

# US Open Championship 2017

Tuesday, June 13, 2017

## Adam Scott

### Press Conference



BETH MAJOR: Good morning. We'd like to welcome Adam Scott into the interview room here at the U.S. Open in Erin Hills, Wisconsin.

It is my pleasure to welcome this afternoon Adam Scott, who is here playing his 16th U.S. Open. He's currently ranked No. 12 in the world and has five top-10 finishes this season.

Can you give me your initial impressions of Erin Hills. You have been here several times, and played several rounds, can you give me a few thoughts on the course.

ADAM SCOTT: Yes, it's a very big golf course. It's incredibly long, if you go to the back tees. But there are so many options on every hole, I guess with distance. I don't really know what we're in for this week. We could play a par-3 that's a 4-iron one day and 9-iron the next day. A drivable par-4 and then a not drivable par-4. I think there's going to be a lot of variation in set up, and that's going to be a challenge for everyone because it's hard to play from every tee box out there in a timely fashion.

There's a little bit of the unknown, of course, first time here at Erin Hills, but a lot has been made about the rough, which is incredibly long, but there's a huge space in between that long rough that we get to hit it. So if you're playing well hopefully you won't be out there too many times. And I think there's enough of a challenge anyway, but if you're playing poorly at a U.S. Open and you're hitting it poor enough to go in that rough here, then you probably weren't going to do too well at the U.S. Open no the matter where it was.

It's going to be a challenge. It's the U.S. Open and that's what it is. And I'm excited for this week. It sets up well for my game, I believe.

BETH MAJOR: You made a trip last week and you've played several rounds here; can you talk about your preparations?

ADAM SCOTT: Yeah, maybe this year my preparation for majors has been a little different than in years past, maybe a few less trips around the golf course than I might have done previously. But I really don't think as long and as varied the tee boxes might be that this is too complicated of a golf course. The green complexes, with the exception of a couple, are fairly

friendly, I would say. And because it's so long, strategy is driver, really, and that suits me.

I played last week in a northerly wind which is the non-prevailing wind, and I got to play yesterday in the prevailing wind. So I've seen it in both conditions, which is good, because holes play very different. And if that were to happen this week, I don't think it's predicted, but it's always good to have played a few rounds in every kind of condition here.

#### **Q. Just like to get your thoughts on the bunkering?**

ADAM SCOTT: I think the bunkering is quite severe. Everything is. It's quite a severe piece of land, there's a lot of undulation, and therefore probably would have been impossible to put bunkers in that weren't severe. I think we see severe bunkers here and there, but maybe the sand is the most unique thing. It's quite gravelly, gritty, although it doesn't play too dissimilar to what we're used to, but maybe a little less control out of the bunkers.

I think certainly bunkers are to be avoided this week if you can because there is chances of unlucky bounces, and because of the random shaping of the bunker edges there are some very precarious positions that the ball could end up. So if you can avoid them, it's a good idea. I think ultimately everyone is going to take a trip in there at some point. And the general rule at the U.S. Open is not risk too much to get out of trouble, just get out of trouble.

#### **Q. Talking to Sergio just earlier about finally breaking through and then the motivation, how to get back up again so quickly after that euphoric moment. Can you talk to that, like if it is actually difficult to keep your motivation after you've finally broken through after a long time or is it easy?**

ADAM SCOTT: My experience was I made a real point of trying to keep my level of play very high. I felt it was finally my time to be up there contending all the time. I'd played well leading into the Masters and the majors and other events and then finally broke through. And then I pushed hard, I continued to work hard with the same kind of attitude and motivation to get my first major. So that lasted for a couple of years, which was fun. And gave myself -- put myself in position to win a couple more but didn't. And just like the first one, the second one doesn't come easy, either, so Sergio is

probably going through lots of that at the moment. To achieve something that you've been thinking about and dreaming about his entire life and for it to happen, I don't fault anyone if they want to sit back and smell the roses for a bit.

But Sergio is of the caliber player even if he was doing that, I don't know if he is, but if he was doing that, he'll be back up there contending in more. And when he does and he gets a taste for it, he has the confidence to know that he can do it. And that's a nice feeling when you have won a major.

