

The 153rd Open

Press Conference

Friday, 18 July 2025

Brian Harman



OLIVIA McMILLAN: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I am delighted to be joined by our current leader and 2023 champion. Brian, a 6-under 65 for you today, remarkable golf. Can you summarise the round for us?

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, got off to a good start, picked my spots really nice, hit some good iron shots. Played smart when I had to, made the putts when I had chances. Played really solid all day.

Q. What is it about links golf that maybe suits your eye a little bit and makes these events perhaps a little easier?

BRIAN HARMAN: I think that places like this force you to be a little bit more creative. It's not so much of an aerial attack. There's probably 10 different types of clubs, irons, drivers, woods that you can hit off the tee. There's different ways to attack into the green, and there's almost always a hill that will kind of kill a shot coming into the green.

I don't know, I just enjoy the creativity and trying to think your way around. You don't necessarily -- you're not forced to hit certain shots. You can kind of do it your own way.

Q. What's different about Hoylake and Portrush? What's different about the way you play these two courses? They're very different links courses.

BRIAN HARMAN: I feel really comfortable over here. I'm comfortable driving it. I don't know. They're very different golf courses, but the golf is similar. You've got to be able to flight your golf ball. You've got to know how far everything's going. Then you can't get frustrated. Like you're going to get bad breaks, you're going to end up in funny spots where it doesn't seem fair, and you just have to kind of outlast that stuff.

Although the golf courses are different, the style of golf is very similar, I think.

Q. What was your first experience on a true links golf course? Did you take to it immediately, or was there a bit of a learning curve?

BRIAN HARMAN: I played the Palmer Cup at Prestwick, and no, I didn't take to it. I played four matches, went 0-4, and I

don't think I made it past like No. 14. I got worn out. I couldn't understand there -- because I kept trying to chip with a lob wedge, and I kept trying to chip it into the air. The ground being so firm was so unique that I just couldn't get adjusted to it.

Q. When do you feel like you first figured it out?

BRIAN HARMAN: I won the Deere in '14 and was the last guy in the field at Liverpool that year. I wasn't super excited about coming over. I just didn't really fancy my chances. After I played that week, I was like, wow, I can't believe how much I enjoyed that. I love being able to hit these stingers off of the tee that go a million yards. I don't know, I just really kind of took to it.

Then I played terrible the next six Opens and then started playing better over here.

Q. We've seen some of the best drivers in the world struggle through two days to drive the ball on this course. Just wondering what unique challenges that this course in particular strategically presents off the tee?

BRIAN HARMAN: I think it's the cross-winds. It seems like you never get it straight in or straight down. There's always a little -- there's so much cross-wind if your ball -- if you can't fight that wind a little bit, it's just really hard to keep from missing the fairway on the downwind side of whichever way it's coming.

Q. In '23 on Friday, you were top 10 but kind of under the radar, and you were not making much of it either. So I wonder if this is a completely different position or you take it the same way?

BRIAN HARMAN: I'll approach the weekend the same way. The only thing I'm really worried about is the first tee ball tomorrow, and then I'll try to hit the next one up there close to the flag. If not, go to the second hole. It's a very boring approach that I take.

I'm not trying to be heroic or do anything crazy. I know that I've got the game to do it, and it's just a matter of executing and staying in my own head.



Q. I also remember a big part of your recovery was a big piece of steak. Is it the same now?

BRIAN HARMAN: Big piece of steak, I love steak, yes. I do love steak.

Q. Brian, maybe related to that, when you were at Hoylake, there was a big deal made about your hunting hobbies. Were you surprised by that, and is it still a big thing you do between golf?

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, big hunter, big fisherman. I was surprised at -- yeah, I was surprised a little bit. I was curious why everyone was asking so many questions about it. I didn't realise that everyone was so upset about it. It's a hill I'll die on, and I have no -- I'll sleep like a baby at night.

Q. On Hoylake, when you got in front there, you were relentless machine-like to get over the line. Is that what you'd love to do again, to just have that?

BRIAN HARMAN: I would love to have a similar weekend and just play great the whole way through. There's going to be challenges. This is a hard golf course. The pins have been in really, really tough spots, and you've really got to think your way around it. Inevitably you're going to mis-hit some shots and end up in spots you don't want to be in, and the way you handle that will determine the outcome of the tournament for sure.

Q. But you do know when someone says what did you shoot today, they mean your golf score?

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, I'm aware of that. I'm a very compartmentalized guy. I'm not thinking about hunting when I'm golfing. I'm not thinking about golfing when I'm hunting.

Q. It seemed like it went quicker today. What took so long yesterday, and why was it better today?

BRIAN HARMAN: We waved up on 5, which I think helped a little bit. Then I think this championship is unique -- it's the same as Augusta but just a much bigger field where everyone goes off the 1st tee, and then we split tees at the U.S. Open and the PGA.

