

# AIG Women's Open

Press Conference

Tuesday, 21 May 2024

## Georgia Hall



OLIVIA McMILLAN: Ladies and gentlemen, thank you so much for joining us today ahead of the AIG Women's Open. Those of you that played the Old Course thoroughly enjoyed it and that there was some good scoring out there, as well. Today we're delighted to be joined by Georgia Hall. Georgia, I guess we'll just get to you, opening with how much you're looking forward to the AIG Women's Open here in St Andrews this August.

GEORGIA HALL: Yeah, obviously it's a very special place for me, and I just love being here any time I can. I think that the course as it's set up is a great test for us, and I just love the atmosphere of being here and obviously just being at the home of golf and having the support of the home crowd, which we don't get that much.

I think it will be very special. Obviously being British, it's the most important event of the year always for me, but just extra special being at St Andrews, and I think it's one that everyone wants to win a little bit more.

**Q. What is it about this place that really gets to you? Is it the town? Is it the course? What is it?**

GEORGIA HALL: I think it's just both. Just the atmosphere and the town especially. Just that it's just all golfers. I just love coming here regardless if there's an event on or not.

I want to try and like have a place up here, that's how much I enjoy it, and I just love being around just the whole golf atmosphere. There's nothing else quite like it. I've never seen normal people just standing there watching people come in. It's just incredible.

As soon as I'm here I'm just happier. I just love being here, yeah.

**Q. Is that a course you've got the chance to play in a tournament format recently, or can you just come up?**

GEORGIA HALL: No. I played my first British Open here in 2013 when I was an amateur, so that's the last time I played a professional tournament here.

I obviously played the champions thing, the men's Open with Tiger, that four holes, and I've played here in a couple of media days. But apart from that, yeah, it'll be 11 years since my last professional event.

**Q. Do you remember the first time you played it?**

GEORGIA HALL: I remember 2016 in the first few days I played with Laura Davies, so to me that was nerve-racking. I had my dad caddying again for that one, and my first Open was just --

**Q. The first Open was the first time you had played the Old Course?**

GEORGIA HALL: Yes.

**Q. You hadn't played it previously?**

GEORGIA HALL: No. I played pretty well. Got the Silver Medal at the end of the week, so it's a course I like.

**Q. You went home, didn't you --**

GEORGIA HALL: Yeah, well I saw the video but that they said that it went on count back, but you know, so they said it goes on count back, so I didn't win. Then I obviously had my flight, and I was on my way to the airport like 20 minutes later, and, oh, sorry, we looked at the history and it's not done on count back; you won, as well.

Obviously Stacy won here in 2013, and I thought that would be such a good experience just to go up there, and just like Athaya did for me when I won. I got the medal, so, yeah.

**Q. Talk about the time you played with Tiger then.**

GEORGIA HALL: It's always been a dream to even meet him, let alone play golf with him. I remember I found out a couple months previous that I was going to play with him, and I just thought it was so cool.

They had let me know about a week before who I was playing with, and then I got a call from my manager saying that I'm paired with Tiger, and I just could not believe it. I was so nervous.



I think it was the joint amount of crowds that I had on Sunday when I won, and it was on a Monday like 5:00 p.m. It was crazy.

But it's just such a great experience, and obviously I'm so grateful to the R&A for putting me in that group. It was just a dream of mine.

**Q. Do you remember some of the conversations you had with him?**

GEORGIA HALL: I remember Rory knew a lot more about me than I thought he did. He obviously knew quite a lot about women's sports, women's golf really well anyway; and then Tiger commented on my swing a few times, saying I've got a lot of power, so that was nice.

But they put me on the same tees as obviously the men, and obviously I had such a long way in, but I was happy that I just played well in front of all those crowds.

Just listening to them talk, talk about the type of shots that they hit and their thoughts over the ball and things like that, it was just really nice to hear that I'm not the only one that gets nervous and things like that.

**Q. You realise the young players in this field look at you the same way you looked at him?**

GEORGIA HALL: Yeah.

