

NBC Sports Group Media Conference

Wednesday, July 10, 2024

Dan Hicks
Brad Faxon
Luke Donald
Jim Mackay
Press Conference



up to everything I had heard and more.

I don't remember a ton about final leaderboards through all these years of doing these broadcasts, but I will never forget signing off of that broadcast that year and seeing the numbers - they're still entrenched in my mind - 20, 17 and 6. Those were the top three scores all under par, 20, 17 and 6: Stenson, Mickelson, and J.B. Holmes was third, a mere 14 shots back. It was just incredible to start off an Open like that.

We may never -- we probably won't ever see separation like that again, but now doing our eighth Open at NBC, this event is so distinct and so special, and some of our crew will be heading directly to Paris for the Olympics, including myself, and as we do, I just have to pinch myself how lucky we've been to be a part of these global events. It's truly a privilege. I can't wait for an incredible three weeks beginning in Scotland and then going over to Paris for the Olympics. It's a pretty solid broadcast double.

I also want to say, really looking forward to working with Luke Donald again, getting his perspective, a guy that obviously grew up in England with such a passion for the championship, so I think that's really going to be a special part of our coverage this time around.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much, Dan. As Dan mentioned, we're happy to have Luke Donald with us as an analyst for the Open. He's been able to make some time for us today ahead of his tee time starting off tomorrow at the Scottish Open, so we're thrilled to have him with us in the booth next week at Royal Troon.

LUKE DONALD: Thank you, Jamie, and yeah, welcome, everyone. Thank you for being on this call.

As Jamie and Dan said, yeah, I'm calling from the Scottish Open this week at the Renaissance Club, so not too much away from Troon just on the other side of the coast, and really excited, again, to join the NBC team to be an analyst. I had a lot of fun with Dan and Mike Tirico and Brad in the booth at the Cognizant Classic and the API, and to obviously do this again at a major championship at The Open Championship is very exciting for me.

I've played two Opens at Royal Troon, in 2004 and 2016. I'm familiar with the golf course. It's a great little golf

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon or good morning, depending on where you're dialing in from. Thank you very much for joining our NBC Sports Open Championship media conference call today. In a moment we will be joined by play-by-play commentator Dan Hicks, analysts Luke Donald and Brad Faxon, and on-course reporter Jim "Bones" Mackay.

NBC Sports will present comprehensive coverage of The Open Championship at Royal Troon Golf Club in Scotland July 18-21 on NBC, USA Network and Peacock. We'll have roughly 200 hours of coverage, including the main broadcast feed, featured groups each day, featured hole coverage on the iconic Postage Stamp par-3, 8th hole, and our Golf Central Live From the Open Championship studio coverage, which will air on Golf Channel and Peacock, and as part of that, Johnson Wagner will be reprising his role with us as an on-course reporter during those daytime Live From shows and have shot reenactments following play during the championship.

I mentioned Luke Donald earlier as one of our analysts for our coverage here at Royal Troon. We're thrilled to have Luke with us. He made his debut earlier with us this year at the Cognizant Classic as well as API.

We will have a transcript of this call later today on NBCSports.com/pressbox. We will open it up for questions momentarily.

DAN HICKS: Good afternoon, good morning, wherever you guys are. Really fond, fond memories of Troon in 2016 because it was our first at NBC. I had never been to an Open Championship -- in all the golf years that I'd been covering the sport, I'd never been to an Open, so I was really anxious to get there. I'd always heard about how special the Open Championships are, and that year lived



course on the West Coast of Scotland. I think it's going to be a very exciting week, and I'm very much looking forward to being a part of the broadcast at a major championship venue.

THE MODERATOR: We'll slide it over to Brad Faxon.

BRAD FAXON: Thanks, Jamie. Of all the major championships that I was able to play in, the Open was always my favorite. I loved playing links golf, and not having grown up playing that in America, to experience it, what I like is you really never know what you're going to get. Weather-wise -- (audio interruption).

THE MODERATOR: Let's slide it over to Jim "Bones" Mackay.

JIM MACKAY: Thanks, Jamie. It's a pleasure to be on the phone call with everybody today. I was just listening to what Brad had to say about you never know what you're going to get weather-wise, and certainly being lucky enough to caddie in the last group there on Sunday, obviously that entire week in 2016 at Royal Troon, I'd like to thank Mother Nature for putting us on the good end of the tee times that week. It played a big part in both Stenson and Phil's ability to separate themselves from the field, and obviously they went on to play amazing, amazing golf beyond that as the weekend went on.

