



MATTHEW WOLFF

RACHEL NOBLE: I would like to welcome defending champion Matthew Wolff to the virtual press conference room at the 3M Open.

Matthew, you captured your first PGA TOUR win last year. Can you share some thoughts on what it's like to be back to defend your title?

MATTHEW WOLFF: It's unbelievable. I think as soon as I got on property, I kind of had all the memories of last year flowing in and I got a little chills walking in the clubhouse. Everyone's been extremely friendly. I'm seeing all the familiar faces and even got a parking spot right at the front row, which is usually a rarity considering my last name was with a W.

It's awesome to be back here, and the course is looking great. Obviously in these crazy times they're doing everything that they can to make it normal, but just really happy to be back. Like I said, everyone's been super friendly and looking for another great week.

RACHEL NOBLE: Awesome. And you'll also be participating in the 3M Compass Challenge later today alongside Paul Casey, Tommy Fleetwood and Will Gordon. Can you just talk about the opportunity to play in this challenge?

MATTHEW WOLFF: Yeah, I think it's really awesome. I played at Seminole with Rickie and Dustin and Rory, and that was for charity as well, to raise a bunch of money. Then I'm doing it again here.

As soon as the PGA TOUR came to me and asked me if I wanted to be a part of it, I 100 percent said yes, absolutely. I think that they're doing a really good job of raising money and, you know, kind of giving the people a little like insight into maybe what the course looks like before the tournament starts.

The group of guys that I'm playing with are great guys. I think Tommy and Paul are -- I don't really know them too well, but I know Will really well, so I'm sure we'll have a good time out there and hopefully make a bunch of birdies and eagles and raise as much money as we can.

Q. Matthew, how often have you replayed that putt on 18 last year in your mind and how do you remember it?

MATTHEW WOLFF: I remember it with a bunch of fans behind me and it really just gives me chills every time I think about it. I feel like I replayed it a lot more right after it happened than I do now, but it's always something that, you know, I see on the PGA TOUR, them

posting Instagram photos of me making that putt, and just reliving that moment even a year later is still unbelievable. It kind of leaves me speechless. I think that to win a PGA TOUR event is a dream come true and to win it like that, how I did, as well as in Minnesota or Blaine, just it all kind of fell together perfectly. I'm really happy to have my first win here and hopefully I have many more.

Q. Only about a year in. I mean, you wanted to compete, I'm sure you come out thinking you can win, but to win that tournament right away, and here now a year later, I mean, you're on the verge of cracking the top-50 in the world golf rankings. With the goals you had set when you joined the Tour last year, is this where you expected to be or are you surpassing some of those goals?

MATTHEW WOLFF: I'm really not that big of a goal setter. I think that I'm very in the moment and when I don't get in the moment, that's when I start looking ahead and worrying about rankings and money, FedExCup, all that stuff. If I just tell myself to just stay in the present, focus on playing golf and everything else will take care of itself, that's when I tend to play my best and have my best finishes.

But it is something that I do have to remind myself sometimes because, you know, as much as I might have missed a couple cuts or felt like my game wasn't where I wanted it to be, I mean, winning out here so quickly is extremely difficult. I'm very fortunate for the opportunity that I was given to play in this event and then not only to take advantage of it, but I feel like recently I've gotten some questions like have I played in Korn Ferry Tour events or have I played in like anything other than a PGA TOUR event and my answer's no. It's not like a braggy or cocky type way, it's just very rare for someone to do that and there's very few people that have done that.

So sometimes even if I'm not in the best frame of mind, I just have to look back and be like, dude, you're one of very few that are out here at such a young age and have a PGA TOUR card, life's pretty good. It really helps me thinking about this tournament, that putt and just like, you know, being here and how much fun I had. It helps me relive that moment and go back to it if things aren't going as well.

Q. Just curious --

MATTHEW WOLFF: Oh, is that connected?

Q. Yeah.

MATTHEW WOLFF: Oh, okay. I thought it was just a handlebar mustache and I was like, dang, it looks good. It looks good anyways.

