

Hatton curses his way into British Open contention

BY STEVE DOUGLAS
ASSOCIATED PRESS

PORTRUSH, North-
ern Ireland — He curs-
es out loud, he slams
his clubs, he castigates
himself — and his ball.
All sometimes on the
same hole.

Tyrrell Hatton, a com-
bustible English golfer,
can divide opinion with
his on-course conduct
but few can argue about
the quality of his game.
And this week at
Royal Portrush, he’s
making another run at a
major championship.

Hatton shot 2-under
69 in the second round
of the British Open on
Friday and, on 5-under
par, was three strokes
off the clubhouse lead
held by Brian Harman.
It comes just a few
weeks after he was tied
for the lead on Sunday
at the U.S. Open when
teeing off on the 71st
hole, only for a bad
break to derail his chal-
lenge.

Maybe, then, his
seemingly erratic
behavior doesn’t do him
too much harm.

“Although from the
outside it looks like I’m
completely gone,” Hat-
ton said, “in my own
mind I still know where
I’m at.”

Like at the par-4
14th hole Friday when
he missed the green
with a lob wedge. He
screamed at himself and
pointed at the slopes
around the green of this
grand old layout off the
North Atlantic.

Like on the par-4
18th hole when he hit a
drive down the middle,
only to set off down the
fairway glaring at his
3-wood.

“I’m not going to

change,” Hatton said.
“It’s just how I am, how
I play.”

So, he isn’t for chang-
ing?

“I’m 33,” Hatton
replied, smiling. “I think
that ship has sailed, to
be honest.”

Hatton can go too far.
In November, he was
fined by the European
tour and rebuked by a
TV commentator after
he cursed loudly after
shots and pressed his
iron so hard into the
ground that it snapped
at the World Tour
Championship in Dubai.

“It’s time for change,
I’m afraid,” Ewen Mur-
ray, a commentator on
British broadcaster Sky
Sports, said. “That’s a
terrible influence on the
next generation.”

This doesn’t look like
it will happen.

Hatton’s chuntering
and general on-course
antics can be box-of-
fice viewing at times,
especially when tourna-
ments are at their most
tense and he’s in con-
tention.

“I’ve always said, as
long as it’s not affecting
my playing partners,”
he said. “Sure, there’s
been times I’ve proba-
bly gone too far and
you comment on a putt
when they’re putting on
the same line and then
it maybe affects where
they’re hitting their
putt, stuff like that.”

“I think that’s part of
what you learn as you
get more experience, so
I do try and avoid that
kind of thing. But yeah,
as long as I’m not affect-
ing the other guys,
then I’m not going to
change.”

What he hopes will
change is the result



Tyrrell Hatton of England chips onto the 7th green during the second round of the British Open golf championship at the Royal Portrush Golf Club, Northern Ireland on Friday.

compared to last
month’s U.S. Open. In
a five-way tie for the
lead at Oakmont and in
with a shout of his first
major title, Hatton hit
what he thought was a
good drive to the right
— only for the ball to
settle in knotty rough
on a downslope above
a greenside bunker. He
made bogey and wound
up tying for fourth,
four back of winner J.J.
Spaun.

“I know it wasn’t the
ending of how I’d like it
to have played out, but
how I dealt with every-
thing there and even
out on the golf course
with the most pressure,
I still feel like I hit some
really good golf shots,”
Hatton said.

“I’d love to have
another chance to win.”



Tyrrell Hatton of England gestures after putting on the 10th green during the first round of the British Open golf championship at the Royal Portrush Golf Club, Northern Ireland on Thursday.

CLARK

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some injury treatment
time.

Ionescu’s advice:
Take full advantage of
the unexpected oppor-
tunities.

“I went through some-
thing similar in my
career,” Ionescu said.
“My first year, I didn’t
play due to injury and
then second year, I had
like three to four soft
tissue injuries. You look
back and it’s a bless-
ing in disguise because
you’re able to learn and
grow and understand
it’s all part of your jour-
ney, continue to figure
out what you need in a
pro career.”

Clark won’t have
much down time Satur-
day, either.

There’s a morning
shootaround, a 15-min-
ute interview session
with reporters and then
she’ll have to navigate

the newly constructed
stage inside Gainbridge
Fieldhouse before test-
ing her coaching skills.
And that may not be all.

“Obviously, unfor-
tunate about Caitlin,
but she’s going to still
have a great impact on
this team,” said Liberty
coach Sandy Brondello.
“I will give the coaching
hat to her as much as
she wants, to be quite
honest. We’re going to
play around with it a lit-
tle bit. It’ll be fun.”

Clark never missed a
game in college or her
first pro season because
of injury but already has
missed 10 this season
with three muscle inju-
ries.

Boston and Mitchell
have seen how their
teammate has respond-
ed in all 10 and expect
nothing different this
time, a contest that
doesn’t count in the
standings.

“Caitlin will still be
Caitlin, trust me guys,”
Mitchell said, drawing

laughter. “She’s going
to be in a coaching uni-
form, like you’ll definite-
ly see the competitive
nature. But I think for
her, her body deserves
what it deserves from
a break standpoint. I
think this weekend will
still be about what her
and other individuals
have brought to our
league.”

So while the league’s
biggest stars compete
on the court, Clark will
return to her role as
promoter.

It’s a role she must
embrace if she hopes to
play Tuesday when the
regular season resumes
with a home game
against the defending
champion Liberty —
even if it’s a disappoint-
ment for the women’s
basketball fans.

“I am feeling good,”
Clark told GMA. “Obvi-
ously, a lot of this
cheers me up. It’s fun to
see everybody out here
having such a good
time.”

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