

STUART APPLEBY



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Question: Not the year that you would have hoped?

MR APPLEBY: No, not at all. By no means but been encouraged - the Masters was encouraging. Last week was a bit different but encouraging because a bit of a weird format, but probably closest to I've been how I normally can play for all of this year. But I've actually had stints of practice much like this; I just haven't been able to play a bit more. So yeah, I'd say much more on track.

QUESTION: Do you like this golf course?

MR APPLEBY: I love this golf course. I haven't played here for a few years, but one of my favourites worldwide. Today was obviously too much of a test for anybody really. But beautiful layout, fantastic conditions, we've had a lot of rain and everything is very green. It's the greenest I've ever seen it around the greens, normally it's a bit bare and what have you, but there's quite a lot of rough. But absolutely some of the most stunning holes you've could ever see in golf.

QUESTION: You've seen the draw, you're happy with your draw.

MR APPELBY: Yeah, yep that's good I'm not worried about who I'm playing with, I'm worried about whether I can get lucky with the draw of the weather. But that will be totally guesswork. We don't think we're going to have any more days like this. Today you wouldn't have been able to play today, so would have been a waste of a day. But hopefully we've got that out of the way.

Questions please?

QUESTION: Stuart since swapping over from Bridgestone to Callaway are you getting more and more comfortable.

MR APPLEBY: Yeah, I've been comfortable for a long time but I got into some confidence bad habits, I got lost, it wasn't to do with equipment, I just got into - which I guess a lot of you guys would get into, chasing your tail, questioning your decision making, you know getting too caught up in actually trying to play the game, not actually playing it. Just I got into some bad habits and

I thought I could have pulled myself out quicker but I didn't realize I had a bit of stuff that was just hanging around. I wasn't swinging it ideal and I wasn't thinking ideally and that was just always leaving me two or three lip outs instead of lip ins and that's out where the game was for me, I was teetering but I couldn't seem to turn it around - turn the ship around. But with persistence and getting on top of some of those things and letting go a little bit, and trying to be a bit more relaxed, started to be a more comfortable on the golf course and that seems very easy, you think someone with my experience should do that in a month, but it just didn't work that way.

QUESTION: You've taken a bit of ...

MR APPLEBY: Why do you say that?

QUESTION: Well you get 12 or 15 appearance plus ...

MR APPLEBY: With which exemption, with which version?

QUESTION: What have I taken, do you technically know what I've taken, have you heard me say anything yet?

QUESTION: No, I presumed that you [unclear]

MR APPLEBY: My management may have announced it, but if you don't know I'm not saying anything until they say.

QUESTION: Why does your management control what you do?

MR APPLEBY: No, that's not controlling what I'm doing; you'll find out, it's not a big deal. Next question, I'm playing on the US tour next year.

QUESTION: If you don't [unclear]

MR APPLEBY: I'm going to be taking - well you've got my 26 to [unclear]

QUESTION: [unclear]

MR APPLEBY: You've got one at top 25 and 26 to 50. You've got two career moneys. I'm eligible for the first, yes or eligible for 126 to 150.

QUESTION: [unclear]

MR APPLEBY: With the top career money yes, but I'm probably get in them anyway if I make 26 to 150 through obviously you have to write a letter.

QUESTION: [unclear]

MR APPLEBY: Of course I know.

QUESTION: If you've made a decision, why wouldn't you know?

MR APPLEBY: Well I'm not sure because the tour has been trying to sort of get me to make a decision I guess they want to finalize it. But I'll probably exercise my career money will be the option I will probably take because its going to involve more normal year and might not be as - it will probably mean, if you look at a week from Monday to Sunday, its going to be more rhythmical if I take the career money. It means I'm basically playing all the tournaments I would be anyways, the only difference would be where my world ranking would be would keep me out of the players - keep me out of the Masters, keep me out of the majors. But if I was taking 126 to 150 there might be extra demands to get into tournaments, or once I was in there might be extra demands that normally I would be using or doing in a tournament. So I thought I would exercise it. I would love to have kept two of those up my sleeves in my 40s, in my dying years, but yeah.

It's my first off year, had it been my second off year, I might have been pushing using 126 to 150. It might not have been as appealing to invite a guy with a second off year. So that will be fine, it will be good to get back on things. I guess I've got to find a way to get into the players early, I've got to qualify. So I've really got to focus my early part of the year playing hard, playing a lot of tournaments and getting back into that tournament, getting back into the majors again and all that. So world ranking has to improve then that will have to come in - I'm not sure of the cut off days but I will have to improve a lot in the first two or three months of the year.

QUESTION: How many years have [unclear]

MR APPLEBY: Yeah, '97 Masters might have been my first, so 2010 Masters - if I don't get my 2010 Masters, yeah that would at a stretch I think. I qualified for a US Open I think once in the middle there sometime. But I haven't had to qualify for anything else I don't think. So yeah, I haven't no.

QUESTION: It sounds like you're much more confident in [unclear]

MR APPLEBY: Yeah, absolutely. There's no guarantees I'm going to get my way into those tournaments but I'd have to say that I'm going to give it my best shot and i will play a lot more earlier, some tournaments I might not

have played. They say you can't win it if you're not in it and that's what I will be pushing for as much as I can to get my world ranking or my snapshot of performance on the tour to get strong enough where it gets me in, I'm not even sure, because I've never had to think about it before, it might be the top 10 money, the top 10 whatever, FEDEX leaders, it might be money leaders, I don't know.