Q. My wife likes it. I want to know how you celebrated the victory immediately and what was it like seeing seven figures show up in the bank account and did you splurge on anything afterwards?

MATTHEW WOLFF: I didn't. I did buy a house, so I guess that's kind of a splurge, but it's also an investment and that's the maturity of me coming out. No, I'm just kidding.

Yeah, I did buy a house, but no, I really didn't, splurge on anything. I didn't get myself a sports car or do anything like that. I feel like I live a pretty simple life like in regards of like, you know, me going out and spending a bunch of money or buying a bunch of things.

I mean, it was definitely nice to see that roll into the bank account, but like I said, if I really -- if I'm thinking about the money or thinking about anything else, that's when I don't play my best. So if I just make sure to stay in the moment and try to play the best golf I can, I know like the money will be there, the world ranking points, everything like that is going to take care of itself, so I just make sure to not think about all that. But no, it's been an unbelievable year and I'm super happy to be back.

Q. And after the last two weeks at Memorial, what are you working on in the game?

MATTHEW WOLFF: I'm working on a few things in my swing. I think I'm trying to get a little more controlled. I feel like because I have a tendency to swing too hard at the ball and when I swing too hard, I kind of jump at impact. And for me, I need to rotate better. So you can't jump and then rotate, you have to stay grounded and use the ground to rotate. So I've been trying to maybe not slow my swing down, but maybe just stay grounded a little more, be a little more controlled with my swing. I feel like that's allowed me to control the ball flight a little more and the spin a little better.

The first week at Memorial I really didn't do that and with how easy it was playing, I got lapped, but then as soon as I, you know, kind of made some progress on that in the harder event, the actual Memorial tournament at Muirfield, I feel like I definitely was a lot better at controlling my ball flight, my spin, missing on the correct side of the hole. And, you know, I feel like it's definitely still a work in progress, but I'm doing what I can to make that progress. It is hard when you play so many weeks in a row because you don't have a week off to work on anything, but I like to play anyways.

Q. Now that you're on your second year on Tour, do you carry enough cash with you or are you going to have to borrow another 60 bucks from Hollis Cagner this year?

MATTHEW WOLFF: I don't know, I might have -- playing so many weeks in a row, they don't have ATMs everywhere, I might have to borrow a few bucks from him, but he has more than enough so I don't feel bad about it.

Q. Did he get his money back?

MATTHEW WOLFF: I believe so. I'm not -- I'm really not sure, though. You'll have to ask him. I'm not sure if he did get his money back or not, but I would be more than happy to pay him right now if he came to me and asked for it.

Q. Knowing Hollis, if he didn't get it, he'll come looking for you.

MATTHEW WOLFF: Well, he's already seen me a couple times this week and he hasn't brought it up, so I'm guessing I paid it off. I'm usually pretty good at that.

Q. This is kind of -- Hollis said you had some trouble finding your parking spot this week, not realizing you would be in a spot where the winners park. Is there anything else about being the defending champ this week that you didn't expect or that you didn't know was coming that's made this week a little different?

MATTHEW WOLFF: The parking spot was a big one, like I said, I'm usually Wolff, so usually it's far away. But I just think with how friendly everyone is. I recognize so many faces. Seeing them again, they all, you know -- I feel like I was super nice when I was here last time and was really on good terms with everyone. Just, you know, them being so welcoming, having me back. I feel like they can speak for themselves, but I feel like there's a lot of people who come up to me and say, "We're so glad that you are our champion," just like because they think I'm a stand-up guy or they think I treat people really well or stuff, so I would like to keep that going.

I just think with how friendly everyone is, it's pretty special to be back here. Wish there was fans because I remember the fans last year being unbelievable and showing so much support, but in these crazy times we're limited on that stuff.

Yeah, I mean, the parking spot's great, but I think just the special memories that I have here are what makes this place so amazing and what will make me come back year in and year out.

Q. Do you see this, I guess, as one of those tournaments that is always going to be kind of one of the more special ones for you just because this was such an early great memory in your career?

