

# John Deere Classic

Wednesday, July 7, 2021

TPC Deere Run

Silvis, Illinois, USA

## Brian Harman

### Press Conference

MARK WILLIAMS: We'd like to welcome Brian Harman, the 2014 John Deere Classic winner. Brian, this is your eighth start here this week, obviously winning there, and that was your first of two wins on TOUR. What's it like coming back to a venue where you've had success and coming back here this week to Deere Run.

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, disappointed we couldn't make it last year. I was really hoping to get a chance to come play last year, but we're here now, and it was really nice being able to -- we flew in and drove around. I love the area, and I'm excited to be back.

MARK WILLIAMS: You were the second left-handed winner of this tournament and trying to be the third this season behind Phil Mickelson and Garrick Higgo. Is there anything on this golf course that favors a left-hander or holes that set up better for you?

BRIAN HARMAN: You know, I get that question all the time. I don't know. I've never been around it right-handed. It's all perspective. So this one fits my eye. I know places like Detroit, I played there -- I didn't play this year and I've played a couple times, and it doesn't really fit my eye. This place seems to fit my eye pretty good, and I enjoy coming here.

**Q. You've seen this course enough; how has it changed over the years, and what are you guys facing? What are the challenges you face out there on this course this week?**

BRIAN HARMAN: It's a little firmer this year, especially in the fairways. That necks the fairways up just a little bit. But the course overall has not changed that much, and I think that's a great thing.

I think when you have a course that's playable but fair -- I think this course has done a good job of knowing exactly what it is. It's a great golf tournament on a great course and they haven't tried to reinvent the wheel with it. If we get good weather and no wind, the scores are going to be low, but the scores are low here because the greens are so



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good, and it's easy to make putts.

I think it's important that people don't look past that, that the reason why the scores are low here is not because the course is easy, it's just because the greens are perfect. There's just a lot of putts that get made, and that's okay. That's okay.

The best player in the field is going to win, and that's what we're trying to accomplish every week.

**Q. A lot of people are looking at you as one of the favorites this week because of rankings, because of FedExCup points, because of your success here. Does that change your approach, mentality coming into the tournament?**

BRIAN HARMAN: No, it doesn't. Over the years I've had some stretches to where I'll kind of work my way up to where I feel like I'm supposed to be, and then it's almost like -- I don't know, I don't want to say take it for granted, but I sort of slack off a little bit.

I've tried to just kind of keep my nose to the grindstone and just keep after it. I know that I'm going -- I know I'm going to make some birdies out here, and I'll just keep my head down and see what I can do.

**Q. You've been out here for a while now, had some success. How tough is it getting to win on TOUR these days with the TOUR getting younger and younger?**

BRIAN HARMAN: Well, that's a good question, but the scores, the winning scores every week aren't vastly different than they always are. I heard the last part of Zach's interview, it's just the middle part has gotten harder. It's harder to -- I don't think it's any harder to win, but it's harder to top 10, top 20, top 30, where you used to be able to kind of scrape it around and have a little better finish than you can now.

**Q. You've played here eight times now, obviously a winner. The people of the Quad Cities like to really rally around their winners. Do you feel that and feel really welcomed when you come back here?**

BRIAN HARMAN: I do. I had some people out watching in the pro-am today. Everyone is always so nice here, and

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it's always great coming back. They do; they take care of their champions here, and it's a supportive group of fans that come out here. It's awesome to play in front of them.

**Q. Does this year feel any different being the 50th, knowing that the big celebration around being 50 years here in the Quad Cities, does it feel any different as a player knowing there's a celebration going on for the 50th?**

BRIAN HARMAN: You know, I think we're all just kind of starting to get back to normal, so everything still feels a little -- even for the 50th, feels a little subdued, but I'm glad to see that it's back and we're playing again. Anytime a tournament can last for 50 years on TOUR, it's incredible, and that just shows the support it gets locally, and I think that's really important.

**Q. Just wondering, do you have any reservations about the restrictions in place at the Open next week? It's going to be quite a difference than what we've gotten used to here at home lately. It's been trending nicely for us and now we're going to kind of go back the other way for a while. Just curious what you're thinking and how you're going to deal with it.**

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, it's aggravating. It is. I'm vaccinated. I got vaccinated as quick as I could, so it's been really nice to not have to test and not have to worry about it.

Unfortunately now that we're used to the changing scenarios, we've gone from different states and we've had to deal with the different local health officials, so it's annoying -- I'm excited to go play the British Open. I think it's a little silly to let in 32,000 fans but to treat the players like -- we're treated differently than the fans are, and that's the frustrating part.

I know the R&A kind of has their hands tied, but we'll go over there and we'll make the best of it, but it'll be nice to come home, too.

**Q. I should mention I asked about this, all the fans have to be tested. They're allowed to be vaccinated locally, but if not they have to be tested within 48 hours. I guess they're trying to take that concern away. Even if they were to go multiple times they'd have to get tested multiple times, for whatever that's worth. But it's pretty much the most spectators we're going to have at any event since we've come back.**

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, I think it just doesn't show a lot of confidence in the vaccine. Like if you're vaccinated, we're getting the same vaccines here that they're getting there.

I'm not sure why it makes any difference where I'm coming from if I'm vaccinated. That's my beef with it. But they're a lot smarter than I am, I suppose.

**Q. Because of those restrictions over in England, did you ever think of not going and playing in the Open this year?**

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, I did. I certainly considered it. More on the fact that I wouldn't want to be away from my family in the event that I was contact traced and was stuck over there for a week or two. That would -- for me, I try not to spend any more than two weeks away from my family. My kids are small, and that's the most important thing to me.

The only other thing I would say is that the PGA TOUR has done -- we've been having golf tournaments for a year and change now, year and a half, and we've gone off for the most part without a hitch. I just think we could have maybe used that as a template.

But like I said --

**Q. So if you were thinking of --**

BRIAN HARMAN: Yeah, I certainly thought about it, yeah.

**Q. But that being said, then what ultimately made up your mind to go?**

BRIAN HARMAN: What made up my mind to go is that I'm 34 years old, so the way I see it I've probably only got maybe 10 more realistic chances to try to win the British Open. You know, my time is limited. It's hard to think about, but I'm probably around halfway through my career, and yeah, I'm not going to -- very rarely does someone compete when they're 50 over there. It's hard to do.

I'm playing well. I really want to win that tournament, and that's why I'm going.

MARK WILLIAMS: I was looking at your season earlier and you've played 22 events this year, made 20 cuts, a lot of consistency, three top 5s, one including THE PLAYERS and then of course your most recent start at the Travelers. When you look at a season like that, how do you assess or compare it to other seasons that you've had? And just to add on to the back of that, you're 35th in the FedExCup right now. You've reached the TOUR Championship once in your career. How important is it for you to make that final 30 again?

BRIAN HARMAN: You know, I've spent so much time kind of on the bubble trying to get to Atlanta that I'm just not that

worried about it. I'm proud of the way that I've been consistent this year. I feel like my preparation and I've kept myself in better shape, and I'm proud of all those things.

But I really want to win tournaments. That's what I feel like is the most important. And I haven't done that. In that sense, it's a disappointing year because I've had a chance to win a couple times and just haven't finished it off.

I'm proud of my work ethic, I'm proud of the way that I've been staying with it, and consistency has been a nice change.

MARK WILLIAMS: Brian, thanks for joining us, and good luck this week.

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