

AIG Women's Open

Press Conference

Tuesday, 20 August 2024

Charley Hull



MIKE WOODCOCK: Good morning, everyone, we'll make a start. Welcome to our first preview press conference for the 2024 AIG Women's Open.

I'm delighted to welcome England's Charley Hull and World No. 10 to the interview room.

Charley thanks for joining us this morning. Last year you were runner-up at Walton Heath. How much would it mean to you to go one better this week here in St Andrews?

CHARLEY HULL: Yeah, a hundred per cent. Like, obviously it's the Home of Golf. It would be a special win. Something that you've always dreamed of as, like, a baby. So, yeah, it would be very special.

MIKE WOODCOCK: How are you enjoying the St Andrews experience, the Old Course factor? It is quite a place to come and compete for a big championship.

CHARLEY HULL: Yeah, I teed it up on the back nine yesterday morning, and as you walk down, like, 17 and 18 you get, like, goosebumps. It's pretty cool.

MIKE WOODCOCK: And is this the first time you've played in a championship here of this scale?

CHARLEY HULL: No. I played here as my first year as a professional in 2013 when I was 17 years old.

MIKE WOODCOCK: And do you have memories of that week?

CHARLEY HULL: Yeah, actually, like, the Solheim Cup announcement was the Sunday night that year when I got picked for my first Solheim Cup. It was a pretty special memory.

Q. You talk a little about how 2013 was your first experience. How much did you play here as an amateur, and how much do you remember from kind of that first 2013 experience, as well?

CHARLEY HULL: So when I was nine years old, we actually had the HSBC Wee Wonders, like, the

championship here. But it wasn't on the Old Course. It was around, like, on one of the nine-hole golf courses, and that was the first time I ever come to St Andrews.

And then I watched, I think it was the 2010 British Open, Men's Open Championship here. Come up to watch Tiger. And I played here that year as well or the year after in -- it was an amateur event here. I actually stayed with Sir Michael Bonallack back then. He was a pretty cool guy. Because I knew his daughter, Glenna, from Woburn. Yeah, just have a lot of good memories.

And I played here again in March time, April time, and that was fun. I did something with the R&A and got to play 18 holes. But it is a really special place and I really like the pies on the halfway house. But they didn't have them here yesterday; I was gutted.

Q. You've traditionally enjoyed parkland courses, and you played well at the Scottish last week. What have you learned about how to really get around links courses successfully?

CHARLEY HULL: Well, a couple of weeks ago, my coach got me working on doing a lot of three-quarter swings because my golf swing got a little bit too long.

But now I kind of understand why he's got me working on the three-quarters because he's just kind of introduced me to get a low ball flight for these couple of weeks coming up for the links. So I think you've just got to be patient out there.

I do find St Andrews, actually, a harder links for me, not necessarily because it's super tough but because there's not -- you can't really -- the lines in the fairways, like, it just looks very open. So it's quite hard to pick, like, a point in the distance.

But usually I like them really tight, like, fairways. Like, Sahalee, because you kind of the golf course -- like you see the ball shape and, like, where to hit it.

So I think out here, you've got to be very focussed on your point and your target. So that was my caddie, Adam's, job.

Q. The support you got in this championship 12



months ago was incredible. How cool was that for you, and how exciting is it to have the prospect to have that atmosphere going again?

CHARLEY HULL: Yeah, it was really cool. Because obviously last year it was, like, 20 minutes from my house. So I was staying at home and I felt pretty relaxed. It was so nice to see the fans out there and everything. I think it was a very good catch in the area from London, as well, so we got a lot of spectators.

But obviously now the Home of Golf, hopefully there will be good crowds this week, and yeah, it's just lovely to be out there and people cheering you on.

Q. The amateur event you mentioned, would that be the St Rule Trophy?

CHARLEY HULL: I think -- I was trying to remember actually the other day, the name of it. But yeah, I think it was that one.

Q. What was your verdict on last week's performance you? You got yourself in the mix. Didn't win, obviously, but do you take positives away from that?

