

US Open Championship 2016

Wednesday, June 15, 2016

Adam Scott

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon. Welcome to the 2016 U.S. Open Championship at Oakmont Country Club. It's my pleasure to welcome this afternoon Adam Scott of Australia, currently the No. 8 ranked golfer in the world, who recorded earlier this season back-to-back victories at the Honda Classic and the World Golf Cadillac Championship.

Adam is playing in his 15th U.S. Open this week, including back to back top ten finishes in 2014 and 2015. Adam also played in the 2007 Open here at Oakmont.

Can you talk a little bit about the course then, the course now, and some impressions of Oakmont this week?

ADAM SCOTT: I don't really think too much is different between '07 and this year. Maybe the rough is a little thicker this time around. However, I found it quite difficult in 2007 as well.

I don't have a lot of great memories. I only played two rounds here, unfortunately, that year, and I played poorly. So I definitely would like to turn that around this week and have a much more memorable experience at Oakmont. I've enjoyed my practice rounds and my early scouting trip up here.

I think I'm familiar with the golf course, and I've got my plan in place. So I'm looking forward to getting this U.S. Open under way.

THE MODERATOR: What has been the key for you the last two years with your success at Pinehurst and at Chambers Bay?

ADAM SCOTT: I think I just finally played a little bit better at a U.S. Open. There's no doubt I'd not brought my best form. I can't even remember a U.S. Open where I felt I was bringing my best form to, but I was playing well leading into Pinehurst and probably just determined to turn around my luck at the U.S. Open.

I played fairly well there, but Martin kind of ran away with it. Last year I played well at Chambers Bay as well and had a great last round to finish fairly high up and for a moment having a fleeting thought of posting a score and maybe being a chance to catch the leaders.



But fun nonetheless. At least I feel like I can get myself somewhat in the hunt at the U.S. Open after the last couple performances.

Q. Hi, Adam. I'm just wondering, you've had to change your putting style obviously last year, and Oakmont is notoriously known as very tough course in terms of the greens. How have you done so far? Like how comfortable are you putting on the greens in the practice rounds? And overall, how are you feeling about putting at Oakmont?

ADAM SCOTT: Yeah. I mean, look, every factor of the game is a huge test here at Oakmont, and the greens get a lot of attention. I think it's going to be tough for everybody that's so severe, probably the most severe greens we're going to putt on this year.

You know, from ten feet and in, I think guys who putt well, you'll still make putts, but once you start getting out beyond that ten-foot range, there's so much movement in the greens -- you know, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60 feet -- it's very, very hard to putt it up there close like we're somewhat used to doing on normal Tour greens. I think it's probably going to challenge everybody this week.

I certainly prefer putting on faster greens with my style of putting, so that doesn't bother me at all. But it's going to be difficult because we're not always used to seeing so much slope on the greens.

Q. If you had to pick one part of a player's game that would be most beneficial here, on Sunday the champion will have done what well to win?

ADAM SCOTT: I mean, I think just trying to think about it logically, you're just going to have to hit fairways. No matter what club and strategy you have off the tee, the guy who wins Sunday is going to have to hit some fairways. It would be surprising if he got it around here Sunday scrambling and won the tournament.

With the caliber of players here and whoever's in form this week, I think the guy Sunday who goes out and hits the fairways is going to give himself the best chance for the most birdies. You're going to make some errors, but you're going to have to be in the short grass to make enough birdies.

Q. Scotty, you mentioned the putting and whatnot.

You obviously hit it pretty well off the tee. On approach, you're half a stroke a round better than anybody else on Tour this year. So you've got that going for you, obviously. Do you feel like, given what you said about the greens, that puts you in great stead, sort of takes those other guys' magic out a little bit and gets you up there?

ADAM SCOTT: I don't know. It's a week-to-week thing. Putting it all together is the key. I could be the best putter on the field this week, but if I didn't hit a fairway, I probably won't have a chance. I'll just struggle around all week.

Somehow I'm going to have to put it all together. But I do feel it's a bit of a leveler, these greens, if I didn't say that before. They're so difficult, the long range stuff and the speed that's involved. Of course, someone's going to make some long putts, but I think it's going to be much tougher than usual. You have to be so careful on really long putts, over 40 feet. If you're just a foot or so offline, they can really get away from you and end up breaking 12 feet away from the hole without hitting that bad a putt.

Although it may level the talented putters out a little bit or not favor them as much, it might also really favor them if they're that much better than everyone else. Like I said, every aspect of this course is asking a lot out of the player, and it's going to test everyone ultimately mentally.

Q. Quick follow. Obviously, you'll be in your own battle in your own space. But is playing with a mate in Jason, number one, is that a good thing for you those first two rounds or not?

ADAM SCOTT: No, I've got a great group with Jason and Louis this week. We're all very familiar with each other's games and obviously very comfortable playing with each other. But being familiar with their games is sometimes helpful at these big events and can kind of put you at ease a little bit, whether it's teeing off or at some point in the round certainly can feed off each other or each other's good golf.