Great, great memories. Some of the best golf I've ever seen.

I think Royal Troon is a great golf course, Postage Stamp, the 11th hole there running along the railroad tracks, just so much to talk about and see as you're watching on television or for us reporting on the golf.

Very excited to get there. I've seen that they've had a tremendous amount of rain here of late, so I'm expecting a lot of rough. But it's going to be a great test, and can't wait to get to town next week.

THE MODERATOR: With the Open Championship coming up, we'd like to do our best to keep questions focused on the Open, understanding that there are a number of things going on in the world of golf right now.

Q. My question is for Bones. Bones, number one, basically what is the worst kind of weather to have to caddie in? Number two, would you prefer it stay consistent, or is it the now it's raining, now it's not, now it's windy, now it's cold, whatever, off, on, towels, jackets, et cetera? Is that worse or would you prefer to stay consistent?

JIM MACKAY: Great questions. I think it depends on how much wind is associated with the rain that you're talking about. As long as you've, as a caddie, done your due diligence and you've got enough towels in the bag, you're really not all that concerned about how hard it rains. It's more about the kind of wind that accompanies it. That'll drive you nuts when it can't make up its mind if it wants to blow 6 or 12 miles an hour.

In terms of the worst rains I've ever caddied in, I think it was the second round at Bethpage in '02 when a couple players in the field suggested that they should have called it. That was horrendous, horrendous weather to caddie in.

You know, the bag is incredibly heavy. It helps tremendously if you have a player that helps you out as a caddie. You'll certainly see players that will hit a shot and just take off down the fairway because obviously they've got a lot on their mind, but you'll also see players that'll throw the divot back, help get the clubs in the golf bag and dry them off and try to keep things in as tiptop a condition as you possibly can. There's a lot involved there, but a helpful player is a big deal for a caddie if you're lucky enough to have one.

But it's just -- it can be really, really difficult. They're long days, and as a caddie you don't care how wet you get, you just want to keep your player dry as possible. I just remember the famous story I think one year Crenshaw had a chance to win the Masters and couldn't keep his grip dry on the 18th hole and his a poor shot into the last there, and stories like that that go around will register with every single caddie, and you want to try and stay as far away from that as humanly possible.

But expecting a lot of rain next week, so to your point, I think we'll have a lot of stories to fall back on or to check out on the TV telecast in terms of what those guys are dealing with.

THE MODERATOR: Brad, if you want to hash out your comment again, we can do that now.

BRAD FAXON: I'm sorry about that, and I heard a little bit about what Bones said about the weather. I think what's remarkable about playing the Open Championship and links golf is the ever-changing conditions. The luck of the draw or the rub of the green is who can get over there with the differences in your tee times being early or late. (Audio interruption.)

Q. Luke, a question about Rory McIlroy. I wonder if I could get your reflections on what happened at Pinehurst. You know him very well; you've seen his resilience over the years. I'm wondering how you think

he'll bounce back at Troon and if you could comment on that a little bit, please.

LUKE DONALD: Yeah. I think any golfer, any human being who's watched Rory finish with those missed putts on 16 and 18 really felt for him. I certainly did.

16 was a poor putt, and 18 was just a very, very difficult putt. The mistake, I think, was just leaving the chip slightly above the hole, and it was a very, very difficult putt under the circumstances. Even without those circumstances.

Obviously I would have loved to have seen Rory pull through after not having won a major for 10 years or so, but he does time and time again bounce back, stronger than most people, and he's had a lot of distractions in his life recently and in the last couple years, and to be able to play at that level still is remarkable to me, even to give himself a chance.

I think he's going to take the positives. He's going to look for what went well. He's going to concentrate on those, focus on what he could have improved on and attack them like he always does. He's one of the best players that's ever played the game, and he's played it at such a high level for so many years, as well, which consistency over a long time is a really, really impressive thing to have.

I have no doubt that he'll play well this week in Scotland at the Scottish Open, and he'll take some form to Troon, as well.

