

# AIG Women's Open

Press Conference

Wednesday, 9 August 2023

## Leona Maguire



ED HODGE: Okay. Everyone, delighted to have Leona Maguire in the Media Centre.

You mentioned playing a few holes already, what do you think of Walton Heath?

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, I think it's a very different British Open test than we've had the last few years. The golf course is soft and there's a lot of woods out there, and there will be a lot of hybrids. I played the back nine this morning, and apart from the par 5s, I think I hit one iron into the green. So it's definitely playing long and I imagine it will dry out as the week goes on hopefully and a few tees will get moved around.

Overall, I think it will be a really good test.

ED HODGE: You were tied fourth last year, obviously great achievement there, Muirfield. Something to build on week.

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, you're always trying to get better and better, trying to get yourself into contention. Like I said, it's a very different test to Muirfield. Muirfield was a proper sort of links test, with the wind obviously the last day. But yeah, I mean, we'll judge by whatever we get this week and definitely try to keep the ball in play. I think out of the bunkers and out of the heather will be the big key this week.

**Q. You mentioned the length and not hitting many irons in. Is that a tough challenge mentally when you are going around, and how do you deal with the fact that it's a lot of long shots into the greens?**

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, I like hitting my woods and my hybrid, so it's not something that bothers me. I think the way the greens are, the greens are huge. There's some really, really big greens, so a lot of pace putting and stuff like that in the practise round as opposed to sort of chipping around the green and that.

You're just going to have been patient and take your chances where you get them. As with any major, the par 3s are tricky, so sort of take your chances on the par 5s

and elsewhere.

**Q. Can I ask you about Anna Foster, who has qualified to play this week, mentioned that she looks up to you and very inspired by what you've done, just wonder how much you know about Anna and the fact that she's managed to get here. Any advice for an amateur player in the field?**

LEONA MAGUIRE: I haven't met Anna but great achievement for her to qualify, to come through the qualifier. I mean, I'm sure she was watching Áine at the U.S. Open and trying to emulate what she did at Pebble.

I was fortunate to play in the British Open a few times as an amateur, and it's obviously a big experience and she'll sort of hopefully take it all in and not put too much pressure on herself, I would say and try to enjoy it as much as she can, and hopefully she's got quite a few more of these ahead of her.

**Q. How much has it meant to you to have your sister, your twin, helping you? Is it a huge help having somebody close to you working with you all the time?**

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, it's massive I think. There's no way I would be to where I am without her, and she's obviously not playing anymore but she helps massively behind the scenes. It's been nice, she's been out the last few weeks. She's studying to be a dentist, so she's off for the summer which is nice, so she's here. Mum and Dad are here this week and they don't get to watch me play very much, either, so it's nice to have sort of the whole family minus our brother here this week to support.

**Q. Have you ever watched her doing her dentistry?**

LEONA MAGUIRE: Well, she's cleaned my teeth and she went for a checkup at Christmas last year. I was the guinea pig I think for a couple hours there. Maybe a bit more, maybe she'll strip my teeth and whiten my teeth for me in a couple years when she's properly qualified.

**Q. You were overnight leader going into the final round of the women's PGA and it didn't go your way on the Sunday, but is there anything you can take from that knowing that you can be at the top of the to be of a**



## leaderboard in a major going into the final day?

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, I mean, I think at Baltusrol, I put three really good rounds together. I think I had had seven rounds in the 60s or something leading into that day.

So yeah, I was probably playing really nice golf. I think the wind the week before took a lot out of me. I was quite drained come Sunday and just didn't have enough in the tank to get over the line.

Knowing I could put myself in contention, it was obviously a new learning experience, to be in that situation in the lead last group Saturday and the lead last group Sunday and sort of the emotions and everything that went along with that.

Yeah, I'd like to think that if I get myself in that position again, I'll approach it a little differently and I'll have learned from that experience.

**Q. Of course, being the first Irish woman to win twice on the PGA TOUR [sic], you'll be looking to do the same in a major championship this week. What do you think it would mean for the country of Ireland, if you were to grab that first major?**

LEONA MAGUIRE: You try not to think about things like that. Obviously it's great to see some more Irish girls coming up through the ranks. Áine Donegan at Pebble a few weeks ago, and Anna here as well, there's more and more girls coming through the ranks which is really nice to see, and even with everything going on with the women's World Cup right now, that visibility is massive.

There was a huge buzz at home for our women's team. And I think that visibility is huge, to see someone that comes from where you come from, to see them on TV achieving on a world stage is massive in terms of growing the game, and even today, there's a lot of little kids out here which is really nice to see young girls sort of watching and checking golf balls and signing autographs and all that.

So yeah, I mean, anytime you see anybody doing well that sort of you can relate to, it only helps inspire the next generation.

**Q. In Ireland, they have always given women golfers equal coverage in the press, haven't they, which is unusual. It's certainly not the same in the UK, but do you think that now people think of you in the same bracket as the male major winners they have in Ireland?**

LEONA MAGUIRE: I've been very lucky. I've always had

huge respect from the media in Ireland. I wouldn't put myself in the same category as Pádraig and Shane and the guys that have won majors, but I think that's the nice thing with being from a small country, I suppose. We all look out for each other and whether it's the media or whether it's the guys or whether it's Pádraig or Shane or Paul or whoever it is, I've been very fortunate to have a lot of people that helped me along the way.

Yeah, I think golf is a very respected sport in Ireland. It gets a lot of coverage. A lot of people are interested in it. I think you'll see that with the Irish Women's Open in a few weeks, the Irish guy's open at did he more land castle in a few weeks' time. People are very passionate and knowledgeable about their golf in Ireland and I think the reporting on that fits in with that as well.

**Q. And which of the Irish men that's won a major has given you the best advice?**

LEONA MAGUIRE: Pádraig's been quite generous with his time and his advice. Chatted to Shane, and chatted to Paul McGinley, he has been a big help as well. He was our captain at the Rio Olympics and has been a big help with advice. To be fair they are all shared their knowledge in different ways and they have all had very different experiences and I've kind of leaned on all of them at different times for different bits of advice.

ED HODGE: You're the top-ranked GB&I player now in the standings. How much satisfaction do you take from that, being so far up the order?

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, rankings are not something that I focus on too much. I think you focus on playing well and doing as well as you can at every tournament, and things like rankings just look after themselves.

Yeah, it's the last major of the year and one that I always look forward to every year and want to do well in, so we'll focus on trying to play as well as we can this week and let rankings and all that take care of themselves.

ED HODGE: Celine is also playing well, going for a hat trick. Who are the main contenders here this week, including yourself.

LEONA MAGUIRE: Yeah, Celine is probably playing the best golf of anybody in the world right now, which is great to see. It's obviously a big boost ahead of the Solheim.

Cup but yeah, I think that's the great thing with the LPGA right now, there's so many girls, there's ten, 20 girls that have a chance to win this week that on any given day, anybody can beat anybody and I suppose it's one of those

things, the favourites are always going to be the favourites, Jin Young, Lydia, I mean, Georgia, Charley at home obviously, and yeah, I mean, Ash, I'm sure, will be looking to defend as well. There's any number of girls that you can pick out this week.

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