

ISPS HANDA World Invitational

Thursday, August 11, 2022

Northern Ireland

Galgorm Castle & Massereene Golf Club

Thomas Aiken

Quick Quotes

Q. Thomas, with your last competitive start coming in December of last year, you might have been forgiven for some rustiness out there today. 4-under to start the week, how do you reflect on that?

THOMAS AIKEN: Yeah, first of all, it's great to be back. It's been a weird three years for me with a few family issues in the beginning and then COVID, now the green card application and couldn't leave the country.

So it's been a really weird three years. Not a lot of tournament golf, as you say, but definitely created a bit of a hunger. I kept practicing through it all and was ready to go when I got the nod, which happened to be four days ago.

So, yeah, it's great to be here. Didn't expect the weather to be like this in Ireland. Maybe it's because it's my first week back.

But, yeah, very pleased to have a bogey-free round. As you say, normally when you come back from lack of competitive golf the rust is more mental than physical.

I think I managed to prove to myself that -- seems like I got a little bit of mental strength, so I was very happy with the bogey-free round.

Q. Very different format this week also. How much do you enjoy that, going from one course to another?

THOMAS AIKEN: Not particularly. It's a lot more work, especially when you hadn't played them. I hadn't played both of these courses, and it's not exactly a golf course you can just hit it, especially Massareene. It's really tricky. May be short on the card, but almost plays tougher than the other golf course. It's so tree lined and you've really got to specifically hit it on certain points in the fairway just to have a shot at the greens. With it being firm and bouncy, that makes it even trickier.

So very pleased with today. Yeah, I mean, two courses, a



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lot of work, doing some homework, but managed to put it in the last couple days.

Obviously different having the ladies here. Yeah, it's great to see them. I think there is a lot of players on the golf course which makes it a little challenging, but other than that, it seemed to flow pretty well today.

If it stays like this the whole week I'm very happy.

Q. As you mentioned, you head to Galgorm in high spirits tomorrow. Kind of a clean state in a way. You have to start again as such.

THOMAS AIKEN: Yeah, well, it's nice to get the other course out of way first and have three rounds on one golf course. I mean, they are playing pretty similarly tee to green, but the greens are very different. These are burnt out but quicker than Galgorm.

So go do some putting this afternoon to get used to that pace. It's better I think playing this one first and having consistent pace throughout the week as opposed to chop ping and changing.

It's a tricky one. Dunhill Links is the another tricky one with the three courses, but we know them so well it's not tiring for us anymore. We normally play one or two nine-hole practice rounds and off we go.

So it's an interesting format, but as long as the weather stays like this I'm happy.

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