

The 152nd Open

Mixed Zone

Saturday, 20 July 2024

Justin Rose



JUSTIN ROSE: That was super tough. Wasn't really expecting it, if I'm honest. I think I talked the first couple days about how well I was prepared for that southerly wind. I saw it coming. I practised with that in mind. Today I did not expect that. I kind of saw it was going to be a southwest, maybe a little westerly, a little bit of rain in the afternoon.

Obviously with the way the guys played this morning, I kind of felt like it was going to be the type of day where you could go out and post a score, and it turned into an absolute survival test out there. I think I did a good job of surviving. All in all I'm delighted to look at that leaderboard and say I'm one back going into tomorrow.

Q. Tell us about 18.

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, 18 was key. Not just to stay within touch but more just mentally. I did such a good job on the back nine hanging in, hanging in, and obviously eventually a bogey came, which I think was going to happen at some point on that back nine.

To sort of double down and bogey 18, as well, would have definitely made dinner taste a little worse than it's going to. I think really that par putt on 18 has really put me in a really great spot mentally going into tomorrow. I feel like I've got nothing to lose. I feel like I'm right there within touching distance.

Obviously someone in that 3-under pack is going to play some great golf tomorrow and obviously there's a few other players right in there with a chance, too. I think tomorrow is going to be head down and sort of run for the finish line.

Q. How excited are you about being in the mix going into that final round? It means so much to you, The Open.

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, it's going to be massive, just from an experience point of view. Those are days that I dream about. Those are days I've been working hard for. Those are days I've still been believing that I can have. The key tomorrow is to do my best to make the most of it.

Q. You were in the tougher wave both the first two days and obviously today. How exhausting is it?

JUSTIN ROSE: I'm not exhausted yet. I'm frustrated because I definitely played the hardest golf course every single day, but proud that I have the opportunity to win the golf tournament tomorrow with a great round.

Yeah, actually I don't even know what to expect. I haven't seen the forecast. Don't know what we're expecting or looking at tomorrow. These evenings are late, it's already 8:30, try and regroup and build a plan as quickly as I can for tomorrow and come out really excited tomorrow really. It's a great opportunity for me. It's amazing.

Q. You just said one key word there about dreaming, the ability to dream. At this stage in your career to be here in the Open, the greatest tournament, to be able to go to bed tonight thinking of the dream still alive --

JUSTIN ROSE: It's still my dream. In a few years it'll be someone else's dream. But yeah, still my dream right now. Great opportunity to go live it out tomorrow.

Q. You're never going to leave anything -- you could see the way you celebrated that putt at the last. What kind of momentum is that going to give you for tomorrow?

JUSTIN ROSE: I found it really hard today to enjoy the crowds. I found it really hard to enjoy the day today. I felt like it was good energy from the crowd, but obviously with everyone with umbrellas up, no one is clapping; everyone is more shouting and cheering, people wanting high fives. I normally engage in that type of stuff; today I just had my head down. I was like not interested in anything. Like I was just trying to get around the golf course today and hang in there.

So to be able to go and have a moment on 18 where I could just let it out a little bit just to show that I am super excited about the support was big because I think until that point I was just grinding today.

Q. You and Billy seemed to be vibing with each other a little bit, feeding off each other.

JUSTIN ROSE: No, it's a comfortable pairing. My caddie Fooch has worked for Billy, as well. They've won some tournaments together, so everyone out there knows each other really, really well. I think there's a lot of mutual respect. Billy



played an unbelievable round today, did a great job on the front nine of kind of -- he did what I was not able to do with the somewhat gettable holes, he was able to take advantage of. I drove it down the first hole and I was in an old divot, turned a 52-degree gap wedge into a bogey. That was about the easiest hole of the day, and obviously to make a 5 on the easiest hole of the day set me up for a long afternoon.

But yeah, like I said, Billy was able to make those cheap birdies -- not cheap birdies, but easy birdies early and then build on it and obviously hang in great on the back nine. His short game was unbelievable, and yeah, it was a fun round to watch.

Q. The 18th was heroic, but you had 11 pars in a row prior to the 17th, a long run of pretty good golf.

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, I felt like my back was up against the wall a lot of those holes, as well. I felt like I missed a few birdie chances at 8 and at 9, which I felt like -- I said to Fooch on 12, I feel like I really just need something to go my way, if it's a long putt or a chip-in or just something just to let the pressure valve just release a little bit because I kind of knew that I was on the fringes of the tournament. I was right in it. But I kind of felt like I was hanging on by my fingernails.

But that obviously ultimately paid off because obviously everybody ended up facing some tough holes coming in. The guys this morning obviously had it off, but that's part of it.

In terms of the guys that went out with the lead the last four or five groups of the day, I think I did enough today to obviously be proud of the effort.

Q. When was the last time you played a nine as tough as that today?

JUSTIN ROSE: I mean, the cumulative clubs that I hit into the green in terms of length of club, I don't think I've ever -- not since I was a junior have I played a round of golf where I've hit 4-iron into 10, 2-iron short at 11, 8-iron into 12, 3-wood into 13, 4-iron into 14, 3-wood into 15. 16 is a par-5. 3-wood into 17, 2-iron into 18. Yeah.

Q. This probably isn't a leaderboard some people would have expected going into the weekend.

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, obviously Open Championship can always have a lopsided draw. I felt like there were a lot of top players it seemed like that played just behind me. I think we had the toughest of it, and it looked like a lot of guys just missed the cut. It blew a lot of people out of it.

Then obviously you then compound that with the guys that just make the cut are able to go and play well this morning and post a score. It just really condenses everybody. It certainly

can shake up the leaderboard from that point of view. A lot of volatility because of that.

Links golf is a different facet, different style of golf. I think form can be not as important. It's sort of how you feel it on the week. There's so much -- there's very few stock shots that you hit on the golf course this week. That's probably why there's a bit of unpredictability to the look of the leaderboard.

Q. With the changes that are coming in the near future to the golf world and the efforts to make you guys basically hit the golf ball less far, is that not an example, like that golf course and that setup, these conditions, that that's the real antidote to modifications to equipment?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, the Postage Stamp, too, is a terrifying hole that's 123 yards. There's many ways to sort of -- I think it's a really -- I don't even know where I stand on this debate, to be honest with you. You can't have us hitting the ball shorter but have every other aspect of the game stretched to the limit in terms of agronomy and greens being 13 and a half on the stimpmeter and every other condition, thick rough, all the other things that make the golf course difficult and then roll back the ball. It's kind of like you're hitting us everywhere.

But if does mean that we protect a couple of the classic golf courses where there is no more real estate and they can't push it back any further, we don't want those to become obsolete. If that's the argument, I get it. But I actually don't know; I've resigned myself to -- when is it coming in? '28? I've resigned to not being that bothered by then. So yeah.

Q. Just a quick word on Fooch and caddies today and the role they played in those conditions.

JUSTIN ROSE: Just being patient with me. I probably want things immediately, new ball, towel, I need a glove, Fooch, come on, where's the umbrella, hold the umbrella over me when I'm teeing the ball up, umbrella is dripping on me. So there's a lot of niggly stuff going on out there on a day like today.

But he did a brilliant job. That bag must have been heavy. There were like four towels and all sorts of stuff in there.

It was the kind of day I actually didn't even have a chance to drink. I haven't drunk enough water. I know I'm probably dehydrated right now. There was just no time to eat and drink on the golf course. It was like, honestly, every single shot, dry, dry, club, even hard work getting the glove on and off. It was kind of literally the most simple things you don't think about on a normal day felt difficult today. But it's over, so I'm happy.

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