

Trust Golf Women's Scottish Open

Wednesday, August 11, 2021

Leven, Fife, Scotland, UK

Dumbarnie Links

Paul Bush

Dr. Prin Singhanart

Clive Clark

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the Trust Golf Women's Scottish Open. I'd like to welcome Dr. Prin, the founder of Trust Golf who are making their debut as our title sponsor; Paul Bush, director of events for VisitScotland, huge supporters of the women's game, partner since 2007; and also virtually we have Clive Clark, the designer of this beautiful course, and he's joining us from California, but I think everyone here is delighted to hear that he will be on site on Saturday.

First of all, Dr. Prin, welcome. How do you feel as you look out across the course and see your branding?

DR. PRIN SINGHANART: I can't be any happier I think in my entire career here. It's simply stunning with the golf course, with the new partner.

I would say for me I'm overwhelmed and overjoyed seeing everything happening these past few days, and especially when I have a talk with all my players bringing here from Thailand and all the players that are already here. Everyone is so happy with seeing the course.

In this situation, like during the COVID pandemic, I would say that it has to be the great support also from the government, the golf course and of course the event managers, which is IMG. All three elements are very important, and I would say that management is very brave to take on the journey.

We are the new partner here because it's new and this is like the new golf course, and it's only like one years old or two years old, like very new. You're so brave, to get everything ready in time just for this event and for me you did brilliantly and for the course conditions, I have really nothing to complain about on the call here.

THE MODERATOR: This is your first international Scottish Open, and VisitScotland have a great tradition with women's golf. Can you tell us about Scotland was an important first step for you to take internationally?

DR. PRIN SINGHANART: When I was young starting off, the original debut, it's the Home of Golf, which is St Andrews, Home of Golf in Scotland, if you start a golf journey, it has to be here in Scotland.

And VisitScotland I cannot say thank you enough and be grateful enough. You have been a huge support and helping my journey through this venture. I never actually working with such a very -- I would say the government is very supportive here. Even in the pandemic, I've been back to several countries, we had a problem with having to organise any big event.

During the event, you can see that the protocol for the testing in the COVID, it's rigid and for us to have the event happening in Scotland during this time, I know even in U.K. before then, that's been going on. You have to like to open up the country, to open up the city, it really means a lot. Like we need to live. How can we live together during this pandemic time, how can we actually move forward without the support of the government and especially with VisitScotland this event could happen.

And I'm glad, and I feel glad for really, for me, actually. It's just like you are -- I would say that I'm having a very good day as a visitor. For me it's the first step towards -- I'm aiming to go with the university, but being like overlooking with all this, I am feeling like I am being reassured. I just have to say thank you.

This is like, you know, with Scotland, I cannot really be -- for me, it's really touching. So if I would start my journey, I would say Scotland is the best place and I would never, ever regret it for having the decision to start my journey here.

THE MODERATOR: I think that brings us quite nicely on to your thoughts on the charities the tournament will support this year.

DR. PRIN SINGHANART: Yeah, the charity, as I tell you here, it's been quite a year. Just like me, I've been in Thailand for one year and three months, cannot travel simply because of COVID-19 and I feel that the healthcare has been working really, really hard in the past year.

In Thailand, we are really, I think we are in that situation that whatever happen in U.K. last year now happening in Thailand, and U.K. actually donating their vaccinations to Thailand, huge amounts that I think actually helping a lot of Thai people right now.

Because of these vaccinations and these COVID that actually happening right now, I would like to say that everybody in this event, everybody on Saturday, Trust Golf will donate USD \$200 per birdie or better, we will match the same amount that we are going to donate to NHS programs here, and with Charity Together, and we will match the same amount to the programs in Thailand for the vaccinations program that is happening.

Whatever amount that all the players are getting birdies, how many birdies they are getting or better, we multiply that by USD \$200 and we are matching the same amount for the Thai foundations.

THE MODERATOR: Moving day is lots of birdies.

Paul, thank you so much for joining us. Obviously VisitScotland are massive supporters of golf. I wanted you to talk about how important this tournament is to your portfolio.

PAUL BUSH: Does my birdie this morning qualify for \$200?

DR. PRIN SINGHANART: This is not Saturday.

PAUL BUSH: Thank you for the invitation today, delighted to be here.

I'm excited to be here. For me I'm excited before an event, we have lots of great events in Scotland but coming to a new venue. So Clive, David, I think you've done a fantastic job. I had the privilege of playing with Georgia this morning who was incredibly complimentary of the course. She thinks it's in great condition.