BRAD FAXON: I just listened to what Luke said about Rory. Going back to what I said about playing the Open, I love the fact that of all the major championships that the yardage book is the least important at The Open with the different conditions you get. Imagination is so important, like Bones knows so well. The ability to adapt to the ever-changing conditions -- (audio interruption).

Q. In light of Keegan Bradley just being named Ryder Cup captain, what struck me is that he is a true contemporary of the players he will be captaining. You were a contemporary a little bit, but you were largely ahead of the other guys, the Rorys and the others on your team. But still, you are in one relationship with these guys where you are a peer, maybe even a friend, and then you have to go and become their boss, their manager. I'm wondering how you negotiate that fine line to get a different kind of respect from them.

Then for Bones, right after that, just get your take on the latest with Rory and Harry at Pinehurst on Sunday and Rory's comments this morning.

LUKE DONALD: In terms of Keegan, I'll answer this question on Ryder Cup. I'd rather the questions remain to do with the Open Championship. That's what this call is mostly about. Yeah, I think when we heard that Keegan was the next captain, it was somewhat surprising. I think everybody would agree to that because he is 38. He's 19 in the world and probably still has aspirations to play one or two more Ryder Cups. He's a phenomenal player still.

Certainly having gone through the captaincy once, I understand that it takes a lot of work, and it's very difficult to juggle both of those things.

But in terms of being a boss or -- I can't remember the other word you used. That's not really the role of a captain. The captain is to understand and listen to the players, to gain their trust, to make them feel that there's good communication going on between them, and I don't see any reason why Keegan can't fulfill that role.

JIM MACKAY: I've got to tell you, I'm in California, so if something went on with the golf world this morning and something that Rory had to say, I haven't seen it. I just rolled out of bed. I apologize, I can't really help you much because I'm not familiar with what you're asking about.

Q. There was a lot of criticism of Harry from Sunday at Pinehurst, and Rory defended him today and said -- spoke glowingly of his caddie. But if you saw anything from Harry and Rory from Sunday at Pinehurst that you could comment on, please.

JIM MACKAY: Yes, sir. To be perfectly honest with you, I was in the final group, so I didn't see any of that. I haven't seen a telecast since we got home, and again, I'm sorry, but I wasn't in that group, so I honestly can't say.

Q. I wanted to ask all three of you guys just kind of what are some of the storylines that you're looking forward to most come Open week?

DAN HICKS: I think it starts and stops with Scottie Scheffler. I think even though his U.S. Open wasn't as Scheffler-esque as we've become accustomed to, I think he's still the gold standard. I think it all kind of trickles down from him.

You've been hearing guys talk about weather conditions. You never know what you're going to get in the Open. Bones mentioned you've got to get the right wave and all of that.

I just think he's so good, he can overcome so much of that, short game is so good, but I think it's also going to be intriguing if the weather does come up and weather is a

story to see Scheffler deal with that.

I think he remains the headliner going into the last major of the year, and some of the other storylines obviously is a Bryson DeChambeau. The guy has just been on fire in the majors, and I think that he has solidified himself as somebody that a lot more people are rooting for and have a lot more interest and he's moving the needle more and more.

I can't help but remember that he was the biggest show in golf before going to LIV and kind of getting out of the mainstream for a while, and he's kind of becoming -- he's very close to kind of establishing himself as the guy again.

I think those are the two biggest storylines that I think the fans are looking forward to, and I am, as well.

LUKE DONALD: Yeah, I'll just jump in. Obviously we touched on this a little bit as to how does Rory bounce back from that disappointing U.S. Open. I think that's something fun to watch. Scheffler, can he continue his dominance and continue to put together a Tiger-like year that he's been doing.

The other two players that are probably considered the top four right now would be Xander and Bryson, Xander breaking through and winning at the PGA Championship, can he get back in the mix and potentially get a second major, and how can Bryson figure out strategies and everything that he puts into his work ethic and his game to figure out an Open Championship.

I'm not sure -- I haven't looked specifically at his record in Opens. Obviously he's won a couple U.S. Opens. The Open Championship is a different beast. You have different things to deal with, different weather conditions and different bounces and all kinds of different little things. Could that throw him off, or can he figure out ways to figure out a game plan that's going to give him another opportunity at another major.

