE: No, not -- I mean, since we got here, there's been a lot of people coming up and saying well done and stuff, but no, it's just been the usual people. I'm not someone who ventures out and does anything wild. I've got a tight-knit group of friends and family and support network.

Obviously there's been a lot of stuff on social media from well-dones and stuff, but there's no one that's really stood out where I've gone, wow, I didn't expect that.

Q. You had a certain intensity last week. You talked all week about, I want this one, I want this one. Have you ever thought to yourself, what if I brought that same intensity to every golf tournament I played?

ROBERT MACINTYRE: Maybe, but I wouldn't be able to play as many golf tournaments if I brought that. Last week the intensity was high, but I felt so calm. I don't know what it was. There was obviously a lot of expectation with myself and my team, but outside that team there was zero expectation. It was just about me playing golf and enjoying myself.

My job was to give myself a chance going into Sunday, and I done that and managed to get over the line.

Q. On a scale of 1 to 10, describe that celebration on Sunday night.

ROBERT MACINTYRE: 10. Look, I'm not a big drinker, but

when you get moments like that that's a childhood dream and a lifetime goal and you've got family and friends there that have backed you since you were a young kid, I think it was quite right to go absolutely wild. I think we done a good job of that.

Q. What has it done for the expectation levels this week?

ROBERT MACINTYRE: Just the exact same as last week. There's no expectation for myself from my team around me other than give 110 percent. It's the same.

Obviously Monday we weren't here. We arrived late Monday. Yesterday played nine holes, front nine, and then today we'll play the back nine.

It's just go out there, scout out the golf course, see how it's playing, and just try and execute it as well as we can.

Q. Last week 25 years since a Scot won the Scottish Open, Colin Montgomerie; 25 years since a Scot won The Open, Paul Lawrie. Do you believe in fate? Can you do it again?

ROBERT MACINTYRE: It's possible. Tomorrow we'll start off from level par. I've got as much chance as everyone else in the field. Same Thursday last week, I had the same chance as everyone else.

It's just about getting in that position on Sunday and seeing where the cards fall. Obviously last week they fell my way. My job is to go out there, fight as hard as I can, try my best, and hopefully get in a position where I can just have a chance.

That's all I can ask myself, and that's the only bit of kind of anything that I want is just have a chance. If I do my job well enough and I hit the shots I see, execute them as well as I can, accept where they end up, then there's a chance.

Q. Well done on Sunday. Right from the start with you, from majors to the Ryder Cup now to winning your own Open, why do you perform so well on the big stage? Also, related to that, how's the home crowd going to help you this week?

ROBERT MACINTYRE: To be honest, I can't put a finger on why I do reasonably well when there's a lot of expectation or there's a lot of noise or it's a big event. It's just, again, I've been



brought up to fight for everything when everything's on the line.

I always say to Mike, in the most stressful situations on a golf course, there's no one else that can hit the golf ball for you. It's you. You can't ask someone to do it for you. You've just got to stand up, take the shot on.

I think that's one thing that -- obviously I love playing team sports, but that's one of the benefits playing an individual sport. It's on you, and I don't mind that.

Q. Just asking about the home crowd as well. You channeled it last week. Can you do the same this week?

ROBERT MACINTYRE: Look, they're there to support you. Probably last week, 90 percent, 95 percent of them are supporting you, and it's always nice. But again, they're here to watch me perform and perform hard, and that's all I can do, give it 110 percent and hopefully give them something to cheer about.

Q. What, if anything, did you learn about yourself last Open?

ROBERT MACINTYRE: I don't know. I didn't really learn anything I didn't know from before. I think the biggest eye opener was probably -- there's been a lot of learning experiences this year from -- if I didn't have the experiences at Myrtle Beach and the U.S. PGA, Canada wouldn't have happened, and if I didn't have them three experiences, Sunday wouldn't have happened.

It's just about on a Sunday of a golf tournament, just stay in the fight and don't get too high, don't get too low. I mean, probably on the 10th hole everyone thought I was out of the golf tournament except me and Mike. No one was running away with it. The weather was kind of getting a little bit iffy.

For us, it was just about staying in it and have that chance, and things fall your way, a bit of luck, and then just holing one putt.

Q. Looking back, was there a moment when you felt -- not like last week, but in your career so far, when you felt I belong here, I can go toe-to-toe with any of these guys?