Q. Bit of a tester for you. You've played in 14 U.S. Opens. When you think back to all the previous U.S. Open venues and how challenging this tournament is in course and setup and all the different variety of holes, is there one hole from somewhere that you played that comes to mind as the most challenging for you? If so, what made it so challenging on the day, if you can recall.

ADAM SCOTT: Just quickly thinking about it, there are lots of challenging holes in the U.S. Open. I think a good one might have been the longest hole at a U.S.

Open, which was the 16th at Olympic Golf Club a couple years ago, 670 yards. That was challenging because I'm pretty sure I missed the fairway, but then having a 3 wood in for your third shot to a U.S. Open style green that's a par 5 that's meant to receive a wedge is quite difficult.

Things have just got stretched so extreme. Another one I think of was my first U.S. Open, the 10th hole at Bethpage Black. It was cold and damp one of the rounds, and guys teeing off couldn't reach the fairway. You know, that makes it tough, especially when it's a long par 4.

So there have been a few, and there are holes here this week that I think, again, are going to take some victims as well.

Q. Hi, Adam. Obviously, this course presents a lot of decision making points. I'm wondering specifically about the long par 3 on No. 8. I know the distance is going to vary by day sometimes there. What do you think will be the field's approach to that hole and yours specifically in dealing with such a long par 3 like that with so much sand around the greens?

ADAM SCOTT: Yeah, I don't think the distance should fool too many people there this week. It's actually quite fair, that hole. There's a very large approach area to the green and a lot of room to err on the short side and be very, very playable. The green is quite big, which is nice, because it's 300 yards long, and the bunkers aren't too severe around there.

So I don't anticipate there being too much -- well, anything disastrous happening on the 8th hole. Of course, guys are going to probably -- it's probably going to play over par for the week, but most holes will. But I don't see big, big numbers just because it's long. It's actually quite a fair long par 3.

And my approach to it is just to get it near the front of the green. And depending on the wind, that's even been irons for me a few of the days, landing at about 250 and letting it run 20 yards up to the front of the green.

Q. Adam, Jordan Spieth came agonizingly close to winning his second green jacket earlier this year. Golf can be an unforgiving game at times. What moment in your career had you down the most, and how did you recover from it?

ADAM SCOTT: It's tough. I mean, if I think about it, the most disheartened I ever was was probably in 2010 at some point. Just not necessarily off of a defeat, but just a frustration of feeling like I wasn't filling my potential and not getting better, essentially.

That was ten years into my career, and just kind of hitting a bit of a wall that I wasn't doing the right things to get better, and that was extremely frustrating, and I was pretty down about things and had a major kind of shift in approach to my game after that.

What got me out of it was making big changes. I mean, I haven't heard Jordan talk about it. I'm sure he's talked about it to you a lot about what happened at the Masters. But good players, that's going to happen to good players because they're in that position a lot. It's very rare to see somebody win every time they're in a leading position in a Major. So it's going to be one of those things.

By the time Jordan's career washes up, it will be one of the few losses that he has, probably.

Q. One thing that I guess a lot of players can't seem to figure out is if we get the rain that's in the forecast for Thursday and Friday, what will happen to this course? I'm just interested in your opinion, if you think it will play easier, as some players have said, or more difficult.

ADAM SCOTT: With rain?

Q. Yes.

ADAM SCOTT: Much, much easier. I was here a week and a half ago, and it was playing nice and firm. I played a round in firm conditions. It rained a lot that night, and we came out, and I played the next day with Rory, and both of us probably made five or six birdies each that day, playing really nice.

The greens become receptive. The fairways become slightly wider because a ball down the edge of the fairway doesn't run out into the rough. It stays in the fairway. Even though it may play longer, I think it will play much easier if it rains.

Q. Adam, here pro golfers use the term attack the course, but that might not apply to Oakmont. What word would you use or phrase for your style of play during this Open?

ADAM SCOTT: I think you've got to challenge this golf course. You look at the field, you look at the quality of players and how well a lot of the top players are playing, it's going to be a very, very difficult golf course to lay back and execute perfectly all week. The greens are just so severe that coming in with a longer club all the time is probably going to catch up with you. And I feel like if any of the top guys play well, you're at a disadvantage if you're plodding your way around.

I think you need to challenge this course. That doesn't necessarily mean attack. You've got to be a little bit

smart, of course, but I think my plan certainly is to challenge this golf course this week.

Q. Scotty, after your great run to start the year, not in as many words, but you said you're a little bit naked. You're back now? You're back to having your zing back?

