

# U.S. Senior Open Championship

Tuesday, June 30, 2026

Columbus, Ohio, USA

Scioto Country Club

## Ian Poulter

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome back to the 46th U.S. Senior Open. We're here with Ian Poulter. This is your first time competing in this championship. What are your expectations coming into this week?

IAN POULTER: My expectations, I don't really have any expectations to be honest. This is new territory for me. Obviously played the U.S. Open many times, and obviously coming here seeing familiar face that's I've competed against for the last 27 years, it's been great. First couple days has been good.

I've probably had more chats than I've hit golf balls since I've been here, and everyone's been amazing. So catching up with Darren Clarke and Ernie and all of the guys, Stewart Cink and Weirsy, so many guys.

I played nine holes yesterday. The course is phenomenal. I didn't know what to expect. This is a new golf course to learn over the next couple of days, and it's playing well. It's playing really well. Hopefully I'll have a great week.

**Q. When you think about this championship and the legacy of it, what had your attention when you turned age eligible?**

IAN POULTER: Look, it's been a tough test through every U.S. Open I've played. It's been hard. Obviously this one, being a completely new one, the golf course is a little shorter than the U.S. Opens that I've played in the past, so hopefully that's a helping hand. Because I've never hit it the longest.

No, it will be amazing to obviously play this week, play well, hopefully have a chance. Yeah, to hold a trophy would be pretty meaningful.

**Q. And had you been to Scioto before this week? I know you played a practice round yesterday. What are your thoughts on the course?**



IAN POULTER: Well, I played the front nine yesterday. I didn't know what to expect. I haven't really looked into the course. I didn't go over any of the YouTube videos that I'm sure are out there. I probably will later on today just to have a real good kind of mapping out of how I'd like to play the course, now this afternoon I will have played all 18 holes.

Clever green complexes. A lot of the greens are kind of squared off or got these funky angles to them. Not your stereotypical brown greens, so certain pin locations can get tucked away. The course is playing relatively soft. I think we had quite a bit of rain over the weekend. So I think with a number of wedge shots, you'll be able to be fairly aggressive to some of the pins, and you'll need to be careful.

**Q. You talked about seeing familiar faces. Is there a comfort level of playing, stepping into a situation where you've known all these guys for years? How does that differ from being around the young guys who you don't know? Does it make your game a little easier too, just being comfortable?**

IAN POULTER: I don't know. It's Tuesday. I arrived yesterday, and to be honest, I didn't know what to expect. Obviously I haven't seen a lot of the guys for a long time. Not that I was concerned about meeting all the guys, but honestly I got here yesterday morning, and it took a long time to get to the driving range, I'll say that, for great reasons.

These guys I've competed against for 20, 26, 27 years. Some I hadn't seen for 10 years. They'd already turned 50 and moved on. I've had great Ryder Cup matches against so many of the players that are here. So through time we've got strong relationships that have been there for decades.

It kind of makes me feel old, but young in a way. My son Luke is competing and has competed in USGA events now, and it's kind of like gone -- it's gone three generations of U.S. Am, he'll be trying to compete in in few a week's time. He tried to qualify for the U.S. Open this year; he didn't. He nearly got in last year. I've played U.S. Opens, and now I'm playing U.S. Senior Open.

So it's kind of cool to see the Poulter family spanning all



three of these events. It's been great. Just catching up with old friends means quite a lot. Just like old friends, school friends you haven't seen for a long time, it's pretty amazing.

**Q. I was going to ask you about your son. Florida Gator, is that right?**

IAN POULTER: Yes.

**Q. How do you guys go at it on the course? Out of 10 times, who wins the majority?**

IAN POULTER: I probably haven't played with him 10 times in the last 12 months because his schedule and my schedule are different. I try to play with him, but I also try not to play with him, if that makes sense, because he hits it 40 yards past me. It's a bit demoralizing, to be honest.

We had a special day in November last year; went to Augusta National. One of the members wanted to take Joshua, my youngest, who he's known for a while, and Luke and play, and he gave me a real good hiding. It was pretty special.

**Q. Thoughts on your game this season playing on LIV? How do you like what you've done?**

IAN POULTER: It's been an interesting season. I tore my meniscus six, seven weeks ago on my leg, randomly just hopping up a step going into the clubhouse.

