

The 152nd Open

Mixed Zone

Friday, 19 July 2024

Aaron Rai



Q. Brutal conditions out there. You must be delighted to have made the cut.

AARON RAI: Yeah, really pleased. I thought today the conditions were meant to be a little bit easier than yesterday. That's what the forecast suggested. As soon as we got out there, it felt really difficult. That front nine played extremely difficult and even the back nine. Certainly a little easier playing some downwind holes but so many hard crosswind holes, as well. It felt like a real battle the whole way around there. Really pleased with holding the round together, and as you said, being here for the weekend is great.

Q. This course looks tough without bad weather. Amazing how quickly one hole can disrupt a round.

AARON RAI: Yeah, definitely. I think the rough is extremely thick. The bunkers are pretty much one-shot penalties. There's a lot of mounding in the fairways, as well, so you can hit some good tee shots which can find their way into the bunkers, and yeah, in those crosswinds even if you've got a wedge in your hand or short iron in your hand, it's extremely difficult to get it close and give yourself some chances.

It feels like a good run of holes is making a lot of pars and maybe making the odd birdie here and there. It's a great test, a really great test, especially in those conditions.

Q. I you know you've put the work in in the gym to make sure you're fit and healthy, but how physically and mentally draining is it playing in those sort of conditions?

AARON RAI: Yeah, it's difficult. It's difficult. I think the biggest part is the mental part, just with staying so switched on on every single shot, because as you alluded to, a poor tee shot or a poor approach shot, you can get yourself out of position really fast, where then bogey becomes a good score.

I think it's the mental side and staying really patient and switched on, which definitely wears as the round goes on. But I think that's why the recovery part and relaxing after the round becomes so important, just to get ready for the following day.

Q. You're here for the weekend. Thoughts on that heading into a weekend at The Open?

AARON RAI: Yeah, really pleased. Really pleased. Especially with the start that I got off to, 4-over, 6-over for the tournament through eight holes, so yeah, I certainly would have been very pleased if you gave me 5-over at the end of the round. Yeah, extremely pleased to be here over the weekend. Playing the weekend at any Open is fantastic just to be around the atmosphere and experience another two days of this golf course under these conditions. I'm really looking forward to it.

Q. Are these the best crowds when you play at a major?

AARON RAI: I think I'm going to be biased because I'm British anyway, but I would say 100 percent. Been fortunate enough to play at a U.S. Open and a couple of PGAs and the crowds are fantastic there, but there's something different about the British Open. It's extremely special.

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