



Richard Bland, First round 66 (-5)

Q. How satisfying was that?

A. Very. I hardly touched a club last week, maybe for about an hour one day but it was too cold and miserable to do any more than that. I'd been in the Middle East and getting home was a bit of a shock to the system, so I didn't much fancy practising in two degrees! So to come out here and shoot five birdies and no bogeys was very, very pleasing.

Q. How tough was it in the heat?

A. Funnily enough, with the cloud cover it was probably about as cool as it ever gets here – and it was still about 30 degrees! You've just got to make sure you take plenty of fluids on board, and try not to get too hot under the collar. But I've played in this part of the world enough times to know what to do and what not to do. As well as the heat, it also takes a while to get used to the grass and the rough, but that all comes with experience.

Q. What sort of test is it?

A. It's an interesting one. Even though it's more of a thinker's course than a bomber's paradise, the key is still driving. If you can get your drives away well, all of a sudden you're going in with a much shorter club, which obviously makes life easier. That said, if you do get it slightly wrong off the tee, you're going to be paying a high price so you do have to have your wits about you.