Pretty much since then I've played some really nice golf, which makes no sense at all, whether that's made me swing it a little smoother, I don't really know. The ball speed hasn't changed, and I've kind of managed that situation with that knee. It's fine to play on. I can walk comfortably.

But my game has trended pretty well this season. I've probably played the best I have than any of the previous seasons, even though I'm now 50. But it's been good. I feel good about everything in my game. I feel good with everything in my life. It's fun watching Luke play golf and try to bring Joshua, our 14-year-old, through to be a good golfer as well. So everything's good.

**Q. Where did you do that? In which knee?**

IAN POULTER: Left knee. I did it at Virginia.

**Q. First day or last?**

IAN POULTER: An hour before tee-off on Thursday. So we strapped it, went and had an MRI on the Monday, and it

showed a tear on the medial side.

**Q. Future of LIV has got some challenges. Your thoughts on that?**

IAN POULTER: I mean, look, they've got their challenges and they're working very hard. I think Scott and the whole team have been very active over the last month, you guys would have seen it, trying to raise private equity to keep this thing moving forward. They're trying really hard.

They've got a good plan for '27, and they feel pretty confident to have some support there. We'll see how that trends.

**Q. When you accepted this invite and kind of accepted that you were kind of transitioning to a new part of your career, has there been a period where you've been able to reflect on what's been in your career, or is that something that's still maybe to come?**

IAN POULTER: There probably hasn't been much reflection time, to be honest. I think it's rare nowadays for people to get to 50 and transition straight in. I mean, it's few and far between.

No, I kind of haven't really had that time to sit down and kind of go over 27, 28 years of playing. I guess at some point I'm going to have plenty of time to be able to do that, but no, I haven't done that as yet. It's a busy -- the Poulter household is pretty busy to be honest.

It's been a great journey, I'll say that, to get to 50, still playing competitive golf week in and week out, against some of the best players in the world. This feels like -- I'm not going to say an easy transition to come in and play, but it feels quite nice to be able to get here without having a lag of two or three or four years like some guys do.

**Q. It makes me laugh when you say you're feeling older because you're clearly one of the fiercest competitors that the game has ever known. Do you still feel like you have that edge, or has that changed a little bit? The competition obviously is still there, but do you --**

IAN POULTER: I don't know I've ever had the edge, to be honest.

**Q. What? (Laughter).**

IAN POULTER: I mean, look, fierce competitor, yes. I've been that way my whole life. I play to win. It's the only thing that interests me. It's the only thing that gets me up in the morning to keep working hard. Coming out and

playing a golf course at this length, it's refreshing because it doesn't happen very often to be able to have that opportunity.

I'm super focused to come in this week and do as well as I possibly can. Obviously I want to come and win, and that's why I'm here. Yeah, you might see a slightly different face come Thursday morning when it's go time for me to come out and try to get the job done.

There's great players out here that I've played against for decades, and they're still great players, so I'm under no illusion that this is going to be an easy week, and I need to have all of my game ready.

**Q. To that point real quick too, fans for any U.S. Open, you always hear carnage, difficult, and you've been very candid in the past talking about U.S. Open layouts.**

IAN POULTER: It's got me good in the past, I'll tell you. It's done me in good, all of them.

**Q. How would you describe, for someone who watches a course or a setup that's simply difficult or carnage versus one that how you describe as a true and a pure championship test?**

IAN POULTER: Referencing this week against others or just referencing U.S. Opens in general?

**Q. In general U.S. Opens or just this week based on what you saw.**

IAN POULTER: With U.S. Opens, I've played a number of the U.S. Open venues casually without there being a U.S. Open there or even in preparation for a U.S. Open, and they play very different. You get there in U.S. Open weeks, and all of a sudden it's a completely different golf course.

Shin is one of those. I played it a couple of years ago when it was playing soft and the golf course played well. All of a sudden -- you know, I've played it in a couple of U.S. Opens, and all of a sudden it's a completely different animal, as we know.

I've been open and vocal about some of the tests we've had played out in front of us and how close they've had some of those getting them to the edge. Shin has had me over the edge a couple of times.

But look, it's supposed to be a tough test of golf. Watching the one a few weeks ago, they definitely softened the golf course over the first couple days to try and manage

expectations of players from previous Shinnie weeks, and I think they got it right.