JIM MACKAY: I've still got so much caddie in me that I can't help but as we come up on the Open to think about anything other than the draw and the weather. I know that there's 156 or so caddies thinking the same thing I am this morning, and that is what is going to happen next week, and if there's a big discrepancy in the tee times, what end of the draw will I end up on. Having caddied for some really good players in that tournament, I remember in 2010 and 2014, we got on the bad end of the draw and you had virtually no chance to compete in the tournament, and then caddying for Phil in 2016 at Royal Troon we got on the great end and those guys were able to really separate themselves from the field, speaking of he and Stenson.

I just think that with what the forecast is showing us, the weather is the big story for me, and I can't wait to see how it all plays out in terms of what those guys have to deal with.

Q. Brad, I had a question about the major storylines heading into next week. Can you weigh in.

BRAD FAXON: Yeah, I got on a hard line, so this one shouldn't drop. I apologize they're having some technical difficulties down here where I live. I heard some of Bones' comments and Luke's a little bit about Rory and who the contenders would be.

I was saying before I dropped for the fourth time that I love the Open where you don't necessarily have to rely on the yardage book as much because there's so much creativity needed for shots that are played into the wind or downwind. You can have an 8-iron go 200 yards or you can have it go 100 yards, in particular at Troon and a typical links course that goes out on the way -- almost all the holes are in the same direction except for the Postage Stamp going out, and then you're coming back into a pretty hard stretch of golf if you're playing those holes into the prevailing breeze.

I think that's what makes links golf so good. I don't know if there's a tougher hole in Scotland than the 11th hole at Troon when you're playing into the wind, blind tee shot, gorse bushes both sides, the famous green against the railroad tracks. It can be pretty intimidating.

Q. Luke, I'm curious, what were your takeaways from the U.S. Open broadcast with the dual announcing teams, and was there anything that you think you might tweak or mimic from what you saw at the U.S. Open?

LUKE DONALD: Explain the dual something, sorry, the fact that we had two announce --

Q. The fact that you had two golf announcers, analysts and play-by-play guys.

LUKE DONALD: Yeah, we had something similar, obviously, at the Cognizant and Bay Hill, so looking forward to obviously being next to Dan again and Brad on my side, as well, and sharing the odds and evens between us.

But yeah, again, I'm just very honored that NBC want me to come and do the coverage.

I watched a little bit of the U.S. Open, obviously watched

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

Sunday. I thought it was very exciting golf, a close leaderboard. The fans seemed very much into it. There was so much drama. There was great shots. There was great recoveries.

I think Pinehurst was a good venue for that in terms of excitement for the fans, and I think Troon will be, too. I've been in Scotland a couple days. Yesterday was 30 miles an hour wind with sideways rain, and today was about five miles an hour and no rain even though it was forecast 80 percent.

Again, the weather will play a huge role in the outcome at The Open championship, and I'm just excited to be a part of it and call some action.

Q. I'm really interested to hear you guys' thoughts on Royal Troon, of course itself. Really this question is for anybody who's willing to answer, but I know, Bones, you obviously had a remarkable experience at Troon. Brad, you have experience there, as does Luke. How does Troon compare to the other courses in the rota? I'm also wondering if you could touch on the course route itself. It's my understanding you've got to make your birdies early and then hold on for dear life coming down the stretch.

BRAD FAXON: Yeah, I was kind of talking about that a little bit earlier. A lot of Open Championships have routings that go out in one direction and in another. The ability that the architects had 150 years ago to figure out prevailing breezes and that it will be tougher coming in, Troon is no exception to that.

I think there's one or two holes that would go against the prevailing breeze -- sorry, with the prevailing breeze on each of the nines that turn maybe one direction. I think it's 12 on the back nine and obviously 8 on the front nine if the wind is prevailing.

So you pretty much know what you're going to get, and it makes those holes so difficult coming in. I remember Nick Price against Tom Watson there making bogey on the par-3 coming in. I remember Calcavecchia dodging Norman's drive, that when that went into those bunkers that nobody thought was reachable on 18 to get Calcavecchia to win that.

I just think it's great. We're going to see the longest par-5 in Open Championship history with the renovation work there, and the renovation work always seems to make the course better.

Again, I think what Luke said and what Bones has said, the unpredictability of what you're going to get over there, it

adds to the charisma of the course, to the championship. You may not think that while you're out there playing, but I think Troon has certainly shown that, depending on the weather, you might see Stenson like scores, but you could also see scores that are just barely under par, depending on the weather conditions.