When you've got threesomes off of one tee and there's 156 guys, you've got a drivable par-4 on the 5th and reachable hole on the 7th, it just bottlenecks right there. That's where most of the time gets spent.

It's not like guys are taking any longer to play, but we probably waited a good 40 minutes at least to hit golf shots yesterday.

Q. What's the closest -- clean card today. What's the closest

you came to making bogey, or was it that stress-free?

BRIAN HARMAN: I had to get up-and-down on 11 from short right of the green. It was a nice up-and-down. I had to make about a 6-footer. That's the hardest one I had.

Q. When tournaments come to links courses, we like talking about the roll-back ball or golf ball roll-back. Does it ever make you think, when you play a course like this, if tournaments were held at golf courses like this all the time --

BRIAN HARMAN: A hundred percent. That's the nail on the head right there. We could talk all day about the golf ball. I'm not going to say that we need to roll it back, but it's like the golf ball is so stable -- it's like the golf ball will accept speeds of up to 200 miles an hour, and that just hasn't been the case. Guys have kind of got that figured out, so they're just waylaying on it because they know it's not -- like the spin of the ball doesn't go up with speed, like it did when I was a kid.

Q. Does it make you think, though, if -- it's unrealistic, but if every tournament you played in was on a course like this, that there would be any talk of golf ball roll-back at all?

BRIAN HARMAN: No, I don't. Any time you can play at a place where the farther the ball misses the middle of the fairway, the worse off you are, if that held at every tournament we played, then we wouldn't be having a conversation at all.

Q. You waited a long time to win a major. When you won, though, up at Hoylake, how much did that change you as a person, as a competitor? Did it make you more relaxed or more hungry to win more?

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, I think I was quoted afterwards saying I'd spend the rest of my life trying to get in a position to feel this again because it is, it's the top of our profession, major championships. Any time you can get in contention, have a chance to win, I mean, that's what we've all worked for our entire lives and you don't get that many opportunities to do that.

Q. How will you describe the way you've played the last two years since your victory at The Open?

BRIAN HARMAN: I've done okay. I feel like I've -- before '23 I'd elevated my game to a different place than where it had been previous in my career. I've maintained there, maybe dropped off a little bit. I just haven't sustained winning. I've won this year, which is fantastic, and competed one other time.

Just really trying to get in contention a little bit more, trying to find whatever it is that clicks it on because, when it's on, it's really, really good. I'm just trying to figure out a way to make that happen a little bit more.



Q. When you thought about where you might be able to win a second major, is The Open the one that jumps out as this is your place?

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, I love the golf over here. It suits me. It's not -- distance, of course, matters over here, but it doesn't matter as much as maybe some other tournaments, and it doesn't matter because the ground is so firm that the ball rolls. There's just a million different ways to play over here whereas at some other majors you get kind of stuck into this, well, I'm going to swing as hard as I can off this tee ball and try to hit this 7-iron as high as I possibly can and hope it stops.

Q. Similar question, but after you won, did you have any difficulty getting focused again or getting dialed in again to try to do it? Did you sense any lulls in your game at all or frustrations at times like you would have before?

BRIAN HARMAN: I actually think it's made me probably more patient with myself, just knowing that you're capable of something like that. Like you know it's in there, and it would be really easy when things aren't going your way to get frustrated. But it's all just, hey, you start seeing signs that things are going the right way and it's like all right.

I actually think I've been pretty patient the last couple years without having the results that maybe I should have had, if that makes sense.

Q. How would you describe how you were treated at this tournament before you were the champion and then how big of a difference it is when you're walking through practice rounds, playing in rounds, how different is it now?

BRIAN HARMAN: They have incredible respect for the game. The golf overall fan knowledge over here is unbelievable. They all play. They love the game. And being an Open champion over here is really cool. They know who you are. They have respect for you.

Like I said, I love coming over here. As far as golf, it's as pure as it gets.

Q. I guess the respect factor too is what I wanted to get at. Just the feeling of how much more people regard you here because it's a different type of championship.

BRIAN HARMAN: But if you go back to Augusta and you've won the Masters, they're going to treat you differently than if you haven't won one. It would be the same at probably every major. Me personally, like I said, I love coming back here. I love all these courses. It's a lot of fun to play over here.

Q. Have you found a good steak place in Portrush?

BRIAN HARMAN: I'm not going to talk about y'all's steak places over here. It's different. I don't mind it, but, no, I have not found a good steak place yet. Do you know any?

OLIVIA McMILLAN: Well, speaking of steak, I think lunch is calling. Thank you very much for your time.

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