**Q. How does that make you feel?**

GEORGIA HALL: Old. I don't know, I still feel young, but obviously I'm not a rookie anymore. This is my 11th British Open. It's unbelievable to me. It's gone very quickly.

Yeah, I just hope that I can help other British players, help encourage the youngsters coming through, because I know sometimes we don't have a huge lot. There's only five or six of us on the LPGA now that are doing good.

So I just want to see as many as possible coming through, because the amount of golf courses is so good and it's harder here than it is in the U.S. to practise and things like that.

I just think us as golfers are meant to be a little bit tougher, and I would say the majority of other countries, just because we have it harder. So when there is wind or it's there is hard weather, I don't think we're affected as much. That's why you see maybe some of us come through a little bit more when the conditions are like that.

**Q. How do you think doing well in the British Girls in the British Am leads into all of this and helps with the progression of women?**

GEORGIA HALL: Yeah, for sure. I think that being under those pressure situations I didn't really have before, and when I had that, it was like four or five days, as well. That's for the British Women and Girls, the same, it's just a very long time.

I think coming up the last one or two holes and feeling that pressure, it kind of helped me when I was in the last nine holes of when I actually won.

And I think you need to -- you can only learn from those experiences. You need to be in them and also learn to fail, because I've had situations where I've been in contention and I haven't won, and we all have. But I think what you get from it means more, and then when the time comes, you just don't want to let it slip. So that was kind of my thought when I was in contention.

But I was happy that I wasn't leading going into Sunday. I thought I took that as very positive because I felt the pressure was on her, or I told myself that it was, even though I had home because she's one shot ahead. So that was the way I kind of mentally changed it for me.

**Q. Why do you think we have like so few players out on the LPGA now?**

GEORGIA HALL: Well, when I was in England sports there was a lot of good players, and they were like similar to me at the time. And now they just don't play golf anymore, and like there were some really good ones.

I think half of it is travel. Like they don't want to live in America, they don't want to travel over there. They get homesick a lot. They don't want to live out of a suitcase. I think a lot of people don't realise that that's half the battle, not just playing golf. It's actually getting there and getting there Sunday or Monday.

It's quite a lonely life, and I think some players understandably don't want to do that. They would rather be happier doing something else, which is absolutely fine, obviously, but I think that's why.

The Americans just have it a lot easier on their PGA. Everything is just one-, two-hour flight, three-hour flight. They're back home. We have to either move there or do it in massive chunks, which means we're away more.

**Q. In terms of you dealing with that, what good things have you done to combat that difficulty, and also what**

## **mistakes have you made and learned from?**

GEORGIA HALL: Yeah, for me it was quite apparently that I didn't want to live in America. I never wanted to. Obviously people ask me before, it's my sixth, seventh year on the LPGA, so I've thought about it, but it's just not even gone any further in my mind.

I love being home and love being in the UK, and that's never going to change for me. I think preparing my schedule is very important, not playing too much, and doing it in like the West Coast Swing as a group and then come home and then the East Coast.

I think it's very important to have someone, maybe a caddie that's very close to you that -- you know, there is only me and Charley that really do this, but like we are doing it. Obviously she's my best friend and we think very similar, so I think it's great that we have each other and we get to kind of go through this journey really together like we have from like when we were 10 years old. I think it would be different if she wasn't on Tour and same the other way round.

And even though -- so I think that's very important just to have someone that is very close to you out there. And like I said, it is a lot harder. Even time difference. The amount of times I finish a round and it's 4:00 or 5:00 p.m. in America and everyone is asleep here, you're just sat there. Like you just don't know -- if you play bad you're just sat there, you can't speak to anyone.

I think that's half the mental battle of like making sure you're mentally happy and prepared to go out and play good golf.

## **Q. How much time do you get to practice when you're having to travel that much?**

GEORGIA HALL: Yeah, well, East Coast I fly on Monday, so I'll do Tuesday, Wednesday, pro-am Wednesday.