ADAM SCOTT: Yeah. There was a lot of golf earlier in the year, and kind of felt the effects of that, and I've been really careful since the Masters time to make sure that I'm fresher for this event. I'm two weeks off, and I'm pretty glad I took two weeks off because this is going to be probably as tough a test as we've ever faced at a U.S. Open, depending on weather, but certainly the course setup is so demanding that I feel two weeks off, fresh, ready to go, done all the practice I can.

But hopefully, if I get deep in this tournament, that's going to hold me in good stead when I need it the most.

Q. Adam, because it can be so difficult to two-putt, much more so than other courses. How does a player fight against simply running out of that juice as the course goes on and letting that effort lead to other mistakes in other parts of the game?

ADAM SCOTT: I think you've just really got to have the right mindset going out this week to enjoy whatever gets thrown at you. If you get crazy putts, enjoy the challenge of it. Do whatever you have to do to fool yourself that it's not do or die and just have some fun with it. Stay calm.

You know, it's going to be the same for everybody even though you feel like it's just you making a meal of the golf course. You've really got to have the right mental approach and not get frustrated. I think the guys who are going to play well this week will be upbeat and calm and kind of just floating around the golf course and won't get dragged into all the bad stuff that's out there.

Q. Adam, given that at U.S. Opens there's so much emphasis on grinding, patience, trying to scramble pars, is the dynamic between a player and his caddie perhaps more significant here than at the other Majors?

ADAM SCOTT: Yeah, possibly. I think it comes down to that mindset that you take out there. A lot of the time at a U.S. Open on a lot of the holes, walking off with a par should feel like a birdie for you. You have to almost kid yourself that par was really good. That's a birdie. That's gaining half a shot or a quarter of a shot on the field, and that's a good thing.

So you really have to believe that. Even if you've hit

two great shots into 15 feet and you missed your putt but made your par, you've done better than most of the field probably has. So it's very important that you and your caddie are on the same page and have that patience.

I feel fortunate to have Steve. He's seen it a million times successfully at a U.S. Open, just how that patience can pay off. He's certainly instilled a lot of that mindset into me at these tournaments.

Q. Adam, what are your thoughts on the course setup, where the tee boxes are at and where pin locations are?

ADAM SCOTT: Where the?

Q. Tee boxes are at and pin locations and just how the course is set up and how that might change the game at all.

ADAM SCOTT: They can move a couple of tee boxes around here and there. I don't think that's going to have a huge factor. The one that will be most interesting when they move it is probably the 12th because from the back tee there's not a lot of fairway to hit at. It's very, very small fairway if you take the slope of the fairway into consideration off that back tee. So that's going to cause some problems the day we go back there.

Hole locations, it's hard to know where they're going to put them. You're out there, and you're not sure if that's really a hole location or not. So we're all kind of going into it a little bit blind, obviously.

We have record of 2007. But for the most part, they're all just going to be very, very difficult. Somehow, if you can manage to play from under the hole, it will be a much less stressful round than if you're above it all day.

Q. Adam, Rory described the mood ahead of a Masters as excitement, but he described the head of this week here at Oakmont, he used the word trepidation yesterday. Is there a word that springs to mind for you? What would it be?

ADAM SCOTT: Yeah, I feel I'm most nervous at the Masters every year because there's such a buildup to getting there. I was nervous for the Masters, and I'm more excited to get this one going.

I really feel that if I can execute and play my style of golf this U.S. Open, I haven't seen a better setup for me personally than this. If I can drive the ball how I usually do, I think I'm at a little bit of an advantage starting out playing from down the fairway here this week. So I'm excited about this week.

Q. There's been a few guys who have made

equipment changes this week, taken out some woods and gone to some longer irons. I know you already play some longer irons, but did the thought ever enter your mind to maybe change something, put another club in the bag this week specifically for Oakmont?

ADAM SCOTT: Yeah, I was open minded about potentially having to change my setup before I came back a week and a half ago; but after playing, I didn't need to. I was surprised a little how many irons there are off tees. And like you said, I've got the long irons in the bag so I was quite happy with that and didn't have to change a thing. So I've got that going for me.

Q. I have two questions. First one is do you have a different mindset for a Major like this? And if you do, does it affect your game at all? Second one is you're definitely one of the most popular players in China and you won the HSBC as well. Will you still be there this year?

ADAM SCOTT: You do have to have a little bit of a different mindset. Major golf requires a little bit of a different mindset. Usually, it's much tougher scoring conditions so you have to kind of temper your expectations and get in that grind mode a little bit. But you've got to be careful not to make that influence you out of playing good golf.

The winner here this week is going to make some birdies. He's going to have to. So you're going to have to hit the good shots. It's not going to be all scrambling.

And I think, other than that, you don't really want to think about it too much. You just want to play each shot as it comes and do the best you can with every single shot.

As far as playing this year in China, I certainly hope to go back and play HSBC again. It's a great event. It's a course that I feel I should play better at, and I hope to do a little bit better this year.

THE MODERATOR: Adam, thank you so much for joining us this afternoon. We wish you well throughout the week.