The greens are running true and fair, and they are a really nice speed. Dr. Prin, a really great new partner for us. And I think the fact that we have moved this event to a solo, stand-alone venue gives you an idea of our aspiration of growing the event in terms of its credibility. I can't speak highly enough of the date in the calendar, so thanks to Ross and IMG and all his team and also The European

Tour in terms of the men's event. We have now got the two premiere event dates on the calendar I think in world golf.

We are the only country in the world that has a double-co-sanctioned event in an LET / LPGA / European Tour / PGA Tour event now, and we are also the only country in the world that can say we have a men's and Women's Open event before a major. So I think that's pretty special.

On the back of Tokyo, I think we've got a great field this week which again is testament to the work that all the partners have done to bring it together. You know, as we said when we were all here a few weeks ago at the Media Day, I think it's our collective responsibility to grow this event to even greater status.

I had an interesting discussion this morning with Georgia about, will we ever see equal prize money in women's golf. We have it in tennis and the four majors have equal prize money. I know that's probably perceived by some people as a pipedream but I think it has to be an aspiration; that we can get to a point where we've got equal prize money and that would make such a massive difference for the women's game of golf.

THE MODERATOR: Women's golf and women's sport is high up on the agenda. Can you talk about why that did work for you.

PAUL BUSH: We've been on a journey, and that's a much used terminology to some extent but the natural step for us after The Ryder Cup was the Solheim Cup, and I think the Solheim Cup was an important watershed in female sport in Scotland. In that year we had a number of changes or events in women's sport. We had a cricket event not too far away from here in Dundee, and a whole host of others.

I think that whole equality and diversity debate has been an important driver; and the fact that we now have this event on its own platform and on its own new venue with the criticality of the dates shows that women's sport and women's golf is equally as important as men's sport and men's golf, and why shouldn't it be. If you looked at Tokyo, the women's sport was as good if not better than the men's sport.

So I think we are going to see over the next four days some great athletes with some great performances, and I think on Sunday night we'll have a great winner for you to very prestigiously present the trophy.

DR. PRIN SINGHANART: Thank you. Delighted.

THE MODERATOR: Would you like to take the time to show on Jock MacVicar Award which will be awarded for the leading Scottish player in the field?

PAUL BUSH: We were all very fond of Jock. I know he's colloquially known as the Doyen, but he was more than the Doyen for all of us. He's one of those people that was always smiley, happy -- Martin might disagree, he was also grumpy as well but he was a fantastic supporter of not just Scottish golf but Scottish sport in general. I think this trophy is fitting to be presented to the best Scot on Sunday night.

THE MODERATOR: Clive, thank you for joining us, and you're the reason we're all here in Dumbarrie. I heard today that you haven't managed to get to Dumbarrie Links since it opened and you haven't been here since September 2019. So it must feel incredible that you'll arrive not only on site to an open club, but your first time at the club with a full-flown LPGA tournament going on such a short time after you joined.

CLIVE CLARK: I think you said I haven't been on quite for quite a while because of COVID; is that correct?

THE MODERATOR: That's correct.

CLIVE CLARK: Thank you for asking. Yeah, I mean, COVID, it's struck the world, hasn't it.

I was there for over four months when we were in construction of the golf course, and I was back the following year for quite some time when we were growing in the golf course, but that year it was quite playable, even though we were growing it in, which was rather fun for me because the course was closed.

So I had the course pretty much to myself which gave me the opportunity to see how it's playing in the early stages. Greens staff have done a terrific job I think to get the course in order so quickly. Even the day we opened, just over a year ago, it was in very good condition, particularly considering it's a brand new course.

Things here in California grow a little quicker than they do in Scotland obviously and I'm located in the desert near Palm Springs where you throw the grass down roundabout overseeding time and it practically hits you in the chin when it comes up.

But very much looking forward to the event. As you mentioned, I'll be over on Saturday about lunchtime from California.

Dr. Prin, it is really, really exceptional that you have come

in with a sponsor with your organisation, your team. Ladies golf I think is fantastic. I watch quite a lot of it worldwide on the television here. The standard of play and the way the girls conduct themselves, the way they swing a golf club, the scores they do are quite exceptional, and a lot of people here in America love watching the ladies because they can relate to the golf swings perhaps more than the men.

So it's very popular over here, and Dr. Prin, I'm glad, so glad you have come in, and I can tell you have great ambitions to drive this event forward.

I touch my cap to you. Thank you so much.

THE MODERATOR: I wonder if you can just give us a quick summary of holes to look out for that the girls will find challenging, a lot of risk and reward holes. If you to talk about a few elements you'd like the media to notice when watching the coverage.