And then the West Coast I'll fly -- depends what tournament. If it's a major, I'll fly Sunday, or LA probably Sunday, so I'll probably the whole week.

And then I'll try and do three weeks in a row. I don't want to do more than three weeks in a row because that's tough. But saying that, coming up I've got six weeks in a row. But that's when I come back and play Centurion here. So for me that's playing -- I'm coming home, because I am going to stay at home.

So I kind of break it up that way.

And I've got a team event, playing with Charley, so that's kind of fun in a way. So I've kind of made it less serious in the middle bit. Kind of that's how I plan it.

Then when I get home, obviously have a couple days off and then do some practice in the middle, see my coach.

## **Q. Do you have any special memories from 2013 that you might bring with you?**

GEORGIA HALL: Hard to remember, but I think I might have played really solid that week. I remember I putted really well. Like these greens are -- obviously they're pure links greens, and I putt the best on links greens in general.

But I just don't get to play it a lot, so I'm actually really looking forward to putting on these type of greens that don't have a lot of slope, you have to hit it firm to the hole, and you definitely have to just imagine more shots on this golf course, especially when the wind gets up.

I hope we don't really have good weather because it's not really showing the golf course at its best. Like any kind of British Open, I think the weather should be slightly British. You never know what's going to happen. Yeah, hopefully we'll have a bit of wind.

## **Q. Would that be the ultimate triumph, winning a Women's Open when at St Andrews?**

GEORGIA HALL: Yeah. I said that in another interview, that if I won here, that's the only thing that would beat my win. Like if I won the U.S. Open this year, it won't beat my win at Lytham. This would only beat it in my opinion.

So I don't know if I'll ever get a chance to play in another one at St Andrews after this. I don't know when it would come around again. I'm not really going to put pressure on myself. Just play as well as I can and enjoy being here in general, which I will.

## **Q. Obviously Nelly's run of success on the LPGA Tour, just looking on, what that has done for women's golf, this kind of run of success?**

GEORGIA HALL: Yeah, I think it's fantastic. I know her quite well, and she's such a good player and great mentality, and I think it's just fantastic for the women's game, what she's doing on and off the golf course, and providing way more audience and the media coverage it's giving.

I know the amount of people that tuned in to watch her win at Chevron, the first major because it was all with -- what's his name? He's done the same thing.

**Q. Scottie.**

GEORGIA HALL: That's it, yeah. So I just think it's great for women's golf. In a way I hope it continues like that because it's just amazing to see. I just can't get my head around it, really, either. Six out of seven is just unbelievable.

**Q. The kind of mental it takes to win presumably takes a bit out of you, as well, mentally and physically.**

GEORGIA HALL: Yeah, to keep going like that and not really even pulling out of events, either, giving herself a rest. Be interesting to see. Like next week, as well, I'm sure she's going to be a favourite to win.

**Q. Colin Montgomerie said quite recently that when Tiger was in his pomp and winning, he said in the locker room the players were talking a lot and going, great, Tiger is not playing this week. Is it going to that stage with Nelly?**

GEORGIA HALL: Well, I played in LA a couple weeks ago and she pulled out, and I texted her and just said, thanks for giving us a chance.

So yeah, I think so. I think people are already thinking that. But golf is a funny game. I mean, players every year are just so up and down, and one week she's like that -- I don't know what's going to happen the next six months, but if you're coming down the stretch with her, I think for me, it would be like, wow, even if I can come down the stretch against her, I'd literally just want to win even more, I think. Like she's playing so well.

But like I say, I think it's just great for the game in general.

**Q. The flipside to that, I suppose, the thing with Tiger is they always said it put more eyeballs on the game, that kind of thing, but you've said it's bringing some of the other players happiness in the fact it's bringing more people in?**

GEORGIA HALL: Yeah, and that's what I've heard from other players, as well. Although we obviously want to win more than anything, for her to keep winning like she is, it's just doing great things for us anyway, and to promote the tournaments and the Tour in general and to make people more aware of where we are this week and what we're doing. It's only going to be a positive.