ROBERT MACINTYRE: I've known that all along, but it wasn't really until you win in Canada that you really feel like I can compete out here fully. I think it's just an attitude thing. You're not given anything out here. You've got to earn it. You've got to earn the respect of the guys you've looked up to for many years.

I feel like the Ryder Cup was an eye opener for me that I realised the majority of these guys, all of them, are just normal

guys, especially guys on the European team that I've really gotten along well with and I continue to have a good relationship with them.

It wasn't until probably then I realised, you know what, if these guys can do it, I can do it.

Q. Bob, just given what happened last weekend, you're still here in Scotland this weekend, is this the most confident you've felt coming into an Open?

ROBERT MACINTYRE: It's probably the most relaxed. Last week I was absolutely chilled out. All week I was as relaxed as I've ever been for the Scottish Open, for a golf tournament, to be honest. There was no nerves. There was nothing going on. I was just trying to enjoy myself as much as I can.

Coming here, it's the exact same again. I'm very relaxed and enjoying time with friends and family back at the house when I'm not on the golf course and enjoying time with my team when I'm on the golf course.

Mike's been a big part of that. He's a great laugh. We just, when we're on the golf course, yeah, we're trying our best to play as well as we can but go out there and have fun.

Q. So many people will be coming this weekend to see you play. What would you say to them? What should they expect to see from you over the next four days?

ROBERT MACINTYRE: They should expect 110 percent effort. That's all they can expect. I'm a human being. We're all humans out here. Some weeks it can be great. Some weeks it can be poor.

But if it's good or it's poor, it doesn't matter. I'm going to give 110 percent.

Q. When you were touching on playing in front of a home crowd, just we saw that Sunday every time the ball hit the cup, there were huge cheers. What does that do for you when you're on the course? Also, will you be expecting the same this week? But just give us your insight into when you are going around and you hear those noises, those huge cheers, those crowds following you everywhere, what does that do for you as a Scot?

ROBERT MACINTYRE: It's brilliant to know so many people are backing and supporting you. It's just great to know that you're bringing so much joy to other people. I'm just doing my job. My job is to get the golf ball in the hole as quickly as possible. If I do it well, then I'll give myself a chance, and that's when the crowd really, really gets going.

Sunday afternoon last week, I mean, some of the roars, I'm



sure, the people that were finishing before me were hearing what was going on. It's just so cool to have the support. Since I got on the European Tour in 2019, the support I've had from home in Scotland has been outrageous.

Q. You mentioned that you've had a few tipples or two since the win. I was just wondering if you've just had a moment to breathe almost and take in everything that you had accomplished that week?

ROBERT MACINTYRE: Not yet. I'll do that next week after this week's over. It's all about coming here this week. I put last week behind me as quickly -- I mean, before I peg it up tomorrow, that will be gone. I'm onto a new week.

After this week's over, I'll sit back, sit down with my team, and we'll reflect on it and probably celebrate again because, again, it was a lifetime goal of mine.

Last year obviously I thought, well, how many chances are you actually going to get at this one? And to come back the next year, obviously this year, and have a chance, it was cool, but to actually win, it was a dream come true.

Q. You referenced Myrtle Beach. I was there for that, watched you. You were in contention through three rounds and then just kind of ran away with it. In that two-month period, it seems your life has changed and you as a player have changed a lot. Can you discuss a little bit what those two months have been like, and what, if anything, did Myrtle Beach show you about yourself?

ROBERT MACINTYRE: To be honest, Myrtle Beach taught me not to try and win golf tournaments. Lower the expectation. I teed it up on Sunday at Myrtle Beach, and my goal was to win the golf tournament. I birdied the 1st, everything's great. I double bogeyed the 2nd. Then I think the golf tournament's gone.

The minute you think that, your emotions are all over the place. You lose all control of yourself. You lose thought process, touch, everything, you lose it.

Then the U.S. PGA, I did the complete opposite. I thought, I have a chance, but my job was not to do what I'd done at Myrtle Beach. That was just stay in the fight, stay calm. I didn't play my best at the PGA, but then you play the last hole unbelievably, and you jump in the top 10. That was a real light switch that made me think, you know what, the golf game isn't the problem. I'm the problem.