**Q. You sort of said that you had that for a few years. What about now, do you still have the high motivation?**

ADAM SCOTT: The high motivation I still have, absolutely. We have such long careers, to keep an intensity never ending is almost impossible in this career. And especially with going through different stages of life, as well. But I had a big shift in my scheduling this year with a big focus on the majors, as always. And sometimes those changes stimulate a bit more motivation, a bit more energy into it, and I've seen that certainly this year. Sometimes you can get a little bit stale, and last year my major results were trending the wrong direction. So I felt it was time to change things up and get back into contention.

**Q. Two things, first, along those lines, what was more difficult or maybe more frustrating, trying to get the first one or trying to get the second?**

ADAM SCOTT: It might be trying to get the second one as I sit here right now. I'd dearly love to get in contention this week and win the U.S. Open. I think what an amazing event to win. It's just a battle. And everyone who has won a U.S. Open has won this incredible battle not only against the best players in the world but against some of the most incredibly difficult golf course setups you'll ever see. And I'd really love to put my name on that list.

I think the reason I say the second one is because my real focus on actually believing I could win a major was cut short, even though it took me a long time. It was 2011, '12 and then '13. It was only in '11 that I really started performing well in majors and I actually had a real belief inside me that I would do it. So it was only a couple of years, and it's been longer than a couple of years since I won the Masters.

I wouldn't say I'm frustrated, but if we're having this conversation in another year, maybe.

**Q. Just a quick follow on that, your preparation, you've changed that, obviously, as you mentioned, playing, if you will, the week before. So your**

**thoughts on how that's worked out and how you feel toward that?**

ADAM SCOTT: Well, I haven't nailed it until I win one doing this, but the two weeks that I count as big tournaments and focus on, the Masters and THE PLAYERS, so far have been some of my best results this year and my best play. So I hope that trend continues this week.

My long game certainly lifted last week in Memphis which I was really happy to see. So I'm seeing progress in my game where I want it. And, again, this is the week I want to peak. I'm glad to see my long game at the level I like to see it, especially here at this course where it will be tested more than anywhere else this year probably. And generally my short game improvements this year have been good. So it would be a great week to put it all together and show those improvements in my short game when it's needed around here.

**Q. Since you won the Masters you've had four top-5 finishes in majors and seven top-10. Do you feel like you're on the cusp of another one?**

ADAM SCOTT: Look, I feel very comfortable where my game is at. I like what I'm doing, it's just been a little while since I've really been in contention, in the hunt in a major. And I'm excited to get myself back in that position. That's my challenge for the first three rounds this week. And then you've just got to have such a great day on a Sunday, anything can happen if you're in that position. I feel I'm not going to kid myself that my game is there when it's not. It is right there and I'm getting those feelings a little bit like I had leading into the Masters in '13 where I'm getting on a mission to win a second one.

And I know -- I don't know how long my time playing at this level will be. The years just slip by and so do majors and I don't want to let them all slip by. So I'm pretty motivated to capitalize on some of those close calls over the last few years.

**Q. Just to follow up on the schedule changes you've made, obviously your best results coming in those two biggest events. What have you learned from the players and the Masters?**

ADAM SCOTT: Yeah, well, I think what I take out of it is the preparation is fine, just different areas of my game needed a little more work to hold up under the most pressure. That's what this week is. It's just a pressure cooker right from the first tee. And I thought my short game was in really good shape going into the Masters and it just wasn't as good as I thought when it came down to executing at the Masters. And I've worked hard on that.

At some point my long game has suffered a little bit this year because of redirection in workload to the short game but that's coming around now, too. This is good timing to be playing really well all through the bag, not just for the U.S. Open but only in a month's time is The Open Championship and the PGA. It's an incredible time of year to play well. So I'm trying to, if not win this week, keep the confidence up and I feel it's right there.