CHARLEY HULL: Yeah, I think how I didn't quite putt how I wanted to in the final round. But it was quite tricky because of the wind. And I putted pretty well all week. But you know what it's like in links golf when you have, like, a four-foot putt, but the wind is blowing and you've got to allow for, like, half a cup of break.

But I feel pretty positive. Because obviously I haven't got the best track record on links golf, but I'm learning every time, and I'm just enjoying it. Yeah, it's good.

Q. Mix of bad weather last week and the forecast pretty grim this week. How much of an advantage can that be playing last week coming into this week?

CHARLEY HULL: A hundred per cent. Like, it come to the point last week in the final round, I think it was on the 16th hole, the wind died a little bit, and it was probably -- my caddie said, "Just hit a normal 7-iron."

And I was thinking to myself, "How do I hit a normal 7-iron?" Because I've been used to hit it, like, punching low all week. So I set up with the ball back in my stance, and I hit a rubbish shot to the right and I just realised to myself, oh, I need to put it back in my stance now.

Yeah, it was good to be playing in the wind. Because hopefully it's windy this week, and it's just a different -- it's a bit more of a challenge. I really enjoyed that, like, the grind

out there.

Q. In recent years, a lot of talk about people driving it longer and longer; that if the conditions are right, and it's a big if, but the par 4s are becoming a bit easy to target. Just wonder from your experience 11 years ago in your practise rounds, how you think it's going to play?

CHARLEY HULL: I can't really remember too much from where I was hitting it 11 years ago.

But I just remember when I played here in, I think it was May, the wind was actually a different direction. And then yesterday, the wind was the opposite direction. So holes, like, I think is it 10, 11, 12 -- so 10, I could go on when I played here in April.

And then for some reason I think I played off the wrong tee when I played here, like, back then I could drive, I think it was 12 as well. But yesterday it was, like, a 4-iron short of the bunkers and then, like, I hit it on to the green so was a lot different.

Q. Only the third time it's ever been held here. Would you like to see it become more of a regular thing?

CHARLEY HULL: Yeah, a hundred per cent. I think it would be really cool. It's, like, it would be cool if it was here every, like, five years or I don't know however long, it would be really cool.

Q. Staying with Sir Michael Bonallack, how did that come about, and how special was that, obviously a legend of the game.

CHARLEY HULL: Yeah, I was brought up, joined Woburn Golf Club when I was eight years old, and his daughter, Glenna, she was, like, the secretary there, and I got on well with his friend daughter as well, Harriet.

And just kind of going down there and she said, "My Mum and Dad, you can stay with them." And I come up here and I stayed with them. He actually came out and watched me one really horribly, windy day when we played, and he was, like, really impressed with my game because I used, like, blades and stuff. And we used to always, like, have dinner at night and everything and it was great. Then I stayed with him at the 2013 British Open. They was lovely, lovely people.

Q. He passed away not that long ago. Will his memory maybe inspire you a little this week?

CHARLEY HULL: Yeah, a hundred per cent. He was a

lovely man. Very lovely.

Q. Are you back to a hundred per cent from the injury, and how has that progressed over the last couple week?

CHARLEY HULL: Definitely. I think, like, the first round of the Olympics was more just because of nerves. Like putting in a lot of work, but coming back after that five weeks off, I just get, like, a little bit nervous. Like, I have all my, like, little check points. And at home I was playing some great golf.

But it was just, like, the first round of the Olympics, I don't know why. And then last three rounds I was, like, under par and then I was back to myself and carried it on last week.

My shoulder just got a little bit tight so I had, like, acupuncture, and, like,, needles in it, like, every other day. I've actually got it after this. Because when it's cold, it can play up a bit. I've got -- is it degenerate arthritis, in it, as well. So when it does get cold, it gets a bit stiff. So just try to cope it warm.

Apart from that, I'm healthy and ready to go.

MIKE WOODCOCK: Charley, thank you for joining us and best of luck this week.

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