

Aberdeen Standard Investments Scottish Open

Sunday, 4 October, 2020

North Berwick, Scotland

The Renaissance Club

Aaron Rai

Press Conference

BRIONY CARLYON: Aaron, congratulations, Aberdeen Standard Investments Scottish Open winner this year, a Rolex Series Event and obviously your first Rolex Series victory and your second European Tour win.

Can you just give us a sense of how excited you are with having that title right next to your name?

AARON RAI: Yeah, it's incredible. It's a dream come true. If I'm honest, to win any event on The European Tour is amazing. You have to play some world-class golf. But for it to be a Rolex Series with the class of field that was this week is deeply satisfying, and yeah, incredibly pleased.

BRIONY CARLYON: Just talk us through, as well, the mind-set of the way that you played today and the preparation of going into a playoff and just how you approached that.

AARON RAI: I think it was beneficial obviously being a few shots behind going into today. Being in that position, you've always got to move forwards and be aggressive at the right points but not overly aggressive and drop shots, because it's easily done around this kind of course. But then being able to play well, hitting fairways and greens, made a big difference in being able to create opportunities.

Yeah, I guess things kind of fell my way in regulation play to then get into the playoff, and then the playoff ended in a bit of a disappointing fashion, certainly, for Tommy. It kind of went by so quick, I wasn't expecting it to be one hole. I thought it was going to take someone really winning it, especially with someone of Tommy's class. But yeah, it's just incredible to be in this position round.

BRIONY CARLYON: How beneficial was The Dubai Duty Free Irish Open last week in preparation and experience.

AARON RAI: It was invaluable, really. It was the first time I had been in that situation for a while, and it was nice to get a feel for myself again in that situation. I think even today, it wasn't really in my mind for the first, probably six



A Rolex Series Event

or seven holes, and then I realised that we were getting quite close to the leaders at around that point.

I think when something is so fresh with it happening last week, a lot of kind of memories come to mind and a lot of good things came to mind last week. I would probably go so far as to say without last week, this week wouldn't have happened.

Q. Obviously this win now moves you all over the place, you're into the Top-10 in Race to Dubai, now Top-100 in the world. Obviously you'll be looking at that Top 50, but what are the names now for the rest of the season, but are you aiming to win The Race to Dubai? Was that an ambition coming into this season?

AARON RAI: It's a good question. The Race to Dubai wasn't something I was thinking of, or certainly winning it wasn't something I was thinking of before this week. I think after a week like this, it's important for it to kind of sail in and me to enjoy it and kind of reset things going forwards.

But to answer your question round, it would be great to continue to compete and to continue to play well, most importantly, and I think that will take care of itself. I think an Order of Merit is different this year with COVID, but you've got to perform well over the course of a year.

So any time you're up there in The Race to Dubai, whether it's winning it, whether it's in the top three, top five, it shows a great degree of consistency with some really top results, as well. So still a long way to go in the season, but it's a great spot to be in.

Q. Your caddie has been quoted as saying he's never seen a player quite as prepared as you. He says your yardage book is a site to see.

AARON RAI: Who said that?

Q. Your caddie.

AARON RAI: Oh, my caddie, Jason. Okay.

Q. He said you're the most prepared player he's ever seen and your yardage book is nothing short of remarkable. What work goes into your work in terms



of holes, range work, course prep. That's a pretty big statement to come from a caddie to say he's never seen anything like it.

AARON RAI: Yeah, there is a lot that goes into it, and he's played for a long time, as well. Yeah, it's incredible to have his experience on the bag.

But in terms of preparation, I try and see the course a couple of times during the week, nine holes on one day, nine holes on the other, just to get a feel for how it's playing, how the fairways are releasing, the speeds of the chips around the greens, the speeds of the putts and I just try and calibrate myself based on what's happening that given week.

I have a load of numbers, and if you looked at it, it probably wouldn't correlate to anything, but it's my way of just calibrating speed and calibrating how the course plays. And during the four days of the tournament, I think just doing the pins the night before, seeing the right areas, the right spots, times you can be aggressive, times to back off, it's a really important part for me with the way that I play.

And I think that gives me a little bit more assurance and confidence that for the most part, I'll be making good decisions. Doesn't mean it's always the case, but certainly it helps give me that confidence to just back myself a little bit more.

BRIONY CARLYON: Aaron, thank you for your time and congratulations once again on your Rolex Series victory and all the best heading to Wentworth next week.

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