

# WGC Dell Technologies

## Match Play

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Austin, Texas, USA

Austin Country Club

## Ian Poulter

### Quick Quotes - 2

**Q. You mentioned sort of the way you played Rory. Not wanting to give him any momentum. Did that work out, obviously the way you wanted to today?**

IAN POULTER: Yeah, it did. I, obviously I got up in the match on the first hole, hit a lovely shot in there. Kind of got 3-up in that match early. So being in that position against Rory you kind of, kind of in a way you don't want to let him back in the match because if he gets any kind of flow, he's going to be a really tough opponent to shrug off. And I kind of made a mistake on 6 and got a little bit overly aggressive, trying to stay in that aggressive mindset and helped him out there with a hole, I mean he's hit a lovely chip shot on to 6 and wins that hole, he's got a little advantage on 8, drove it across the corner, he hit a wonderful shot in there to about four feet, just outside gimmie range. And then I had to hit a really nice shot on 9 from that position. I was top of the hill and again he had cut the corner and hit it down the bottom. So I had a stretch around the turn where kind of I kept the foot down and I made it difficult and obviously Rory had to be aggressive at that point, took a couple shots on and obviously I came out on top.

**Q. You played a lot of golf with him, is there any part of you, I know it's golf and things can happen, but was there any part that surprised that he struggled the way he did, at least late?**

IAN POULTER: Obviously Pete's going to be working exclusively with Rory on his game. I think there's a couple of areas of his game which I'm sure he wants to kind of firm up a little bit and obviously he missed a couple of tee shots left. From that point he was trying to hit a kind of a bit of a hold up cut. But it's Rory, it doesn't take a lot for Rory to spark up pretty quickly and I wasn't surprised with anything, I just felt that I kind of, I had done a pretty decent job of putting him under pressure, I made it difficult for him, but, yeah.

**Q. You love match play, do you remember the first**



**time you played a match play tournament, how old you were?**

IAN POULTER: I played against my brother all the time and I hated losing.

**Q. But do you remember a tournament match play?**

IAN POULTER: Not really. Accenture Match Play, how about that?

**Q. Do you prefer this over sudden death format?**

IAN POULTER: I prefer the old way, to be honest.

**Q. Why?**

IAN POULTER: Because it's really simple. And the simplicity of win your match or go home I think is the right way to play. I think -- couple of years ago I beat Kisner in my first match and two days later we're heading off in a match play to playoff to get out of the group and he beats me and guess on to win. So I've just technically beaten the guy that wins the tournament. It's a bit annoying, to be honest with you. Yeah, but this format gets a little funky when there's a couple of scenarios that can happen in these group matches which, if you're in a position where you can't advance, are you really trying really hard? Not really sure.

**Q. I know it's a lot involved with TV and keeping the best players around, but it's more grueling matches isn't it?**

IAN POULTER: The sponsors pay big money and the sponsors want the players here for as many days as possible, so they have the right to do that and I am not saying it's right or wrong, but I think there's a number of players that would like it back to the old way, where if you lose you go home. I'm sure there's a few guys that lose that first match and out of the group come Friday afternoon and they're quite happy with it.

**Q. Was it your A game on today or was it more your B game and Rory was scuffling?**

IAN POULTER: I played well, I played well and obviously the score line's pretty flattering to be honest with you. But I



kept Rory under pressure and I made it difficult for him. Yeah, he hit a couple of loose shots, but putting the ball in pretty tight and taking control of a match, I had to do that against Rory.

**Q. I know you miss a lot, we all miss a lot from last year and The Open Championship. Was this one that you missed quite a bit?**

IAN POULTER: Yeah, I love the format. I mean it's no -- it's no secret to know that when I go out in match play it really kind of, it kind of keeps me turned on pretty quickly as soon as you tee off. And this is definitely one that I missed, it's good to get that kind of feeling going, it's not often you tee off on a first round and you kind of, the heart's fluttering already and you got good adrenaline and you got good excitement to go out and play.

**Q. The feeling, how is it different than stroke play, more adrenaline, but what about match play kind of gets you going?**

IAN POULTER: It's great to feel the kind of excitement, pressure and to get the ticker going. I mean it's nice. When you've got no fans and we haven't had fans, we have only just had guys back in, to tee off on a Thursday with no crowd, it's pretty, I mean it's pretty boring, to be honest. So to get people back in and to get in this format it's actually really nice, because you want to win your match, you want to move on from the group stages and obviously it's a format where if you're playing great during this week you, and you advance, you got a great opportunity to have a great week.

**Q. Obviously in stroke play you would want to be as far as you can off the fairway, but in match play is there some kind of paradoxical, not advantage, but benefit to being the one who hits your approach shot first in the sense of being able to pressure the other guy a little bit?**

IAN POULTER: Yeah, I think at times there's definitely an opportunity to know that you're always going to be hitting your second shot in first. And it's a good way to put a bit more pressure on your opponent. In he's 10, 20, 30, 40 yards in front and you've hit it in there pretty tight, that was apparent today on a couple of short holes where he's hitting sand iron or lob wedge in and to a soft green and it's hard to control the spin. So by doing that I think I had an advantage on a couple of holes, once I've hit my second shot, and then he was questioning himself how far is the ball going to spin. I made it pretty tricky.

**Q. 3-up early, he cuts it to one as you go to 9, and then that stretch, 9, 10, 11, you throw two birdies at**

**him, he makes a bogey, that was kind of a swing there. Your thoughts on this win today?**

IAN POULTER: It was a good win, and, I mean, as you say, when you're 3-up early and then you kind of give a hole away there on 6, he's got a lovely advantage on 8 by taking it over the corner. He's got that about 50, 60 yards shorter than I did. He made a lovely birdie there and then I'm all of a sudden 1-up.

So I didn't really want to let that momentum of his carry on too much. I hit a good 7-iron into 9 from 166 yards, and where he hit his drive he was kind of in that spinnable range, which he would have had to control his spin. I took advantage of my birdie on 9, and then he kind of, he helped me out on 10, he makes a soft bogey on 10.

I mean, you're half expecting him to chip it in and he didn't.

Then I lit a lovely shot into 11 and it's a tricky pin for him, tucked right pin, wind off the right, and Rory hits it right-to-left. So I kind of wanted to get one in there tight. I made birdie, and then obviously hit it pretty tight from 259 into the par-5. Hit it to about six feet and kind of put him under a lot of pressure.

**Q. You guys have been partners before, friends. Is your mental approach when you play a guy like Rory maybe a little different than when you play a guy you're maybe not familiar with?**

IAN POULTER: My mental approach is really simple: Try and get up in the match and try not to give Rory momentum. Because if he does, he's going to take it with both hands. He did it. He kind of got himself really back in the match real quickly, you know, two holes in three. It's sometimes difficult, but to hit good shots at the right time and put him under pressure when you're going into these holes first was the right thing to do.

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