

Trust Golf Women's Scottish Open

Sunday, August 15, 2021

Leven, Fife, Scotland, UK

Dumbarnie Links

Ryann O'Toole

Press Conference



Q. Here with the Trust Golf Women's Scottish Open after 11 years on Tour, how does it feel to walk away an LPGA Tour champion?

RYANN O'TOOLE: Words cannot describe what I am feeling right now. I still can't even -- it didn't seem real. It seems very surreal, and definitely a dream come true. I can't believe it's taken this long to win but it's finally here.

THE MODERATOR: You talked a little bit out there about kind of the mindset going into today. Yesterday you said, "I'm going for the win." You co-lead after the third round for the first time in your career. What were you thinking as you stepped to the first tee this morning?

RYANN O'TOOLE: The first three rounds, I think even the last couple of round, I've felt very calm, patient. I could tell that my game was getting there. I feel like I've just had this different sense to me this year where the game feels good and I know where the ball is going and I know what my swing is doing and if it gets off a little bit, I know how to fix it.

But for the most part, I felt staying patient was key. Even the last few events, I've been putting myself up there and couldn't get that final fourth round going. I just think patience. It was never a playing issue or anything like that. It's just getting things to fall or things kind of go your way.

This week I felt like I really started off strong. I kind of told myself going into this week, let's get a first round a little lower than I typically have. Like I typically have a slow start, maybe 1- or 2-under but it was nice to shoot 4-under the first day, even given the circumstances of the weather, and then back it up the next day with another solid round.

To go into the weekend and shoot what I did I think I just stayed completely in the moment because I didn't even think about shooting 8-under today.

THE MODERATOR: I was going to say, did it feel

memorable to you when you were out there? Did you black out for a moment or during the round?

RYANN O'TOOLE: I honestly feel it was one shot at a time. There was moments I go to the bathroom and I'm sitting there by myself and it's quiet and I'm, okay, don't think about anything else, just back to what is the tee shot coming up. Or I would draw on my yardage book just to distract myself back to the present and not get ahead of myself.

Because at the end of the day I didn't know what anybody else was doing. I know obviously what the girls in my group were doing, but there was plenty of girls that were right there that could have had a great day and had no idea. I didn't know what the girls in front of us were doing but even groups ahead of that. Trying to stick to my game plan and hope that my caddie put me in position accordingly and if we needed to press or we needed to keep chugging along, so I think that went really well.

Q. What does it mean to win the first one in Scotland?

RYANN O'TOOLE: Having Irish in my background, O'Toole, I think regardless, winning over here, I guess take it back to my first year, second year on Tour and playing my first British Open and learning what true links was. I felt like I got my butt kicked.

And after that I was like, wow, there's so much to learn and change and grasp on this style of golf and after that, I fell in love with it, how to hit a really low tee shot, how to play the contours of the green and the course and I just feel like I love this style of golf and to have this be my first win, it seems fitting.

Q. Where was the butt kicking?

RYANN O'TOOLE: Royal Liverpool. It blew. One of the rounds got called for the day. I had never played in anything like that, and I remember hitting tee shots that just flung across, like those aren't going to work here.

Q. What do you draw on your yardage book?



RYANN O'TOOLE: Waves. Flowers. Imaging my happy place, being at the beach surfing. I just try to random stuff that's easy to draw that just occupies my mind. I was drawing the 18th hole at St Andrews, stuff like that.

Q. Presumably after 228 or 227 (tournaments), did doubts begin to form that you would make that breakthrough?

RYANN O'TOOLE: Yeah, it definitely was one of those like as a kid I dreamed of being No. 1 and dreaming of going out there and being this athletic golfer that just added a spice to the game and then, you know, life doesn't go that direction.

Yeah, you start pressing and putting doubt, and wondering, is my time ever going to come; do I have the ability to, you know, make this happen; are the stars going to align, because that's what I felt like. I think this year, after last year, COVID year was hard. I didn't get to play the Scottish or the British. I had got COVID so I was stuck in the States. I was so happy to be able to come over here and play this year.

But I just think with that whiplash of last year and just the uncertainty and the offness, it kind of just brought this motivation for this year to have steadiness back to our normal schedule and things like that. Things are going well. I'm working well with my coach, Jorge Prado, I've had him since 2014. He's done wonders for my game. I don't see myself ever having a different golf coach.

My caddie that I had this year, he retired last week go, figure. So me and Mikey I think work really well together. That was a surprise and something that I thought, wow, I thought -- I didn't think I would be changing caddies in the middle of this year. Didn't hurt me.

I love where my equipment is at. PXG has done wonderful. This is my fifth year with them. I think their product has come a long, long way. I strike their irons really well. Driver is phenomenal. No complaints.

Q. More champagne tonight?

RYANN O'TOOLE: More champagne, yeah. Maybe more in my belly than on me.

Q. The caddie change, was that expected?

RYANN O'TOOLE: No. To be honest so we finished Evian on Sunday and walked off the green and he started crying and said, "I have to talk to you about something."

I was like, "Am I in trouble? Was I mean? What

happened?"

He said out of the blue that he's homesick and is ready to retire and wants to start a family. Loves competing, but the downtime in the hotel room and stuff was eating at him. He wanted to be back home. What are you supposed to do? Can't get mad or upset.

I would have loved him to stick around for the British, but I guess this worked out in the end. It's just the little bit of difference that Mikey provided me. He really painted a picture with every shot, start it here, finish it here, and it's like, no problem, I can do that, and away went this week.