Then in Canada I'm obviously in a great position all week, and I just stayed calm. Obviously my dad helped me with that. Then the same last week, was just -- there was obviously so much hype, on Sunday especially, and my job was just to stay calm

and hit the golf shots that were required at the time. I done that, and thankfully everything kind of fell my way. That's all.

There's no magic recipe to it. It's just stay out of my own way.

Q. Can I ask about the influence of your family? You obviously had that win with your dad as your caddie. Your family able to be there last week. Are they going to be here this week, and what difference does that make to you?

ROBERT MACINTYRE: Yeah, I'm not sure who's -- some of them are coming down, I think, tonight. I'm not sure who's all coming down. I'll realise that when they pitch up at the door.

Look, family and friends are everything for me. I've shown that from the start. The people that are there in the high times, it's good, but it's the people that are there in the low times that you really realise who are your friends, who are your family. To be honest, I've got a really small, tight-knit group that are all family.

It's not grown in the last four years, it's shrunk in the last four years, but they're the ones that make me who I am, and it's probably not going to change from here on out, but family, family and friends are everything.

Q. You spoke about being a kid and going along to the Scottish Open and how inspiring that was to you. There will be lots of young people here over this weekend. What do you hope you inspire to them, Scottish kids growing up around the country who are seeing you do so well?

ROBERT MACINTYRE: Don't be scared to dream. A lot of kids out there will be told to do certain things because things aren't achievable, but with hard work, sacrifice, dedication, anything's possible. Obviously you need a bit of luck on the way. You need a good break. You need a decent support background. But anything's possible.

Q. As much as you've talked about the Scottish Open and wanting to win the Scottish Open, why do you think you were able to feel so calm?

ROBERT MACINTYRE: I just think it's all about the way I'm thinking just now. I'm not going out there trying to win a golf tournament. The minute I try to win a golf tournament, if you bogey the 1st, you're thinking the golf tournament is getting further away from you.

Whereas now I'm just going out there trying to play the best golf, coming up with a score at the end. Whether it's good or bad, it's not going to affect what I'm doing. I think that's the answer for me just now is just commit to the shot, accept the outcome, and go on to the next one.

It's simple. I trust the work that I'm doing with all my coaches. I trust my hands. I trust Mike. I trust the whole team around me. I'm the only one that can hit the shot. I'm the only one that can deal with wherever it goes. I've got the skill to deal with whatever it ends up, good or bad. I just have to keep walking forward and accepting.

Q. Obviously last week was a very passionate win for you. We saw that coming down the stretch. How hard is it to balance being sucked into the moment with the passion and the crowd and then standing over a golf ball and hitting a shot?

ROBERT MACINTYRE: For me, it's all about a learning experience. It all comes back to the experiences I've had in the past. Canada, I remember -- I mean, when I holed that putt on 16 for eagle last week, yeah, I gave a little fist pump, but it wasn't too high, wasn't too low, it was just kind of, right, we're back in the game here.

In Canada, I remember birdieing -- I was getting a bit of jip on the 10th hole in the final round. All the way up to the 11th hole, I was getting some stick. Canadian fans are always wanting Mackenzie Hughes to win it. And I've holed that putt, I think it's to go four or five ahead, but they'd been giving it all the way up the hole, which is totally fine. I loved it. And I gave probably the biggest fist pump I've done in my career, in my life, and then I've hit the worst 4-iron I've ever hit in my life.

Again, I just learned from that, and I knew the minute you get too high or low, you lose all the fine motor skill, you lose all the touch, and I wasn't going to allow that to happen last week. It's just about learning from the good or the bad. It's just keep on taking them steps forward.

Q. This 110 percent or maybe you said 120 that you can give when you're under real pressure, was it reflected in your school reports? Were you like that in exams?

ROBERT MACINTYRE: No, I wasn't like that in exams. I don't know if I turned up to all the exams.

No, I wasn't great in school, but thankfully I'm not really needing schoolwork now.

Q. So where else could you have used that 110 percent? Has it shown in your shinty?

ROBERT MACINTYRE: Yeah, all sports. I'm just someone that I don't play a sport if I'm not trying to win it. Whether it was table tennis at school, tennis at school, badminton, shinty, football. If I was playing a sport, I was trying to win, whether it was a training match, whether it was a friendly match. I didn't really do friendlies. I was always out there trying to win.