QUESTION: How confident are you now with the Australian Open?

MR APPLEBY: Well from what point of view?

QUESTION: Approaching this?

MR APPLEBY: I'm confident, absolutely. We've got a golf course that probably has more ability to squash players in any course in Australia. There's not another course really that we touch that can be as dangerous. Today we saw it probably at its worst and you couldn't play today. If today was the first round or last round it would have been called off because it was just too windy. But its like a British Open, it's the hilliest British Open course that we have. You could shoot 65 in the next round and a brilliant round would have been 75 and that would have been today. You couldn't believe the shots being hit out there today, were just phenomenal, five irons from 100 metres, three woods - ripping three woods from 160 and that was kicking the ball back out the fairway wider so you could get a shot at the green, I mean you didn't even have a shot. So if you played the tees and greens today, the course was unplayable, apart from balls.

Mattie Goggin was on I think 13 at the front - with front slope just screwing around, hitting his lob wedge as hard as he could. He hit it to the back edge of the green. I'm watching it - watch it sideways go up and then blow back and land in the middle of the green and roll back to his feet. It probably went for 60 metres in height and the distance back, just screwing around like that and the par five over the hill, you couldn't even get close to the hill. I had a driver three wood and its normally - the three wood I hit - I reckon the first three wood I hit was probably not even 180 metres, I tried to hit it along the ground, it was too scary to get in the air.

Question: But you feel you've got the game capable of winning?

MR APPLEBY: Well I've won at windy tournaments before; Cat Balou is an obvious one that comes to mind. So I know the wind and it's probably about being as comfortable as you can be in the wind. It will become the green Cat

Balou is very big, they built it for massive wind, this is not built for wind. Greens aren't overly huge like Cat Balou so you could hit 16 or 17 greens around and play your way and putt your way. But here, you're not going to do that. It's going to be very tough. I feel comfortable, but the wind is just like an opponent that's greater than the game, when it starts blowing it will just beat you into the ground and it doesn't matter how good you're swinging it. There's a lot of luck involved and that's why today wouldn't have been playable because the balls were rolling off the greens and things. So once you get to that stage, a left or right putt from a foot, becomes dead straight, there's just a real lot of luck involved. I think if we keep the luck away you will have the most skilled relaxed player out here for sure.

QUESTION: What sort of conditions are you expecting?

MR APPLEBY: I'm not sure. I heard that. I didn't hear we were going to get anything, maybe something from the other direction, the north. But it's been awhile since I've seen this course both ways. I've seen this wind a bit; I've seen the other wind. I can remember holes we've had it the other way, but won't be any worse than this.

QUESTION: If it was this bad on Thursday, what would your reactions be?

MR APPLEBY: Well we wouldn't have played today. They will probably have to just drop the green speed down, if we get wind like this again, because today the balls were blowing. We might have been able - if we really knew it was going to be this hard, you might have been able to get the green slow enough and you could have played it, but I mean 75 would have been phenomenal. It would have led, no doubt, I think. Today the greens were just a little bit too quick and the wind was absolutely hunting out across five and six.

QUESTION: [unclear]

MR APPLEBY: Yeah, probably alright if we had half this wind, but once you get beyond that, the key positions go, yeah, they should slow them down, I think British Open speed is nine, I think they were in the 10s. Yeah, that's too quick. That's fine if you're in Melbourne, you can sort of get away with that, with those greens but not when you're on a coast like this, it's too much.

QUESTION: Assuming you do win, how much of a kick start would that be?

MR APPLEBY: It will be a massive kick start, absolutely. It would be a great kick start. It would be cementing the hard work has meant something and has

really worked and has got me across the line. Yeah, you sort of have to reflect on that. You can look about, what did I do to win and how much of it was the stuff I've been doing in the last six months. Usually you don't win by luck - usually. Usually it all revolves around some recent form, something that you're really working on that's working well, there's something. It's not just pure luck, by no means, not at this level.

QUESTION: [unclear] what would we see in your game to let us know that you're [unclear]

MR APPLEBY: I hope good scores, as simple as that. Swing wise I've been really trying to work to make sure my body and my turn through the ball is nice and my arm speed matches that, so really keeping my arms under control. With my putting, trying to feel like I'm releasing the head a bit more, so a bit more releases in the head, because the left hand is going a bit too quick at times, which got too tight. So probably feel like your head releases a bit more. That's feeling more comfortable; you can do it putting no problem, but in a tournament was really weird. So I think I feel more comfortable doing that now. So those are the things that I've struggled with. I've always been working on the swing thing like that, that's always been a weakness of mine, but putting wise, that's starting to feel much more mature. Just got to scare the hole, that's all I'm trying to do.

QUESTION: [unclear] spark the other or that confidence didn't come back quickly or?

MR APPLEBY: I really find it hard to answer that question. There was no definitive time or a shot I couldn't hit, there wasn't anything that stood out that became an issue, in fact, I really I don't know, I just don't know.

QUESTION: It seems more than a coincidence.

MR APPLEBY: Absolutely, but I can sit here and tell you in a polygraph test that there wasn't a shot I couldn't hit, there wasn't anything that was different and I was trying to hide it or change my swing to see if I could find it to get it back. There was nothing there that stood out as to that's why. Because if it was, I would have got it sorted out. I wouldn't have just let it go, what's the point in having a company turn around and go ... I've never seen a company more responsive to my needs than Callaway was. So probably just my fault, you know as simple as that. Just was doing a lot of things poorly.