

The Senior Open presented by Rolex

Quick Quotes

Thursday, 25 July 2019

Colin Montgomerie

Q. Looked like it was all percentage golf. How comfortable were you with the way you were playing?

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: That's very interesting you say that, playing two guys that hit the ball a mile. Getting it in play around here is vital, and I don't mind hitting bunker shots into the greens. Vital thing is missing the bunkers around here and I did that today. Only drove into one at the third, which was a good drive and managed to get a par save with a 5-iron and holed the putt.

Yeah, my irons are good; that when I'm on the fairway, I should be making pars, and it's one of these courses where par means something. And it's good that we come to courses as good as this that par does mean something, and I look forward now to the next days ahead because I know I'm swinging the club well.

The putter was iffy today. It didn't really -- you know, it didn't really matter. 68 was a great start. But you're right, I kept it out of the bunkers.

Q. As conditions change, wind, that type of thing, how much do you have to change your club selection off the tee here to stick with your game plan?

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: Very much so. Very much so. I mean, the last hole there, I could hit four clubs off the last hole. I couldn't have done what Retief did.

Q. Are you sure you could do that?

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: No, no, I can't do that. That's one shot I don't have, the 330-yards-in-the-air shot.

But at the same time, every tee shot is discussed with Alistair, my caddie. The seventh hole, for instance, 600 yards, 2-iron off the tee, two 2-irons and a wedge in, and I should have holed the putts. You keep it out of the bunkers, that's all you have to do -- well, No. 1, keep it out of the bunkers, and you have the other stuff to contend with. If I can keep it out of the bunkers, I'll do okay here.

What I was happy with was keeping the ball in the fairway and keeping the ball out of the bunkers, there's 190 of them here; when you think about those 58



bunkers at Royal Portrush, there's 3 1/2 times that there. For every bunker there, there's three here. They are in play. My strategy around here is to stay out, especially off the tee shot. You can get up-and-down from the green-side bunkers, but you cannot make par if you drive into them, so that's my strategy.

I have to work out with my caddie on every hole, every tee, we discuss at length where we don't go, and we avoid it, and I'm swinging the club well enough right now to hit the shots that we are selecting, which is key. You can select a shot as far as you want, but if you -- you know, if you push it, pull it, whatever, it doesn't matter does it. I'm swinging the club well enough to allow myself to strategise around this golf course. I know it well. I led The Open here back 18 years ago for 2 1/2 days, so I know my way around here and I'm confident. It's just a matter of going out there and seeing how many putts you can hole over the next few days. But I look forward to it. That's a decent start.

Q. What attitude do you bring to the golf course knowing that 1-under par is a good score?

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: Really on the Champions Tour we play a little bit too many courses where is 66 -- you've got to score 66 or else you're not involved, especially in a three-round event. It's a sprint, it's not a marathon. This is a marathon; it's four days, and every hole you par, you tick off and you gain on the field and I like that. I've always liked that.

My strength was the U.S. Opens in the day gone by in the '90s and I love that because I could tick off a par and knew that I was ahead of the game, and a wee bit this week, too. Might look lovely overhead, but there's a fair breeze blowing. It's ten, 12 miles an hour and makes a big difference in links golf when the fairways are so hard. Therefore, you're getting more spin on the ball, so into the wind, it's one more club and downwind, of course, it's now one less.

Yeah, good golf course. Good golf course. We forget how good this course was.