**Q. Do you think we need to be doing more to get more people watching and playing women's golf?**

GEORGIA HALL: Well, I think in this country in general, because there's a few of us play on the LPGA, it's really hard for anyone to watch it, and I know because of the timings and the time difference, that I don't have it on TV that much, either, so I think that's one thing that can definitely improve, especially in this country or actually UK.

Other than that, I think just more -- obviously the atmosphere events, what's happening at the Masters, when Lottie won, I think that's just incredible. I met her at Chevron a couple weeks ago, as well, and just to see that and have an English winner is just fantastic for the game, and I just think if we can keep doing that -- I remember 10 years ago, it's tripled, quadrupled, since I was like 15, so I think we just keep going on the path that we're going on.

I think it's important not to compare ourselves to the men, including the whole prize money questions we get. It's just they're two very different entities. We play golf differently, and we don't hit the ball as far, but I think a lot of people like to watch us because of that, because more people can relate, and the tempo and rhythm we have, it's very different to the men.

I think that's why it's kind of important to see how far we've come in the last 10 years instead of looking like it's not equal to the men yet, and I don't think it will be for a while, but I think the support we're already getting from the R&A and AIG for this event in general is providing a great example for companies and tournaments to come in and kind of rise up to their level and do the same.

**Q. In terms of your profile outside of golf, doing whatever you do away from golf, do you get recognised or spoken to?**

GEORGIA HALL: A little bit. I think in the airports more than anything. Yeah, a few times, but I don't really like to --

**Q. Are you glad of that?**

GEORGIA HALL: No, not really. When I'm outside of golf, I don't really like to talk about it that much. I really like it when people just have no idea about golf because that means I can speak about -- because I do it as my job, obviously, so the same as like if outside I suppose you don't want to talk about the Times.

But I understand it's part of what I do. For a lot of people it's their hobby and their enjoyment and passion. That's fine, yeah. I'm kind of used to it.

**Q. What would be the most surprising example of someone recognising you and feeling a bit wowed by it?**

in America.

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GEORGIA HALL: It's more like when I'm down in the supermarket. If I'm not wearing golf clothes a lot of people don't, but when I'm like -- look really crap, got like rubbish clothes on then people recognise me. And I'll think, how did you -- but yeah, that's probably the extent of it. I don't know.

**Q. Have you ever been mistaken for Olivia Coleman, the actress?**

GEORGIA HALL: No. Isn't she the Queen?

**Q. She was, yeah.**

GEORGIA HALL: The person I get mistaken for the most, even though we look completely different, is Charley. Yeah, I get stuff in my locker. I think it's the surname. But then a lot of times at events I get, great shot, Charley.

**Q. Do you think Nelly will do a Michelle Wie or a Sorenstam and play in a men's event because she'll be asked to, won't she?**

GEORGIA HALL: Yeah, probably, and I think she'd definitely make the cut. She's a great player. She hits the ball far enough. If I was her, I'd want to. If I got an invite, sure. I think it would be great, as well, just to showcase her golf, women's golf in a men's event. That would get more coverage.

**Q. You haven't discussed it with her?**

GEORGIA HALL: No. No.

**Q. If Nelly did play, I saw some chatter where they'd be looking at a shorter course or a course at altitude. If you were to do it, would it be a links course you'd be looking to be playing at, if you were playing against the men?**

GEORGIA HALL: A couple years ago I kind of got invited to play in one, and I didn't because the course -- I knew the course was too long. I knew that I would have 3-woods into par-4s, and if I want to play, I want to try and make -- obviously have a good chance of making the cut. I was already looking at Switzerland on the men's European Tour, things like that, but I think, yeah, probably like a links course or a short one where I can at least have irons in.

Then I think if we can have irons in, we can have a good chance. I would only play if I knew I was playing well and that I can reach because I want to try and make the cut or like do as well as I could there. I think it would be a great experience, but I think, yeah, it would be great if Nelly did it