**Q. I think you've kind of hinted this, but every major has its own personality. How would you describe the personality of the U.S. Open?**

ADAM SCOTT: Just a brut. It is, it's just become brutal. And growing up as a kid watching the U.S. Open I always thought a great driver of the golf ball was going to be the one to win the U.S. Opens, and of course that's true in some cases. But I feel since I've been playing in them and if I look at the most successful players in the U.S. Open, and I have to say Phil Mickelson without winning it has probably been the most successful in the last 20 years, with six second places and then obviously Tiger has won a few -- short game is huge. Even the best drivers of the ball can't hit it in the fairway all the time at most U.S. Opens. And you're going to have to scramble. And great wedge players will do well, and that's also what I've focused on a little bit this year to lift the standard of that so I'm able to contend.

And the last few years I've had my better results in U.S. Opens. It took me a long time to get a good result. I haven't cracked the code but hopefully I'm on my way.

**Q. There's been a bumpy ride a little bit the last couple of U.S. Opens, with controversy over Chambers Bay and Dustin Johnson. You still have a lot of respect for it. What maintains your respect for the U.S. Open despite the bumps here and there?**

ADAM SCOTT: Look, it's got a long, long history, and we absolutely must respect that and the great champions that played and they played in tough conditions, too. There's no doubt about it. It's always been very high scores to win. I know Hale Irwin was 5-over when he won one time. And this is not uncommon.

I think the way the game's evolved and always with the players and the equipment and everything, pushing it to get to that score teeters on the edge. So when controversies happen, it can take some of the gloss off the grandeur of this event. But we can't forget the history.

And I think as we move forward we're always trying to get the best result. But it has to be pushed so far because I really feel the golfers at the top level are

athletes now, and it's a new dynamic that we have to adapt to as we move forward and how to challenge us the best.

**Q. You mentioned the length here, the width of the fairways, and you said your long game is improving. How critical is that driver going to be for four days?**

ADAM SCOTT: Look, the driver is huge for everybody, not just length, that's very helpful here, for sure. But you want to keep it inside those margins that we're given. And I said they're very generous margins, but get to the first tee Thursday at a U.S. Open those margins narrow a little bit for everyone with nerves and expectation. Conditions, if it gets windy, they get a little tighter then. The course has been designed well and some angles narrow up those margins. But everyone is going to need to hit that driver inside the boundaries we've been given on a regular basis to contend here. It's just going to be very hard to play if you're not on the short grass.

**Q. I'm sure everyone has a chance to win. What do you think of your friend Hideki Matsuyama, do you think he has a chance to win this championship?**

ADAM SCOTT: He has a great chance to win. He's been one of the best players this year. And I'm sure he'll get to win his first Major Championship. He's won PGA Tour events, he's won World Golf Championship events, it seems like it's just the next step for Hideki. He works incredibly hard and no one would think that he doesn't have a chance here this week. He's definitely a player to take -- that would make you look twice if he's on the leaderboard because he's a proven winner, and not just in Japan and around the world but on the PGA Tour, as well.

Hideki has a great chance just like a list of top players. There's been amazing golf played by lots of tough players at different points in this year. And there are players like myself who haven't played their best yet that really want to be in that conversation, too. And that list is long, as well.

**Q. You talked about your long game coming back. Friday was ridiculously good. Is it as simple as making more of your chances on the green for you? When you hit it that well if you made, what, three or four more putts you'd almost be unbeatable, right?**

ADAM SCOTT: Well, last week that was the case, yeah. I think going to a course like Memphis that is a lot smaller in scale than most Tour courses that I play makes you play within yourself a lot more. And I think that was a really good thing for my ball-striking, to just tone everything down and get it very much in control. And I like to use the term "playing within myself" and

that worked great because, not just Friday, but generally throughout the week I hit the ball very well. In typical golf fashion it was my worst week of putting for the year and every other week I've putted really well. And I don't read too much into that other than I've seen it before.

I really want to put it all together. The focus is now on this week. I've had ten good weeks this year putting great, maybe the best I've ever putted by statistics up until the last week. So if I can keep my long game at that kind of standard last week, I feel like I'm really in a good place to contend here.

BETH MAJOR: Adam, thank you so much for joining us today. We wish you well throughout the week.