Q. His surname?

RYANN O'TOOLE: Curry. Michael Curry.

Who was your old caddie? Reed Martin. Great guy. He came from the PGA TOUR and he's going to go back to Korn Ferry and was like, let's give the women's tour a chance. Literally between him crying and telling me it was nothing to do with me, I think truly he just wanted to be home.

Q. How many years was he with you?

RYANN O'TOOLE: Just this year starting. He was working with Mark had you been barred for three years prior to me. But I think he's about to ask his -- I can't actually say that, that would give it away. He'll hopefully be engaged soon and has a dog and just life's at home.

Q. How did you know Mike?

RYANN O'TOOLE: Him and Sophia split right after Evian and so I know he was looking. To be honest I wanted him at the beginning of the year. So I reached out at the beginning of the year and he had already committed to Sophia Popov. So, well, here I am now.

Q. My first question is: Do you think links golf brings out the best in you and fits your personality the best?

RYANN O'TOOLE: I don't know how to take that question, fits my personality the best. A little sparky, is that what you're saying?

I do. I think links, especially when it's windy, challenges the ball-striker. I feel like my best part of my game is my iron play. I would think so. And then being able to have that really low tee driver helps in the wind, so if it's any crosswind or anything like that, I really don't sit on the tee box and fear where the heck the ball is going to go. I think the biggest challenge for me this week was getting the

speeds down on the greens, whether we were into the wind or downwind. I just feel like having it being windy, the greens are not running what we're used to. I just felt like what I always felt good on 5-footers or anything, just trying to get it to the hole. I never had an issue getting a putt to the hole and this week I left a lot in the jar, but I guess it still worked out.

Q. You've had a really consistent year. You said that things are just aligning. Is there one area or one decision that you made that you really feel has set you on this path to the winner's circle this year?

RYANN O'TOOLE: You know, I think you get to a point in your life where you're sitting here going, okay, I'm getting married in December, and okay, my clock's ticking, I want to have kids. Like how much longer am I going to be out here. I thought maybe this year would be my last year or I don't even know, I haven't even really announced that. I've been kind of playing it by ear.

I think just kind of letting go of this, I've got to make something happen, I've got to do this; it's just accepting there's more to life. There's a future of other things, and I think that just kind of eased up out here rather than the pressure of just making the pressure -- I'm Ryann in a lot of different ways rather than just Ryann the golfer.

I feel like it's been a long time coming as far as all the work and effort I've been putting towards getting to where I am today. It's always a combination of where your swing is at, where your head is at, your team with your caddie, I think that makes a huge difference. It's a partnership out there, and how you guys communicate and all that. It's funny, this is the first week we worked together and I win. So, who knows? I'm excited to see what happens next week.

Q. So did what happened today just prolong your career for certain?

RYANN O'TOOLE: Don't tell Gina. I don't know. I'm trying to figure that out. I've never wanted to be a mom on Tour as far as having a kid and doing all that. It doesn't sound fun to me. But at the same time, I don't know if I could stop playing golf now.

THE MODERATOR: Speaking of Gina, there is a question on Zoom. We saw Gina on the green there watching you walk up 18 and you saw the emotion from her and the emotion from the two of you when she was able to pour champagne on you. What does it mean for you to have this win with her on the green and just the journey that you two have been on to get to this moment?

RYANN O'TOOLE: You know, I said earlier, winning,

there's plenty of weeks I've been out here by myself and my parents or Gina haven't been out here. You think of whipping and you're like who, will be out there to pure champagne on you or who is going to be there to greet you or who has been next to you on the off weeks or next to you when you cried because you were frustrated of missing cut or not playing well on the weekend or whatever.

She's definitely been there for me. She's always been on the other end, every time I go to play, I call her before I tee off, right when I get done, just talk about my round or to wish me luck. To see the emotion in her and to be there, she knows how hard I work and how much that this game has cut me open and how much this game has now given back to me.

It's so nice to be able to share that, and to be myself out there and to have her greet me on the green and just live in a world today that I'm not scared to hide that.

THE MODERATOR: I love that -- sorry.

RYANN O'TOOLE: Thanks.

THE MODERATOR: Carnoustie is ahead of us next week. What are your thoughts and obviously going in with a win, how much confidence are you feeling in your game after what you were able to do on the links?

RYANN O'TOOLE: I want to go in with the same game plan as this week. Obviously expectations are going to be different. I don't see how they can't be; I'd be lying to myself. But I just think proving that I can do it, if I take the game that I had this week, there's no reason that I don't have a shot next week. I always wanted to see what happens when I break the seal, what would happen to the future.

Q. So I hope it's okay if I ask this, but if you were going to retire at the end of this year and you hadn't won, how would that have eaten at you? How big of a hole was that?

RYANN O'TOOLE: Between you and I, it definitely would have ate at me. I definitely feel like it would have been unfinished business and something I never would have known what the feel is. Now that I've had a taste, I feel like that's going to be a hard one to give up.

So I might have to like have a little chat and figure out what my next steps are. There was honestly no actual set plan to retire. It was just a question of, my clock's ticking, and I know that as a female, and what do I want to do going forward.

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But that mainly was the thought process. My sister just had a kid and she's like, he needs cousins, let's golf I'm just like, oh my gosh, okay. Hang on.

So I'm still trying to figure out like one step at a time, just one week at time a time.

THE MODERATOR: Where is the trophy going to go?

RYANN O'TOOLE: I think I need a trophy room. I do. I really think so. It's going to go in my pillow between -- next to me tonight maybe. But till then, maybe I can start making something in my gym at home.

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