

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW
February 25, 2021



MATTHEW FITZPATRICK (-6)

Q. Bogey-free 66 today, this is coming off the heels of a good week I'm going to say last week in L.A. I know you're disappointed with the way you finished, but obviously your game's in good shape.

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Yeah, it was a good day today, obviously played well last week as well. Yeah, the golf course is in unbelievable shape. The greens are running about 12 on the Stimp, That's great for me, I love it when it's like that. I think it makes you think, this golf course, you've got to think about where you're hitting your tee shots and your approach shots. Yeah, you've got to be on the ball.

Q. There was a lot of talk earlier this week about the width of some of these fairways, that the guys that can hit it a long way were just going to feast on it. However, you find yourself and Webb Simpson on top of the leaderboard. What is about this golf course that kind of takes the driver out of play?

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: I played with Xander and Adam Scott today and one hole in particular, I think it was about 5 maybe, I'm hitting driver and I did get close to the bunkers but I know I'm not going to get in them. Those boys are going straight into the bunker with driver, and 3-wood is a little bit shorter than my driver, so all of a sudden they've got to change of club in their hand and they've got to think about it, they can't just bomb driver. So I think it kind of played to my hands, I can kind of play just my normal game whereas even though the fairways are wide, some players have got to kind of hold off it.

Q. You've got a really good short game both around the green and on the green, but these green complexes, they offer some different challenges than you see at normal Tour events. How do you like it around here?

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Yeah, they certainly do. They're just so slopey, there's lots of break on plenty of putts, got to keep your eye on the green as well and they're lightning quick. So it's a great golf course and, like you say, the green complexes are challenging and I think that's what helps protect it.

Q. This is the first time you're seeing this golf course. The Genesis Invitational last week, you tied for fifth. How much of today was a continuation of your excellent play?

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Yeah, I feel like I played pretty well last week. The golf course is obviously a lot different, different grass and everything and the greens are much smaller than they are here. Today my dispersion I guess, sounds pretty strange, was just good. Aiming left and pushing it right and aiming right and pulling it left. Just the way I tried to play

today and just hit a few close and made some putts.

Q. A bit of a humble way to put it. You have a magical short game, everybody in the world of golf knows that. These green complexes are so fascinating. How are you able to negotiate that?

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Yeah, I think the big thing for me is you've really got to think about your approach, your approach shots. It's so complicated into some of them. Where the flags are, they're put in tight little areas and you've got to make sure you catch the right slopes to either get it close or just to the fat part of the green. That's what we did really well today and got to do more of it the next three.

Q. Matt, when did you get here? When's the first time you saw the golf course?

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Tuesday, yeah, Tuesday afternoon I played 18.

Q. Do you put any extra effort, any extra work into trying to get to know the golf course ahead of Thursday when you come to a new course?

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: I mean, fortunately Billy walked it twice. Billy had done a lot of homework, which is great. My big thing was just to get lines off tees and just scout the areas around the greens, see where to miss, where not to miss to certain flags and take it from there really.

Q. And your thoughts on how you played today and your thoughts on the golf course in general?

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Yeah, I thought I played really solid today. Just said over there, I was aiming right and pulling it left and aiming left and pushing it right, that's kind of the way -- when you're on, that's kind of what happens, it's great. There's not many flags out there today where you can go at just because the misses are so penal if you miss it on short-side. So that's been the big positive for me today is that I feel like my irons were good and I hit them in the right spots.

Q. You've been on a good roll. How confident are you and what do you like so much about your game right now?

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Yeah, I feel like I took a lot from my win at the end of the year in Dubai and I feel like my game was in really good shape there and we kind of found something that gave me a really good feeling. I've kind of pressed on with that. We kind of lost it at the start of the year and we didn't really manage it over the winter, I guess. We sort of quickly rectified that and sort of back in good shape and I feel -- like I say, I feel confident where it's at. I'm not saying I'm going to go out and win every week, but it's just having that comfort factor in your swing and your game as you play week in, week out.

Q. You talk about rectifying. Is that just a matter of putting in the hours or is there something else that you have to do to say this is how we get out of the winter slump?

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: It's just plenty of practice, plenty of stuff that just, you know, grinding it in. I know what it was and my coach obviously told me what it was and the way we fixed it was kind of simple, it was kind of just a bit of posture and a bit of takeaway. Then you just sort of grind that in and get comfortable with it and just try and keep those feelings for the rest of your life, you know. When you've got it or when you feel like you've got it on a string and you've had a good tournament, particularly in Dubai, you think you're unbeatable, then literally two weeks later you can't hit your hat. So it's about trying to find that middle ground where it's repeatable and you have good feelings.

Q. Just on the course, does this seem like the kind of place -- everybody talked about the difficulty leading up, do you think you could have a winning score close to 20 under or is it the kind where people will really exchange having good days?

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: It's a tough one. Before I played -- when I played Tuesday and Wednesday, I didn't necessarily see like a 7 or 8 super low one under. Where they put the flags today, I kind of thought it's kind of, you know, 3, 4 under I'd be really pleased with.

Yeah, I think it's going to just depend a lot on the wind and the weather. If it's dead still, the flag's on, perfectly gettable but you can hit them in good spots and make lots of putts because the greens are so pure.

I'll be honest, I hate to like score speculate and guess. I'm useless, to be honest, so that's probably why. Yeah, it's just going to be an interesting three days.

Q. Speaking of speculating, since you don't like that, is your mind on the Ryder Cup at all at this point?

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: No, no, not at all. I played that game in 2016, just got super worked up about it, just kind of desperate to make the team. Just accepted the fact that if I play well myself and I do all the right things myself, then hopefully it takes care of it, but if it doesn't, then it is what it is.