MATTHEW WOLFF: Absolutely. It's your first, you're always going to remember your first win. And to do it in the way that I did, it's always going to be a place that's really special to me. Like I said, I'm really happy to be out here and I know week in and week out, tournament to tournament, the courses are amazing, the fans are amazing and everything's great.

But I feel like, you know, I'm not just saying that because it's my first win. When I came here even before the week started last year, everyone was just super nice and the employees were amazing, the volunteers, the fans. I just feel like everyone was really welcoming and I feel like I really like to interact with people and talk with people. And like I said, the people here were just really stand up. And met a lot of cool people, not only fans and people who work for 3M, like Kyle Rudolph and people like that. Making connections out here is really important, too, and they definitely make sure to include that in this week.

Q. So, what is your preparation like when you're heading into one of Arnold Palmer's courses?

MATTHEW WOLFF: Did Arnold Palmer design this course? Gotcha.

I can't -- I don't -- I really don't know the answer to that. I mean, I feel like I'm not a big -- I'm not a big like architect guy. Like there are definitely courses like I know like a Pete Dye course or like a Fazio course because they have like certain characteristics, but I feel like we play such a wide variety of golf courses out here that I'm not -- I don't really know like characteristics that each golf course would have. But I'm starting to learn that the more I'm out here and the more I play these events, I'm starting to see tendencies and patterns throughout the courses.

The reason why I love this course, and I'm sure Arnie was the same way, because it's definitely a course that, you know, there's no part of your game that if you have it, like it will carry you. But it's also -- like meaning like, you know, if you, you know, don't hit the ball well, but you're chipping and putting really well, you're still going to struggle to shoot really low scores out here. You might make the cut, you might shoot some decent numbers, but I feel like every part of your game has to be working in order to shoot that low number that you're looking for.

But at the end of the day, it's not like too hard and just like ridiculous where like if you're not hitting that good, you're going to shoot 5 over par.

So I feel like it's definitely a course that, you know, if you want to win on and you want to take advantage on, every part of your game has to be up to par and strong, but at the end of the day if one part of your game is lacking, you can still kind of save yourself, which is I think a really good course. There's some trouble off the tee, but not too much, and it's always in really good shape.

I didn't know that he designed this course, but I'm sure that, you know, being back at Bay Hill or stuff like that, I'm sure I'll see some patterns. Like I said, it's one of my favorite courses to play, so I guess he did a good job.

Q. And a follow-up to that, you have some risk-reward holes out here, 6, 9, 14. What is your plan of attack when you're going into those?

MATTHEW WOLFF: I think just stay in the present, take it shot by shot. I feel like there are some times when I get up to -- you know, I'll be on No. 5 fairway right in the middle of the fairway or something like that and then I'll, you know -- I don't know, whatever happens, I'll be thinking about like the next hole. Like I'll be like, oh, if I hit a good drive on 6, I can go for it. I'll be thinking about that when I'm on 5.

Or I'll be thinking about No. 9 tee ball because it's a really hard tee ball and a really hard

hole. I'll be thinking about like, oh, if I hit a good tee ball here, I can maybe have another chance at birdie. I'll be thinking about that on hole like 7 or 8, though. So I think what I need to do is I need to just stay in the present to make sure that I do the best I can on each shot. then once I get to that drive on 6 or 9 or 14 or anything like that, I'm making sure not to use any energy before I get there and then just make sure to go through the process, make the best decision I can and then that's all I can do.

Q. I just wanted to talk to you a little bit about Rocket Mortgage a couple weeks ago. I know it didn't end the way you wanted, but can you talk about the positives that you can take away from that heading into a pretty important stretch of tournaments?

MATTHEW WOLFF: It's all positives. Yeah, unfortunately I didn't get the win, but I've only been in that situation a couple times and I felt like I really -- I didn't start off well, I got some bad breaks and I maybe let some shots affect me a little more than they should have. Then coming down the stretch, I really buckled down, stayed in the moment and, you know, hit good shots to at least make it, you know, maybe a little interesting coming down the stretch.

