

The Senior Open presented by Rolex

Quick Quotes

Thursday, 25 July 2019

Darren Clarke

Q. Off to a good start at the Senior British Open. Tell us about your round?

DARREN CLARKE: I played nicely. Hit a couple of poor shots at the start but after that, I think I only missed one green I think. I'm not quite sure. I played really nicely. My ball-striking was pretty good today. I had it pretty much under control, the trajectory, you need to do that. Even with the little breeze here at Lytham, if you're off, you're going to find bunkers and get in trouble.

Q. Playing the PGA TOUR Champions Tour, part of the Staysure Tour this week, how much does playing competitive golf all the time now help you?

DARREN CLARKE: Hugely. I had that gap, which a lot of guys have found between 45 and 50 where you want to play and you're trying to play and you sort of semi think you're 25 at the time you're trying to do it. And because you're not playing 72 holes or 54 holes or whatever our tournaments are, you lose that little competitive edge and you need that to be sharp.

Certainly last year when I joined the Champions Tour and played a pretty full schedule, it's benefitted me a lot.

Q. You have one in your back pocket. How important would it be to get this one in your pocket and have you thought about that, to win the double?

DARREN CLARKE: Yeah, of course. A guy mentioned to me last week -- last week was a huge week for me, was well, Royal Portrush, from Friday afternoon, triple on the last to missed the cut, that's probably as low as I've ever been in my career just because it was home in Portrush.

But the whole week was fabulous. The guys all loved it and we had a wonderful winner in Shane Lowry, played brilliantly but I enjoyed my part in playing last week, from my first tee shot, and then coming here this week. As you said, I have one Open Championship and I would dearly like to have this one but it's a nice start and I have to keep doing what I'm doing.

Q. How were you able to collect your emotions and refocus for this championship?



DARREN CLARKE: You know, last week, I played really nice for two rounds, I putted awful and even Friday I played better than Thursday, but I came off the 18th green, probably as low as I've ever felt coming off the golf course.

The Open Championship at home at Royal Portrush was so special, but I knew I was playing okay, and come over here, another week of links golf coming up and I've played well here in the past, really well when David Duval won The Open here, but I've played really well and I like the golf course. It's a stern challenge.

When you have another major, senior major coming up right on the back of one, it's not that difficult to get yourself up for it.

Q. Only three players have won The Open and Senior Open. What would that do to your resumé and your career and your legacy?

DARREN CLARKE: Early to get carried away yet but I would love to get myself in there. I'm amazed there's only three people that have done it, but certainly, it's another Open Championship, and it's one that I would love to win at some stage in my career.

Q. Quickly going back to Portrush and an Irishman in Shane Lowry winning that and was welcomed by the fans there and he's had a heck of a party since.

DARREN CLARKE: And rightly so. You wouldn't expect anything less. He should still be partying.

Q. How impactful, meaningful, to that part of the world was Shane's victory?

DARREN CLARKE: It was huge, and one of our good friends, Ewan Murray on SKY, he put it very eloquently on one of his posts; the pair of them walking up the 18th green, walking around each other, about to win the biggest tournament in the world in Northern Ireland at Royal Portrush, just huge, huge, for everybody concerned, huge for Northern Ireland and all of Ireland that that's what transpired.

He was a worthy winner and he played wonderful. Fair play to him. I wish I was partying with him.

Q. Thoughts on a 68 today?

DARREN CLARKE: I played nicely. I didn't miss many greens. I think I only missed one where I hit it into a

bunker off the tee on No. 4. Played really nicely.
Missed two greens I think. Apart from that -- hit some
poor shots at the start but played nicely on the way in.

Q. Nice to finish with a birdie?

DARREN CLARKE: Yeah, finishing with a birdie is
always good, a little bit better than the triple-bogey last
week Friday on the last hole. It was nice to knock that
one in there.

Q. So you're satisfied with your first round?

DARREN CLARKE: Yeah, I'm hitting the ball nicely.
Got a little bit of work to do on my putting and hopefully
hole more putts.