LUKE DONALD: Obviously I got to play a couple times '04 and '16. I think it's the smallest greens of all The Open Championships. It's a shame the weather up in Scotland has been quite wet over the last month or so, and I don't see it obviously getting firm and fast this year, which if you do couple that with the very small greens, then it becomes really, really tricky for the players.

I would expect the scoring to be decent. I was there a couple weeks ago for an R&A day, got to see a little bit of it. Didn't play the course, but played the 8th hole a few times with some groups. The 8th hole for me is one of the best par-3s in the world. Just such a small target. You should hit good shots and give yourself birdie chances, but any kind of wind and any kind of just slight miscalculation with the shot, and you're suddenly looking at bogey, double bogey, even worse.

I think it's a great hole. It kind of comes in middle of the round, so it's not going to come right in at the end of the round. They've made a few changes in terms of lengthening holes, as Brad said. The longest par-5, No. 6 is it, and they've added a lot of length to the 17th. It could be a pivotal par-3 coming in. I think it's something like can play up to 250 now.

With a prevailing wind in off the left, it's going to be some hole if you're needing a par-par finish to close out The Open Championship.

So it has a lot, yeah, you have to make a score as long as the prevailing wind is as it usually is, you kind of want to make a score early on the front nine and kind of hold on on the back nine, which makes for some exciting TV.

Q. Luke, you may not have realized that this will be Ernie Els' fifth appearance at Royal Troon. You've overlapped with him. Can you just describe what it is that made him such a good player.

LUKE DONALD: Yeah, I've played some golf with Ernie. Beautiful swinger of the golf club. I think, if it wasn't for Tiger and even maybe Phil, he would have won quite a few more majors. Just a great player, great ball striker, did everything very well.

He just had that beautiful tempo. He just seemed like he never got out of rhythm with his golf swing.

To obviously have him play Troon for the fifth time coming up, longevity. Again, he's been pretty fortunate with not fighting too many injuries, and just to perform again at a high level like that over a long period of time speaks to how good a player he is.

Q. May I be a bit cheeky and ask a quick one of Bones. I'm just wondering what you were ringside at that terrific duel with Stenson. Can you tell us now, if you sit here or you sit there in California, what is the memory you have of that afternoon when it comes to mind? What is the dominant thing?

JIM MACKAY: The quality of the golf was pretty much mindblowing for me. Both those guys were absolutely incredible. I remember the crowds, the spectators were just -- just the buzz around the place, the electric atmosphere was maybe something I never saw again. Maybe at a couple of Ryder Cups.

But it was just electric out there. I'll tell you a little story. I think on the 13th tee on Sunday, and Phil had just made a 25- or 30-footer for par on 12, and I was the last guy off the tee. I think I had grabbed some water, and an R&A official came up to me and tapped me on the shoulder and said, would you mind telling both the players that we're concerned about their position on the golf course and they need to hurry up a little bit.

I said, sir, this is so amazing what's going on out here right now, I'm not saying a word to anybody about anything. I just want to watch this play out.

It was really special and one of those handful of times, as I get a little older, that I think back about how absolutely privileged I was to be there in person and to watch it because it was just golf at its absolute highest level.

Q. We've talked a lot about the unpredictability of The Open, the tee time draw, the weather. I'm curious, in your opinion, what are the mental attributes that help a player succeed amongst all those varying factors? And maybe what are some of the underrated ones that people don't talk about as much as the others, like locations and all that comes with that?

BRAD FAXON: It's a great question, by the way. All the best players that I know thrive in the most difficult conditions. Jack Nicklaus, who I grew up watching, was always a player that felt like he had the field beat, half the field beat before he even started with the way he was able to think, and as conditions worsened, there were fewer and fewer people that would be able to compete with him.

And we've seen other players, modern day players, that have that some mentality. Brooks Koepka would be one of those players as well that would say that.

Think about Rory McIlroy last year at The Scottish Open in those conditions, in those windy conditions, where he hit that 1-iron from barely 200 yards and hit that shot.

I think that's what the great players have always loved to do is have the conditions where it's tough for everyone, but they find a way to play well in those conditions, in the adverse conditions that frankly you can never even predict or practice what can happen.