But Bryson played really well, and I think looking back at that tournament, the only thing that I'm taking from that is being in a situation like that, having to sleep on a lead, what it feels like to be the leader going into Sunday. the more I'm playing in events like that and the more I'm in that situation, the more comfortable I'm going to be. And so unfortunately, I didn't win, but I still had a great week. It made me feel a lot better about my game and it's something that, like I said, I'm just going to look back on and draw from experience instead of hang my head because I didn't get the win.

Q. With what Bryson is doing and with Tony Finau kind of rethinking things off the tee, do you think that is unique to them or are we seeing perhaps the future of golf here where even the longest hitters have to adapt?

MATTHEW WOLFF: I think Dustin said it best, I heard a quote from him a little bit ago saying that he doesn't feel like he needs to hit it any farther to win. I feel like Dustin, you know, myself, Tony, like they all -- I feel like recently I've actually been trying to tone it down a little bit because I feel like I go hard at everything and instead of me going 110 percent at everything, I can go 90 percent and I feel like I honestly still hit the ball just as far, but I'm a little more controlled.

I don't think that at anytime soon it's going to get to the point where people need to start hitting it ridiculously far because although it might help, I think that there are people out here who prove week in and week out that, you know, they hit the ball -- they're not short, but they're not long, but other parts of their game are so great.

Like I played with Ryan Armour for the last round in Detroit and he didn't have a great last round, but I mean, I think he had a top-5 finish. I mean, I was talking to him about it, about how Bryson is chasing distance and what he's doing is unbelievable, but I was talking to Ryan about it and Ryan said he had a stretch where he chased distance and he was

struggling a lot because he couldn't keep the ball in the fairway, and that's his game. He doesn't hit the ball overly long, but he's very straight, he's a very good iron player and a good putter. he went back to that and you saw how well he did in Detroit.

I think the most important thing is just to stick to what you do best in your game, not try to change your game based on other people. Like I said, what Bryson's doing is unbelievable. I think to be so precise with your irons and still such a good putter, but hit the ball as far as he does, it is very impressive.

But I wouldn't recommend it to everyone because not everyone can gain distance. Sometimes if you do try to gain distance, it affects other parts of your game.

Q. Just a follow-up, what's the back story on the \$60 you owed Hollis?

MATTHEW WOLFF: I can't remember exactly, I think it was something like -- yeah, no, it was something in the locker room. It was like -- oh, I think what it was, I think I was playing a match with someone in a practice round and it was just a friendly little game and I like -- I don't know if I had the money. I think like I said it, but there was like no ATMs around and stuff and I was trying to pay the guy and Hollis came around and I was like, gosh, I don't know if I should ask him. So I asked him for a little bit of money, for \$60 and stuff like that and he left it in my locker and I ended up paying the guy.

I think I did pay him back, but it was just funny at the time because he gave me a sponsor exemption and I just met him. He's kind of like the head of the tournament, you know. He's the -- yeah, and it was just funny how it all kind of happened and ended up.

And then at the end of the week, me winning the tournament, I think that's when he -- I think that's honestly when I did pay him. I think it was after I won and after I got that check. He was like, "All right, now you have money to pay me back, I need my money back." But yeah, he's awesome. We had a lot of laughs about it. I'll actually have to go remind him about it because I honestly didn't remember until someone brought it up and I don't know if he did either, but I'll go find him somewhere and tell him about the story.

Q. Who got into your pocket in the practice round?

MATTHEW WOLFF: I can't remember. I know I played -- I think I played with Joaquin and Carlos Ortiz, Joaquin Niemann and Carlos Ortiz. But I wasn't sure -- I feel like I remember beating them, so I wasn't sure if it was like -- because I played with them on Wednesday, so it might have been someone on Tuesday, but I really can't remember. I'll talk to him about it, though, and I'll come back to you with a more firm story because like my memory's not great.

RACHEL NOBLE: Thank you so much for your time today, Matthew. Good luck this week.

MATTHEW WOLFF: Of course. Thank you, guys.