

The Senior Open presented by Rolex

Quick Quotes

Wednesday, 24 July 2019

Paul Lawrie

Q. You turned 50 the beginning of the year. I suppose you've been looking forward to this week?

PAUL LAWRIE: Yeah, obviously it's hard to be competitive on the main Tour in your late 40s. These guys are younger and stronger, so when I turned 50, this was certainly one of the events that I was very much looking forward to. Lytham is one of my favourite courses. I played a few Opens here, so I'm looking forward to the week.

Q. And have you been surprised by the standard of the Senior Tour since you started?

PAUL LAWRIE: Yeah, both tours. I played a little bit on the Champions Tour and I've played a couple in the Staysure. I played the Farmfoods one down at Trevoise, and I played Jean Van de Velde's one in France. So yeah, the standard is very good. But I knew that. These guys, just because they get to 50, the standard doesn't drop a hell of a lot, to be honest, and it's been blowing me away with how good these guys can still play.

Q. And how good of a test is Royal Lytham Golf Club?

PAUL LAWRIE: It's always one of our toughest courses I would have said. It's not one of our longest I wouldn't have said, but there's so many bunkers out there and they're so well placed, and the bunkers are proper bunkers. If you go in the bunkers off the tee, you're not getting on the green. You're hitting it sideways, so you've got to stay out of the bunkers on a links course. That's rule number one, and Lytham certainly has loads of them.

Q. What would you say are the key holes here? Tough finishing holes, aren't they?

PAUL LAWRIE: Yeah, the back nine gives you a few chances. The front nine is quite a tough start, obviously, with the par-3 it's an unusual start, and all the holes on the front nine it's only the 4th that gives you a little bit of a chance really. 6th they've turned into par-4 from a par-5, so that's going to play tough. 7 is a par-5, but it's a proper three-shotter, it's 590 odd. At our age, not many of us are getting up there.

So the golf course is tough. I don't think scoring is going to be overly good, but if the weather stays like



this, then guys will score. The course is in great condition. The greens are rolling pure, which they always are, and if you give these guys good greens and nice weather they're going to shoot decent scores.

Q. How difficult is it to start with a long iron on the first hole?

PAUL LAWRIE: Well, it's a 5-iron. It was a 5-iron yesterday in the Rolex pro-am, so 4-iron, 5-iron for most of the field. It's just a little unusual. You don't normally have a start like that. I can't think of any other tournament that I've played that starts with a par-3. So I mean, it's a tough hole. It's quite a small green. There's bunkers all around it. So it would be nice to get off to a decent start. It's just a little unusual, that's all.

Q. Of course you had a good start back in 2012, I think you shot 65 in the first round?

PAUL LAWRIE: I did, actually. I had a nice first day. I don't remember how I finished for the week. Not overly good I don't think, but I was having a good spell around there 2011, 2012. I think I won three times on the Tour and got back in the Ryder Cup that year, so that was one of my best years as a professional. It was certainly the most top 10s I've ever had in a year as a professional, so I look back on that, obviously, with confidence and knowing that I can play around here. But I'm a little older now and not quite as fit, so we'll see how we get this week.

Q. Apart from yourself we've got Retief, Michael Campbell, Darren Clarke making their debuts, so it's a strong field?

PAUL LAWRIE: It is, yeah. Obviously there's a lot of guys who are competitive coming in here, major winners. It's great to see guys like Tom Watson, as well, playing. Just a complete legend of the game still competing, made the cut at the U.S. Senior Open and is well up there. And obviously Clarke and Michael Campbell, a few of the boys, Goose won the Senior Players, so yeah, the field is very strong.

Q. How is your game? Do you feel confident this week?

PAUL LAWRIE: My game is okay. It's not great. I had a year off with injury and surgery. It's taken me a little bit longer to get back in than I thought it would. You don't realise how long a year is until you actually kind

of sit on your bum and don't hit balls or don't work out for a year, it takes its toll, so it's going to take a bit of time, but slowly and surely I kind of feel as though I'm getting a little bit of that. Hopefully this week will be another week under my belt of getting some golf.

Q. Having won The Open 20 years ago, what would it mean to you if you could win the Senior Open, as well?

PAUL LAWRIE: Well, I believe there's not many that have won both the Open and the Senior Open. I don't know how many people there are, but there's not many. So to add my name to that list would be very special, and if it doesn't happen this week, then I've got a few Senior Opens, opportunities to try. But it's just nice to be back playing golf. Whether I win or not is not really a huge thing for me. To be back playing and competing is what it's all about.

Q. 20 years ago you enjoyed winning an Open on home soil. How is Shane Lowry feeling at the moment?

PAUL LAWRIE: Well, he's having a bigger party than I had, to be fair. If I won The Open, we would have a proper party, too, but I didn't drink back then an awful lot. I was only a sort of three or four beers a year man. I was kind of a different person back then. I was very sort of focused on what I was trying to do, and I didn't probably have as much talent as some of the boys. So I felt as though drinking that little bit would kind of make it harder for me, not easier.

But now we would have a party like he's having. He looks as though he's enjoying it, and quite right. To go out there, especially after Rory missing the cut, he's the one they all want to win, he's got all the expectation on his shoulders the whole weekend, and you can't underestimate how hard that is to pull that off and to play the way he did.

His 63 on Saturday was just sublime, wasn't it, to finish the week and blow everyone away. And even Sunday, that was some atrocious weather he played to shoot 1-over with the tournament on the line. I thought his Sunday play was every bit as good as Saturday.

Q. When he wins he wins big, WGC --

PAUL LAWRIE: Yeah.

Q. Great thing to do, isn't it.

PAUL LAWRIE: Well, you've got certain players who are big-time players and players who when they win tournaments they win big and then you don't see them for a wee while. Shane seems to be one of those players. But massive win for him.

He's a great lad, as you know. He's very popular. Bo

is the same. Bo is a great lad, loves a laugh, loves a pint or two, and that's what it's about. You can see how they're sharing it with everyone this week with the videos that are coming out, and that's what you want. You want someone winning The Open that's someone who can share it with everyone else.

Q. For the European Tour, too, as well, obviously they're going for the clean sweep.

PAUL LAWRIE: Yeah, obviously. I mean, any time you get a European winning majors, that's what you want. I mean, he's the kind of player, with the short game that he's got, that when it gets like that, he's the kind of boy that you want to pull through and you want him to keep going and get on the Ryder Cup team. Padraig is obviously very friendly with him. I think he'll want him on his team, there's no question about that. I know Darren wanted him on his team in '16, but it didn't quite happen for Shane. He didn't play the golf that he could have played to get in it. But he'll be desperate to get in Padraig's team.

Q. How is the course playing?

PAUL LAWRIE: Course is awesome. I played yesterday, played a few holes Monday afternoon, and then we played all the way around in the pro-am yesterday. Just as I remember it, it's just a magnificent golf course, and they've only got a couple of tees up. There's not many tees up. The 2nd is up a wee bit, and there was one other tee that I noticed was the next tee up from the very back tee.

People think that seniors golf, the courses are short and easy and it's nothing like that at all, honestly. In America, they play them off the far back tees and scoring is really good. That's been the biggest, not surprise, but playing the courses full length. I assume when I saw the scores that these guys were shooting the last couple years that, oh, they must play short courses. It's the opposite, honestly. They play them all the way back. The standard is incredible.