That's why I've said this the entire call about how that's what's amazing about an Open Championship, what you can see these players do. You had the Duel in the Sun at Turnberry with Nicklaus and Watson. We talked about how Troon was so remarkable with Stenson and Mickelson and Bones there firsthand.

I can't imagine that anybody would ever tell them to speed up. I'd want that to slow down so you can just keep watching terrific golf.

And even at Muirfield, when Tiger Woods got caught in that squall, that's the unpredictability, where you have one of the best players in the world get stuck there where almost nobody could do anything well. It's so unique to The Open Championship.

Either weather conditions are extremely dry, like the players saw at Turnberry when Norman won, or whether they're going to be wet next week, there's always going to be parts of the game that you're just going to laugh and go, I'm glad I'm not playing. I'm glad I'm watching this.

LUKE DONALD: I think, regardless of whether it's The Open Championship or any tournament, the best players I've seen understand what they need to do, and they hammer at those things time and time again, whether that's physically or mentally. They are very consistent all the time of what makes them great through their practices, through their drills, through their mental preparations, through their whatever they tell themselves.

That's the best in the world, and they're very consistent with it. Scottie Scheffler, he checks his grip on nearly every shot I see him hit. It's just like over and over again doing the same things repeatedly.

You obviously get to an Open Championship, and with tougher conditions, I think, over four days, if you're doing that consistently, you're going to come out on top. That's what the greats do. They're very, very consistent about

following their protocols that they know make them really good.

Q. If I could just ask questions of Brad and Bones, please, different questions. For Brad, similar one to what I asked Luke earlier. I was just wondering if I could get your reflections on what happened with Rory at Pinehurst. Also with your kind of insight into working with Rory, how you think he's going to respond at Troon. Following on from that, I would just like to get Bones' take on the Postage Stamp and if he's had any particular, if he's witnessed anything particularly spectacular at that hole over the years.

BRAD FAXON: I thought Rory addressed a lot of those issues, and he's so blatantly honest. There's a couple things to take out of what he said in the press conference, what we all watched, and how he was doing things in a final round of a major that he said he hadn't done before.

Up until that 16th hole, he was first or second in putting that day. He had a spectacular week on the greens all together. Any of us that have played this game knows how this game can flip in an instant. He made that point that he started to think about, when he had a little time, about that putt on 16, and none of us wanted to see him miss that. Luke said the same thing.

So much about this game, particularly putting, we want to know what happens, what is that, is that something that's a mechanical, does your stroke just leave you in a second, or is it the way your mind works?

When you're a coach to a top player in putting, so much of it is what happens in a situation rather than the details of the stroke and the face and the path. I think that's why we love and hate this game so much is what it can do to the human mind.

There was certainly nothing wrong with Rory's stroke at all. He had made 469 of those putts of three feet and under in a row. That's just a situation that sometimes gets the best of the best players in the world.

When I talk to Harry Diamond, and he's been criticized by some people, I think Harry is the secret sauce for Rory. I've been saying that a long time. Harry would say that Rory's strongest part of his game is his resilience and his mindset. I think, when Rory addressed that today about Hank Haney and Smiley talking about could Harry have been better in that situation? Rory said so honestly, Why doesn't anybody ever credit Harry when I win?

I think these things will help Rory to be stronger when he gets in that situation the next time. I think it will be better

for him.

Q. If I could just ask Bones about the Postage Stamp and his experiences there.

JIM MACKAY: Yes, sir. I was sitting here thinking about your question as Brad was speaking. I got to think that the Postage Stamp is top five spectator holes in golf, and I may be underselling it. It may be one or two.

All I know is, if I was a patron there that week and the gates opened, I'd be sprinting out there to spend the day. I just think it's an incredible hole. Knock on wood, I got really lucky that I didn't caddie for anybody that had any train wrecks there. But as we go through the week, we're going to see quite a few 2s and also some 5 or 6s.

One of my favorite things to do at Royal Troon is to caddie in the practice round when guys try to get the ball up-and-down out of those greenside bunkers and ultimately end up playing ping pong ball across the green.

I think it's one of the great, great holes I've seen in all of golf, and I can't wait to see how it plays out this year, especially if we get a little bit of wind. Again, it's where I would be if I was lucky enough to get out there as a spectator.