CLIVE CLARK: It's very much in many respects a traditional links course but with a modern twist. We are on 345 acres and many of the great links courses, they go out on the coast and come back, and so a lot of the holes run in a similar direction.

But Dumbarrie Links, that is not the case because we have this huge site, we could easily get if we wanted to, a couple of golf courses on the one site. That's the magnitude of the site.

So it's going to be a test in the respect that it will bring pretty much every club in the bag into play. No two holes are running the same direction, and we've got the elevation in the back part of the site. So we have a number of holes that have a gorgeous backdrop, the first and fourth, and it's a very visible golf course. I designed it that way.

There are not a load of blind holes. There are not a lot of elephants or any elephants buried in the greens. It's a course -- it's a thinking-person's golf course. You've got a lot of options. You've got risk and reward. You've got three par 4s which with the right wind and tee, they are drivable. We should see a few eagles but depends on the wind. I noticed the forecast; we have the prevailing wind, which is west/southwest, so on the first tee, for instance, the wind is coming from the right. We hope it's not a severe wind, just a breeze. But that will create a nice test.

A lot of good players in the field. I think it's a wonderful field we have here, quite exceptional. I think it's the best field that this event has ever had. I know everybody is really looking forward to all these top players and if they shoot lights-out, that's great. If it's a challenge for them, it's

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

going to be interesting. Looking forward to see how they are going to play all the 18 holes.

THE MODERATOR: I think we are all are excited to see how it's going to unfold.

Q. Talking about the status of this event, and the men's Scottish Event, a Rolex Series Event, but how exciting was it when you heard the possibility that the Scottish Open would become the first European Tour event on the PGA TOUR event? Was it exciting when that was brought to the table?

PAUL BUSH: That was an historic moment for Scottish golf and I don't think we should underestimate what happened last week with that.

But I think it's equally important to have this event and that event on the same pedestal because I think they are equally as important, they are equally as prestigious and we have the best golfers in the world at the events now. No other country can say that. You know, we are very proud of that. It's taken a long time for us to get to that position.

Rand I think the fact that the Scottish government have offered as Dr. Prin said that long-term support, it's quite unique. You see many countries in the world that come and go. Scotland have been in for the long haul, and I hope will remain in for the long haul, as well. As Dr. Prin says, it's the Home of Golf and it's very fitting.

Q. This event, one of the concerns about the men is that the Scottish contingent will reduce. Are you keen to ensure there is a decent Scottish contingent in that field?

PAUL BUSH: Obviously initially they will have to get that by merits but I was delighted to see last week Grant Forrest win at the Fairmont just around the corner from here. Let's hope that is the start of the younger or developing Scotts to push through and follow through what people like Bob MacIntyre are doing, as well.

Q. Your course, everybody is singing its praises but I'd like to know when you designed it, what other courses did you have in mind from your experience in amateur golf and links golf over here?

CLIVE CLARK: Well, yes, I was fortunate because as an amateur, I turned pro when I was 20. But I had a very good amateur career and battled away with Michael Bonnalack in many of the finals and things like the English Stroke Play and various things; The Open Championship, I played in 12 Open Championships, and I worked for BBC

commentating on another 18. So I went to 30 Opens, which were always played as you know at a links golf course.

With amateur golf, many events were played on links. It's a very specialised type of golf and it's a rare type of golf. It's the tradition of the game. It's the way it started. There are not that many links golf courses in the entire world. There's about 240. But they are not all five-star golf courses, if you will.

So if you take the famous and the high-end golf course, there probably around the world aren't more than 40 links which is quite astounding. It's rare. It's a rare beast. And sometimes when the wind blows, it is a beast.

And it's wonderful. I love links golf because you can play all sorts of different shots, running shots, under the wind, working into the wind off the tee.

And around the greens, here at Dumbarrie, we have some run-offs just miss the green, the ball runs into a little dell and now you have to decide what you're going to play. You have to be creative. You might want to play with a sand iron or 6-iron, or you might want to use a utility club or you might want to putt it.

We have large aprons here which is fine grass, fescue, which allows to you putt from off the green. So there's great variety, and it gives the player, particularly these top professionals an opportunity to create shots. I think they will enjoy that.

Q. Just a quick one for Paul. You mentioned chatting to Georgia about the equal prize money, this is slightly related to that and it might not have been your decision but you may be able to discuss it, and that's the change with the tournament title from Ladies Scottish Open to women's Scottish Open. I just wanted to understand a little about the theory behind that change.

PAUL BUSH: I think it's more befitting now in terms of the title to call it the Women's Scottish Open than the Ladies Scottish Open, and we are just following the nomenclature of other events around the world.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you so much for joining us, and we look forward to a great week.

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