

Fischer makes Royal Liverpool, Open Championship plans

By Laury Livsey

NORDELTA, BUENOS AIRES, Argentina—The first round of the 2023 Open Championship at Royal Liverpool Golf Club is 228 days away. That gives Zack Fischer—and numerous members of his family—time to secure passports so they can travel to England. Currently they have zero passports between them.

Fischer and his clan will need the little blue U.S. government-issued books because he won the 116th playing of the Visa Argentine Open presented by Macro. One of the perks that comes with winning the world's seventh-oldest national open is a playing spot in *the world's* oldest golf tournament—played overseas.

Fischer edged Sweden's Linus Lilliedahl Sunday at Nordelta Golf Club Sunday afternoon on a sunny, hot day that replicated the kind of golf both Fischer and Lilliedahl staged on the final day. In the end, the 33-year-old from Texarkana, Texas, was a shot better than Lilliedahl, and he was all smiles as Mark Lawrie, Latin America Director for the R&A, handed him the familiar yellow Open Championship pin flag emblematic of the invitation to next year's final major championship.

"The fact it gives me a chance to play in The Open Championship, which is the oldest tournament in the world, is so cool. I'm just over the moon right now," Fischer said after his triumph in his PGA TOUR Latinoamérica debut. "That was one of the main priorities for me coming down here, the exemption into The Open."

He earned it with a sublime four-day performance that took place while he battled a virus that kept him fatigued, congested and with a hoarse voice. He was still feeling side effects from the illness, but Sunday, fortunately, was the best he felt all week—and it showed as he capitalized on his three-shot, 54-hole lead then held off Lilliedahl by shooting a Sunday 68.

With the start of the Korn Ferry Tour still more than a month away, Fischer is headed back to Texas to do three things: See his wife, Kaitlin; and daughter, Hallie; relax and enjoy the holidays; and keep his game sharp for the upcoming season. If there's a fourth item on his to-do list, it's to start thinking about the style of golf The Open Championship requires.

"I've never played golf on the ground like that. That's one of my favorite ways to play, to hit the ball low and flat with a lot of driving shots. To be creative like that is going to be a lot of fun," Fischer said, picturing himself at Royal Liverpool. "The weather could be miserable, it could be great. You never know. I've got a lot of time to get my game ready, which is really cool, too."

One person who Fischer will definitely call, and probably visit, is Bill Rogers, the 1981 PGA Player of the Year and winner of that year's Open Championship at Royal St. George's Golf Club in Sandwich, England. "He's one of my mentors, and he won the British Open," said Fischer, who still lives in Texarkana, Texas, where Rogers attended and graduated from high school. Those two will have a lot to discuss.

"I've never even gone to Europe in my entire life," added Fischer, who has one major championship appearance on his resume, the 2013 U.S. Open at Merion Golf Club, where he missed the cut.

Sunday afternoon, with the sun going down, Fischer walked away from Nordelta Golf Club. His destination was the airport. He walked with his golf bag slung over his shoulder, as he held the yellow pin flag and the trophy. Argentine legend Roberto De Vincenzo's name is on the silver cup nine different times, his first title coming in 1944 and his last in 1974. Fischer's name will soon appear alongside the World Golf Hall of Famer's, who won 231 career titles and one major championship.

De Vincenzo's lone major victory was at the 1967 Open Championship. The site?

Royal Liverpool.