

The 152nd Open

Mixed Zone

Saturday, 20 July 2024

Daniel Hillier



Q. 3-under par 68 to kick off the weekend. How satisfying was that?

DANIEL HILLIER: Yeah, it was nice. It's a lot nicer when it's not blowing 40 out there, as well. Those first nine holes are a lot easier, to be fair. Managed to play them pretty solidly, get a couple good birdies early on, and kept it rolling from there.

Q. It's your first Open Championship where you're playing the weekend. You made the cut. How good a feeling is it?

DANIEL HILLIER: Yeah, took a lot of will power yesterday. I was pretty battered after all that, but yeah, obviously really stoked to be playing the next couple of days, and yeah, hopefully I can just carry on the momentum tomorrow.

Q. It's not often conditions on links courses are as nice as they are today. How important is it to capitalise when the conditions are friendlier?

DANIEL HILLIER: Yeah, absolutely. I'm not sure what the conditions are like tomorrow, but I can't imagine they'll get any better than this. Nice to put a good score on the board, and fingers crossed it's pretty similar conditions tomorrow and try and take advantage of them again.

Q. Next step up for you is the Olympics with New Zealand. Your first ever Olympic Games. How much are you looking forward to that next week?

DANIEL HILLIER: It's going to be amazing. Obviously being able to represent your country is a huge honour. Doing it at the Olympics is the pinnacle of it all. It'll be cool to just embrace the moment and hopefully while we're out there we can take a look at some of New Zealand's best athletes and cheer them on, as well.

Q. And playing with your good friend Ryan Fox?

DANIEL HILLIER: Yeah, absolutely. He's been a big help of mine over the last couple of years, and been great to rub shoulders with him. Yeah, pretty special we get to share the Olympics together.

Q. You won on the DP World last year, you're playing in the

Olympics this year. Is it just a case of sit back and enjoy the rise at the minute?

DANIEL HILLIER: Yeah, all I want is to keep getting better. It's nice to look back on what's happened over the last couple of years. If you told me I was a DP Tour winner at 25, I would have been pretty stoked. But yeah, it's all happened a bit quicker than I thought it would, but the game is feeling pretty good. I don't feel like there's any reason why I can't keep continuing on, and hopefully can get a couple more.

Q. When the wind is not blowing, what's the biggest difference? Is it that you know your distances or the ball doesn't do weird things? Why is it so much easier?

DANIEL HILLIER: That's definitely a big part of it. You get your number, your yardage, whatever it is, and you can actually hit it with confidence, whereas when it's blowing 30, 40 K's an hour, if you slightly mis-hit it, you can spin one up in the air, and the difference between hitting a good shot and a bad shot is really drastic. Just gives you a bit more leeway, I guess.

Q. What do you think distinguishes people who are good at that other part, playing in really hard wind? Is it adaptability? Is it toughness?

DANIEL HILLIER: Yeah, definitely adaptability is huge. I was lucky enough to grow up in Wellington, which is renowned as one of the windiest cities in the world, so I've learned how to control the ball flight a bit more out there and hit different shots, and I think that's a big part of getting around these golf courses is you can't just hit your stock golf shot. When it's blowing like that, you've got to be able to work the ball and either hold it against the wind check or turn it with it.

Yeah, so obviously it takes a lot of practice and a bit of exposure to get it done, and pretty thankful to have had that.

Q. You talked about yesterday the will to fight through. Does it just wear on you with time, the difficulty?

DANIEL HILLIER: Yeah, absolutely. It's been a pretty slow start to the season. Missed a bunch of cuts, and the cuts that I had made I was finishing 50th, 60th place. After a while it does take a bit of a toll on you. It was nice coming out last week at the Scottish Open and put up a half-decent result, and then



yeah, obviously this week to make my first major cut, it was a big confidence boost really, and pretty happy with it. The game is getting back on track.

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