This game isn't supposed to be easy, and it isn't easy, especially in U.S. Open format.

This week, look, I've only played nine holes, but the course plays well. It's more generous off the tee, this course. If you hit it a reasonable distance, then you're going to have some opportunities with some shorter irons, and you've got some tough par-4s out there too. This hopefully should be an easier test than a regular U.S. Open.

**Q. You mentioned the demeanor changes Thursday when you tee it up. This may be old news, I'm an old guy --**

IAN POULTER: So am I.

**Q. Social media, but you've seen the Michael Jordan thing, like you're the one guy that scares him. Have you ever heard this?**

IAN POULTER: Yes, I've seen it.

**Q. Do you surprise yourself with your intensity and your passion? Is it a switch that goes off, or is that just under the surface boiling all the time?**

IAN POULTER: We work very hard. People don't know generally how hard we work, our craft, to get ready to play tournaments. Look, it spills over sometimes for sure. I've never been one to hold it all in.

Look, you have to have that intensity, you have to have that level of focus to be able to compete against these golfers week in and week out.

I was just a kid in a pro shop until I was 22, looking at these guys that I'm playing with this week, and I idolized them, and I watched them play Open Championships. I've watched them play Ryder Cups. I admired them.

Now I get the opportunity, and I've had the opportunity for a long, long time, and I -- not that I looked at them in a way where I felt they were any different to me, I just felt that I could compete against them if I was to apply myself and work really hard.

I feel I've done that, and I want to beat them. It's sport, right? It's the natural thing of sport to go and enjoy the hours you've trained and apply it properly and test yourself against the best players.

**Q. Reaction to the MJ?**

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

IAN POULTER: Look, I love MJ, and I get on great with him. It was funny, I spoke to Mark Rolfe in -- after 2012, and I said MJ's been messing with me on the golf course, and he was like, really? I mean, he had no idea.

I don't think many people really had an idea. Mark said, I'm going to ask him for an interview. He's probably never going to give it to me, and he did. He gave him a full interview.

There's a longer piece interview on Golf Channel NBC which was filmed. It's pretty humbling, to be honest, to have somebody who I've looked up to for that long in sport say those things.

But look, it was -- I've loved playing Ryder Cups my whole career. I've loved what they meant to me, to Europe, to my family, to the best athletes in the world that obviously love intense sport.

So to have someone like him kind of pay a compliment, it means a lot.

**Q. We just had Henrik in here, asked him a little bit about the World Cup. Sweden is playing today; England playing tomorrow. Is that something you've been dialed in and watching the World Cup? How do you like their chances?**

IAN POULTER: You won't see me here tomorrow at 12:00, I'll tell you that. I've got a 7:10 tee time tomorrow morning for a reason.

Yes, we brought the family to New Jersey. I went and stayed at Liberty National for a week and we experienced their first World Cup game. It's never really -- we've never really been in kind of the right side of the world to go and watch World Cup games. We love football. We love England. I'm an Arsenal fan; so's Joshua.

Obviously to have an invitation to go to the Garner game is pretty amazing, even though the game was pretty boring at 0-0. It was a great experience.

The fans, I think, have done football good. I think when you look at all of the countries and how they've got behind their teams, I think America has done an amazing job with this World Cup. As spread out as it is and packed 85,000-plus people into it every single stadium, it's been amazing.

So I took the opportunity to stay in New Jersey. I went and played some great golf courses over the last week. I went to the Panama game the other day, which was fantastic.

Obviously the first half I'm like, really? It's 0-0 again; am I really going to see another 0-0 result? Then obviously we scored two goals in the second half.

It's been great. I'm following it like everyone. I think America have done amazing so far. I think they're going to continue to play really well. Big shocks yesterday, obviously Germany getting knocked out, I mean, penalties. Yeah, the Dutch going -- it's insane.

So it's trending, if things pan out, possibly -- hate to get ahead of myself here because it's English football, but America in the Aztec against Mexico. I mean, the hand of God took us last time in that stadium, so we need to have a little bit of revenge if it pans out that way in Mexico City.

But that would be a pretty tough fixture for us because I think they've lost two games in 53 years or something insane like that. Every game is a tough game from this moment on.

Yes, you will not see me here tomorrow. I'll probably leave at 11:45 and find somewhere nice and comfortable to watch the game.

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