

The Senior Open

Presented by Rolex

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Carnoustie, Angus, Scotland
Carnoustie Golf Links

Alex Cejka

Press Conference

Q. Great to see you back at the Senior Open. How exciting is it to be back here as a defending champion?

ALEX CEJKA: Any time you're defending champion is a nice feeling. Coming to a course like this, I remember I played it a long time ago, I want to say ten years ago, I think during the Dunhill Links we used that course.

But we had so bad weather, it wasn't even like comparable when you play like in this weather, right, no wind and everything. But it's a tough beast even in good condition. It's a great test of golf. There's a lot of great players here. It's nice to defend the title but it's a new tournament.

Every week is different. You can play great one week and the next week, you miss the cut. We've all seen it before. But you know, I'm going to give it my best shot to play great.

Q. When you arrive on site this week, you see the branding of the Senior Open. It must bring back so many great memories of last year's brilliant performance.

ALEX CEJKA: Oh, yeah, that was something special. I mean, it was a really challenging week last year, not only the Sunday, but I want to say every day was very windy. We had kind of bad weather. It was cold, especially the weekend with the rain everything, and it was almost unpleasant, right, what I heard from everybody else who was playing.

So I got lucky. I got away with it. I really didn't play that well on the weekend. I shot 5-over, 5-over on the weekend, and somehow it was still enough for the playoff. And then I got lucky in the playoff to beat Harrington, who is a good player.

Again, I was super pleased. It was incredible to win a tournament like this. It was always my dream, and yeah, it



was a super week.

And you know, a year later on a different track, hopefully in better conditions against almost the same players. There's a lot of people who are in form. I'm a little bit struggling because I had two months off due to a back injury. So I'm slowly coming back. So that threw me off a little bit of my game, two months off, can't do nothing. Like I said, I'm going to give it my best shot.

Q. Obviously you've won a lot of tournaments during your career but can you sum up what it means to be a Senior Open champion?

ALEX CEJKA: Like for us, the majors are the same like for the young guys. You know, those majors, that's what we play and practise for, to eventually do this one time in your career, three times in your career. It doesn't matter how many times it is; you still have butterflies when you come down to the 18th hole and you're trying to close the deal. It doesn't matter if you have a three-shot lead or if you need a birdie or the playoff. It's magical.

I mean, both of my two prior major titles were incredible. I can't say that one was better than the two or the third one was better than the one. It's just every one is unique. Every one on a different golf course. You still have to beat a lot of great players in order to have a little Claret Jug at home. It's kind of a nice feeling.

Q. You've had some good results this year so far. You played last week, as well, made the cut, which maybe surprises you on that sort of test, but are you feeling happy coming into the week with where your game is at?

ALEX CEJKA: Yeah, last week was a really, really big deal. I didn't even give myself a chance to make the cut because, as I said, two months coming off, I basically started at the BMW on the DP Tour like three weeks ago, and it was awful to watch me play. It was awful to, like, everything about my game was terrible, right. I played only two rounds. I didn't even sniff the cut. I was like 6-, 7-over par.



My game improved a little bit last week. Again, it's as you saw, a lot of great players missed the cut, a lot of Americans, it's a totally different golf course. A lot of guys are not familiar with, it yes. I'm from Europe and I played this a couple times.

Yes, I may be a little bit Americanised and I like to play American courses but at least I played it a lot of times where I got away with it last week to make the cut, right, but I was -- compared to my playing partners, I was just short. I'm hitting rescues and those guys are hitting 6-irons into greens.

The game, yes, you can beat a great player on a day or maybe in a week, but overall, if I were to play the whole season with those young kids, it's almost impossible, right. So we are glad we have our tour here where I kind of fit in with my distance, and it's just still -- I think everybody is happy to play in our age, and even big tournaments.

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