Q. Luke, what's the best piece of golf broadcasting advice that you've received and from whom?

LUKE DONALD: That's a tricky one. Obviously before I worked the Cognizant and API, I reached out to Dan, to Mike, to some other people. I think the best piece of advice is obviously to be yourself, but also just to try and explain to the people watching something that they might not be able to see with their own eyes.

I think that's -- you know, not to just kind of call plays and say things that are pretty obvious, to come up with kind of unique things that the fans are going to enjoy, little stories, little insights about what the player's been working on or is there a new club in his bag, is there a mental thing that they're working on. Just something that they wouldn't be able to get that information unless they heard it from us.

So I think that's kind of the advice. Yeah, just not doing anything to annoy Tommy Roy really. That was the only other thing.

Q. I just got a question about Jon Rahm, and it seems like he's -- obviously he had to withdraw from Pinehurst with that foot and toe injury, but it just seems like ever since he's gone to LIV, he's lost his mojo a little bit. I know you guys aren't broadcasting

LIV events and whatnot, but curious what your take is. Particularly you, Luke, obviously being a key Ryder Cup guy yourself, what's going on here? What's your assessment of him since he really hasn't been in the mix?

LUKE DONALD: From my standpoint, I've talked to Jon a little bit. Obviously he's very disappointed with his major championship performance. The first two were certainly not up to his standard. Then obviously the unfortunate timing of the injury.

I think it's just been -- I've said this to the media before. I think it's just been an adjustment. His results on LIV have been fine. I think he's had mostly top 10s. He hasn't broken through and won.

But I just think it's an adjustment. It's a different format. There's one less round. You have to get going a lot quicker playing courses you haven't played before. I think he's just someone that is going to take a little bit of time to get used to it.

I think it's a big week for him. He, I'm sure, has been a massive focus for him to try and get his game to a level where he's going to be back in contention at a major. Yeah, I think there's a little bit of pressure on that, and we'll see how he deals with it.

Q. Fax what's your take on that? What's your take on Rahm? When he went to LIV, he was King of the world, obviously the best player in the world, fallen off the radar a little bit.

BRAD FAXON: It's funny. I was actually with Rory when Rahm was making the decision to go to LIV, and they were kind of texting back and forth. I think it was a really hard decision for Jon Rahm, this pile of money versus leaving a Tour you've been very successful and comfortable on.

When you listen to some of Jon's comments about how difficult it was to be home in Scottsdale while the PGA TOUR event, the WM was being played and he couldn't do that, he made a comment about one of the events he did play in Saudi Arabia, was hitting a shot, and there was a picture that was on X or Twitter, and him hitting a second shot up this hill into a hole, and there was virtually no spectators watching a player that used to be the No. 1 player in the world.

I think he misses that. Couple that with some of the injuries he had, the difference in travel, now around the world versus mostly in the U.S. and Europe for him. I think, like Luke says, it's a big adjustment. I think players can adjust fairly quickly to new courses quicker than they

used to be able to do that.

Then when you see the Ryder Cup and how quickly everyone comes together, particularly the European side, I just think that they're not seeing that he's not seeing that as much when he's playing LIV Golf.

Jamie, can I say one more thing? The question about the Postage Stamp -- and I like how Bones answered it as well, if you were going to put together your top 10 list of the best par-3s in the world, I don't think anybody could leave the Postage Stamp out as one of the best holes in the world. It could be No. 1. It could be No. 3 or 5, but it can't be outside the top 10.

We had a similar hole, very controversial hole at Liverpool last year on 17, but it was a hole you always wanted to watch. It had been renovated or changed for The Open last year. We saw the disasters of players, particularly Matt Fitzpatrick, when you missed it. And you could hit a good shot that just ends up poor, can't you, unlucky.

It takes luck to win any championship. It takes more luck to win a major championship. Maybe the most luck at an Open, where you don't have control of a lot of the things that you do.

To hit a spiny shot with a short iron into the wind with a tiny target with trouble on all sides, it just makes you want to watch. I think it's so thrilling, and like Bones said, and it was the same way at 17 last year at Liverpool, when you missed that green, you didn't know what you were going to see.

I think that's what lends towards great golf and television on golf as well gets better because of that.

THE MODERATOR: I'll close things out here. On behalf of everybody again, Dan Hicks, Brad Faxon, Luke Donald, and Jim "Bones" Mackay, thanks for joining us.

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