

The 152nd Open

Mixed Zone

Saturday, 20 July 2024

Billy Horschel



Q. How good was that then?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: It was a pretty good round. As I said, I think my round at Kingsbarns in 2022 was probably better than this, and those conditions were pretty nasty. I think you were there that day. But this one's by far my best round in really tough conditions in an Open Championship.

Q. Billy, why do you enjoy this so much?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: I've just always embraced the toughness of anything. I've always enjoyed it. I think that's the best way you can do to have a chance to play well.

I enjoy hitting little bunt shots. It's not the -- I get tired of golf where you're making full swings and you lean into a certain number and it stops. I like when you have to be creative and find a way to get around the golf course, and I think I've always done that well for the most part.

So I think that's why I've always -- or I enjoy days like this.

Q. When you started out today, did it seem like it was going to be really difficult the whole way? Did you sense that immediately?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: No, because the wind wasn't blowing that hard. So we knew it was going to get some rain, but the wind was down for the most part. Then even the back side, it wasn't blowing too hard.

Then we got to 13, and it really picked up. We played five par-5s on the back side, and that's not even including No. 16. Yeah, it was a tough one out there today. Just knew going into the back side that it was going to be a grind no matter what. You have to find a way to grind down and make a score.

Q. Which of the short game saves on the back nine was the most satisfying to you?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: The one at 13. The one at 13 was the toughest. It was a 70-yard wedge shot. You can play it many different ways, and hit a really quality wedge shot there into the wind and to make that putt, kept some momentum going. Yeah, that was the one that was the most satisfying of them all.

Q. What was tougher, the conditions in '16 when you shot 85 here or today?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: The ones in '16 were a helluva lot tougher. It was blowing 30, and it was raining sideways. Yeah, it was a lot tougher back then by far.

Q. Billy, 37 years old, and you've played a lot of golf. Now you get something that is inherently new. You're a leader going into a final round major. It's something completely different for a guy to play links golf. What does that kind of feel like?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: I love it. I've worked my entire life to be in this position. Listen, I've been in the lead many times going into a final round. Obviously this is a major. It means a little bit more. We all know that. We know what this means to everyone. I know what it means to my legacy in the game of golf and what I want to do and accomplish.

But I'm excited to be here. I've wanted to be here my entire life. I'm finally here. I'm embracing it.

As I told Todd Lewis, something I've done this year, and I've done a better job this week of it, or tried to do a better job, is sort of manifest seeing myself holding the trophy before I go to sleep every night, envisioning myself holding that trophy on 18, walking out to the crowd and being congratulated as Open champion.

That's what I'm going to do again tonight, and hopefully that comes true tomorrow. If it doesn't, then I'll get back on the grind and work harder to get back in a position like this again.

Q. Does it help when you're both playing really well grinding it out together?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Yeah, it does. When you've got another guy like Justin Rose who loves conditions like this, who grinds out shots, who works hard, it does make it a little bit easier when you're playing with someone like that.

Listen, I've looked up to Justin for many years now, I've told him that. The way he goes about his business, the way he checks every box, I've emulated that a little bit in what I've



done.

Justin is a great friend. Foochy obviously caddied for me for a few years. He's a great friend. So we had a great group out there. Even though there wasn't a lot of chatter going on because we were grinding out our score, we know we both are pulling for each other.

Q. Why do you think you're ready now? Why do you think the time is now?

BILLY HORSCHEL: I mean, I think I've learned a lot about the game of golf playing 15 years professionally. I think I've learned how to handle my emotions. I've learned how to embrace a lot of things, not to be -- I'm not saying afraid of failing. I think I'm more -- I'm never afraid to fail. I think I hate when I don't do well and I get criticism from outside, and I'm letting those criticisms sort of affect my vision of myself.

So yeah, I think, if it's my time tomorrow, it's my time, and I'm going to be ecstatic. If it's not, then we'll get on the horse again, and we'll work hard to get back in that position again.

Q. You said legacy there. At this stage of your career, how much do you kind of think about balancing all the success you've had and then kind of this void a little bit of major tournament success?

BILLY HORSCHEL: I've won a lot of really good events on the PGA Tour. I've won some great events on DP World Tour. Obviously, listen, there's three things that I'm missing, a couple things that are missing on my CV. Obviously a Ryder Cup, being part of a Ryder Cup, hopefully a victorious Ryder Cup, and then a major. I want to win more than one major.

I'm also content that, if a major doesn't happen in my career, I can be satisfied with what I've done in the game of golf, that I've given it everything I've had. And if it's not meant to be, it's not meant to be, but I know that I can look myself in the mirror the next 10 to 15 years and say, hey, listen, I did everything I could to be the best player I could, and it just wasn't in the cards for me to win a major.

Q. Have you taken a different approach at all to the majors this year?

BILLY HORSCHEL: I think I had a different approach the last couple years. The results have been better this year, but I think started in '22 just understanding I'm a perfectionist at heart. I want everything to be perfect, and it's weird at majors -- or at regular events, I know I don't have to be perfect to win, but at majors I've always felt I've had to be perfect.

In the back of my mind, I knew I didn't, but I just couldn't get that thought out of my head.

Sort of early in '22, working with my team and Bhrett McCabe, I don't think we've done anything different or focused on anything different, I've just come to the realisation that my game is good enough to play well in majors, and I have to figure out a way to make a score every day.

Q. If you're content in your career, is that a peace you found later over time?

BILLY HORSCHEL: I think I've found it over the last couple years, there's no doubt about it. There's another reason I've played well in majors as well.

I look at guys that have had heck of careers, Lee Westwood, Steve Stricker, who else am I going to forget in there? I'm sure there's a couple other guys in there that haven't won majors, that have had really quality careers, and they don't have a major on their record.

Understanding that it's okay if a major is not in the cards, but it doesn't mean that I'm not going to work my butt off and do everything I can to sort of change that.

Q. Billy, what does this evening look like for you? Are you usually okay sleeping on a lead, especially on a Saturday?

BILLY HORSCHEL: Yeah, I'll sleep. It's a late night. It usually takes me a long time to sort of calm down after a round of golf. What are we, about 8:15, 8:30, so I'll probably go to bed about 11:00, 11:30. Go watch some darts on TV and just enjoy the night with the team.

Q. Darts guy?

BILLY HORSCHEL: Listen, I'm very English when it comes to sporting events. I love watching cricket. I love darts. I love a lot of the English sports over here. Yeah, I enjoy it.

Q. Do you understand cricket?

BILLY HORSCHEL: Do I understand cricket? I understand it a little bit. I still am learning, but I understand some of the basics to at least comprehend what's going on.

Q. Billy, don't tell the crowd that you're very English, by the way.

BILLY HORSCHEL: I'm very UK, how about that? That's better.

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