I think that's my personality. It's the way I was brought up. I don't think I'll ever change.

Q. You won an incredible amount of money recently. Do you picture yourself being a multimillionaire? And relative to that, how satisfying was it to pay off your mom and dad's mortgage?

ROBERT MACINTYRE: Again, money doesn't -- money's not going to change me. I'm not going to go and do anything daft or buy anything flash because if you do that, someone will drag you down properly. But it's great to obviously get the financial gain and be able to do certain things.

No, I'm a big believer everything happens for a reason. A lot's gone on in my family in the last little while, everything that's gone on at home. Again, family's everything. If I can help family and close friends, that's what I'll do.

I'm out here doing my job, and I'm lucky it pays really well. It's part and parcel of the sport. Yeah, just try and enjoy myself as much as I can and help the people around me.

Q. When exactly did you decide you're going to move back to Scotland, make that your permanent residence? What was the determining factor in that decision?

ROBERT MACINTYRE: This year was just a trial run to see if I enjoyed living in America. Obviously Shannon gave up her work, took a six-month leave from work to help me as best as she could to see if it was the place that we both wanted to live. It wasn't just about me; it was about both of us.

Obviously at the start of the year, I felt like I was playing all right. Nothing was happening. I then went home for a couple of weeks, and then everything changed. She's spoken about it, we've both spoken about it, and I've spoken to family and friends about it, I've spoken to everyone.

Look, I'm still going to play on the PGA TOUR. Nothing's changing other than I'm not paying a whole lot of rent on a house I maybe spent four or five weeks in since January. To me it's absolute madness.

I'll still going to be a member at Isleworth. In fact, I'm going to go there in a few weeks' time to do a couple of days' practice. Nothing in my golf life, private life is going to change other than I'm not paying a stupid amount of rent for a house.

Scotland was always going to be my home, but I was maybe going to be a little bit more in the U.S. than in Scotland. But if I go out there and I need a place to stay for a couple of weeks' training camp, we'll just rent a place for a couple of weeks. It's just I don't think I need a place for a year. It's just as simple as that.

Q. How has shinty helped your golf?

ROBERT MACINTYRE: I don't know. I think it's just going home and spending time with people. Look, when I'm here and I'm on the golf course and I'm in here, I'm getting treated as Robert MacIntyre, professional golfer. When I go home, I get treated as Bob, one of the boys. I go to shinty, I'm flying in the tackles, and they don't care that I'm a professional golfer. They don't care what I've done last week. They just want to win the shinty ball off me, and I'm not wanting them to take the shinty ball off me.

I just get treated like a normal person I am, and I love that. And I go home, and I'll go back to shinty training, and we'll have fun. Yeah, it's a simple life.

Q. On Sunday night the guys on the Tour put a picture of you and your dad with the trophy and what looked like quite a substantial amount of whisky in it. I'm just wondering how many bottles did you go through, and were you able to keep up with your old man?

ROBERT MACINTYRE: It was a great celebration, and it's one that I would do all over again, to be honest with you. It was a great night. Everyone that was there that was involved in the celebrations were brilliant. It was just one of them great nights.

It was a special one for friends, family, and the staff around me. It was just special, and it's a memory that I'll have forever. It was the one I wanted, and I'm glad I got that one. It was just unbelievable.

Q. When you first pitched up at Portrush in 2019, everything was still relatively fresh. I was just wondering how different you feel coming this week on the back of the biggest result you've ever had. Mentally, do you feel different?

ROBERT MACINTYRE: I feel totally different. 2019, I was going to Portrush. I knew the golf course well. A lot of people didn't know that, and I really liked the golf course from playing home internationals there. I didn't have any expectation of anything; after five or six holes I was leading The Open.

Then I got a shock. I was like, what's going on here?

But this week I'm turning up the same as last week. Zero expectation. My game's in a good place.

Obviously last week the results showed, but this week is about going out there, being at home, having the home support. It's about going out there and performing as best as I can, trying my best. Hopefully come Sunday I've got a chance, and that's all I want.

Q. Renaissance Club have installed a plaque for Rory McIlroy's shot from last year. Is there anywhere on the golf course that you'd like to see a plaque with your name on it when you get there in 2025?

ROBERT MACINTYRE: I think it's a gold-plated sprinkler. (Laughter.)

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