

The 153rd Open

Mixed Zone

Friday, 18 July 2025

Lee Westwood



Q. Just curious how tricky that 20 minutes is when it really starts coming down?

LEE WESTWOOD: Yeah, it's not ideal when you're playing the final hole. I thought we were going to play it down out of the right and it was going to be like 3-wood, 8-iron, something like that. It ended up being a good 3-wood and a 6-iron and then a really good save for par.

Links golf is all about adapting and just trying to handle the conditions as best you can really. It was on and off all day. The wind switched. But it's helping out there, and there's loads of flags, so it's easy to see it switch. It's not like you get caught out, it just changed direction.

I would say the trickiest thing is going from dry to really wet and dry to really wet, and it changes the speed of the greens dramatically. Our group -- I don't know what anybody else's group was like, but we'd go from having nice pace to two, three foot short; nice pace, two, three foot short. It was so hard to get used to after a downpour.

Q. How do you feel about backing this round up from yesterday? It's been a while since you've been at a major in this position.

LEE WESTWOOD: I didn't really think about it, to be honest. No, I'm just enjoying playing one of the greatest courses in the world in one of the greatest championships. I wasn't thinking it. That's the first time I've thought about backing a round up.

Q. Just your form in general as well.

LEE WESTWOOD: Yeah, my form's been pretty good over the last few weeks. I feel like I've been swinging the club nicely. There's no reason I shouldn't shoot a really good score. I had loads of chances out there, just kept pulling my putts, but managed to sort it out over the last few holes and made some nice ones. Just looking forward to a weekend at The Open.

Q. Can you talk about your memories of coming to Portrush? You've been coming here a long time.

LEE WESTWOOD: The first time I came over was on the ferry for the British Amateur in the early '90s, I think it was. I didn't

know how good a golf course it was. It ticked all the boxes.

Obviously I got on really well with Darren and Graeme and they're from this area. I've been over here when tournaments haven't been on with Darren. I've played two Opens here now. It's a lovely part of the world with nice, friendly people, and they're lucky to have some incredible golf courses in this area.

Q. What's your impression of Chris's game from what you're seeing?

LEE WESTWOOD: Really impressed. I'd say over the last couple of weeks with the qualifying and then the practice rounds and then playing with Chris today, I've seen some really good young talent in the qualifying, Connor Graham from Scotland, a couple of good lads from Charlotte, UNC. Is that University of Charlotte? A couple of great players there. Some great young players, which I'm not surprised about. There's so many good young players about now, but they've come through the qualifying.

Obviously Chris is a different kettle of fish. He's got very impressive game. I think there's probably -- the way he penetrates the ball and plays off this links turf, it's ideal for links play. He can keep it down, drill it out there with a driver, looks to have a good short game, nice putter. He'd be like a dark horse for an Open Championship, one of those guys that it would surprise most people if he won, but it wouldn't surprise me.

Q. You don't sound surprised with your performance, but I think the average golf fan does get surprised when guys in their 50s play so well. It looks like Justin Leonard is going to make the cut. Phil's going to make the cut. Why shouldn't we be surprised by that?

LEE WESTWOOD: I think it's the advancement of technology and knowledge of the body, dieticians and the -- we work hard now. The workout regimes we do and things like that. Obviously I think technology's helped us a little. It's obviously helped everybody, but I'm probably longer now than I was when I was late 20s.

Then as I said yesterday, The Open Championship with a bit of run on the ground and you have to hold it into the wind or let it go on the wind or keep it under the wind or use it to your



advantage, it asks you a lot of questions that an experienced golfer has been through before.

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